Victoria State Government
Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Annual Report 2022–23

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

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**Responsible body’s declaration**

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023.

**John Bradley**

Secretary  
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

19 October 2023

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria’s land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria’s Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.

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# Secretary’s message

This is the first annual report for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) following its establishment on 1 January 2023 after Machinery of Government changes. This report reflects the dedicated work of the department’s 5,913 staff, who came together from two former departments, to lead some of Victoria’s biggest environmental, economic and social transitions in our community.

DEECA staff have worked closely with Traditional Owners, stakeholders across diverse sectors and the Victorian community to strengthen environmental sustainability and unlock our state’s economic potential.

In addition to a significant delivery program, our staff rallied to respond to significant floods during spring 2022 and other emergencies throughout the year. DEECA teams played a significant role in the immediate statewide flood emergency response during October 2022 and in supporting the longer-term recovery effort. Our Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) crews contributed more than 15,000 shifts to support the Victorian State Emergency Services (VICSES) and flood-affected Victorians. Agriculture Victoria coordinated over 28,000 calls to farmers impacted by floods in late 2022 and early 2023 to provide urgent animal welfare, agricultural logistics and technical support to farmers. Along with responding to 838 fires across Victoria that impacted 4,299 hectares of land, we also deployed crews to support firefighters in Canada and the flood emergency response in the Kimberley region and assisted with other emergencies including blue green algae responses, whale and dolphin emergencies and supporting the New South Wales Varroa Mite Response.

Throughout 2022–23, DEECA continued to coordinate the Victorian Government’s climate action agenda including, an increase in the emission abatement ambition – to bring forward the date by which Victoria will achieve net zero emissions, from 2050 to 2045. A new 2035 emissions reduction target of 75–80 per cent below 2005 levels was also introduced, and a commitment to 95 per cent renewable electricity by 2035. We continued to help Victoria adapt to climate change, through a $166 million investment to build climate resilience through programs to install air conditioners in more than 40 public high-rise buildings.

Considerable steps were taken towards creating a healthier, more resilient and biodiverse environment through the ban on problematic single-use plastics from sale and supply from 1 February 2023 and DEECA prepared for the launch of the Container Deposit Scheme in November 2023.

Critical actions to improve biodiversity through the year included a $10 million allocation to 22 organisations to take action for threatened species, including the recovery of the critically endangered Fairy Tern. We supported the revegetation of public and private lands through the $77 million Bushbank, which included the Bushbank First Peoples grant, which provided funding for projects that support the self-determination of Victoria’s First Peoples.

We worked closely with Traditional Owners, other public land managers and the community to sustainably manage and protect the state’s public land. To make it easier for Victorians to spend time in nature and experience the health and wellbeing benefits of getting outdoors, we’ve reduced camping fees for state and national parks, delivered 31 new campgrounds along with 50 upgraded campgrounds, created 29 new kilometres of walking trails and provided access to more waterfront campsites for recreation and camping. Work to deliver new parks in growing outer suburbs, pocket parks for Melbourne’s inner suburbs, off-leash dog parks and other park revitalisation projects also continued during 2022–23.

Statewide bushfire risk was maintained at 65 per cent well below the target of 70 per cent. Our risk reduction program delivered 234 burns across 75,868 hectares, and 16,762 hectares of non-burn fuel treatments were carried out to reduce the impact of bushfires on people, property and the environment. We also supported the delivery of 20 Traditional Owner burns and conducted 76 of 160 identified priority burns. Through FFMVic, we replaced 10 strategic fire access bridges with high-standard, robust structures that are now highly resilient to the impacts of flood and fire, and upgraded and improved 2,155 kilometres of roads to support access for firefighters and road users.

DEECA continued to support the major transformation of Victoria’s energy sector to a renewable, clean and affordable sector. Throughout 2022–23, we supported multiple energy and storage projects including the Victorian Big Battery and Renewable Energy Zones. We also released the Gas Substitution Roadmap, which will help our state navigate the path to net zero emissions while providing greater choice and cutting energy bills. Through the re-establishment of the State Electricity Commission, we have commenced a market search for the first investments in renewable energy generation and storage.

To support Victorians with their energy costs, two further rounds of the $250 Power Saving Bonus program were delivered to help Victorians manage cost of living pressures. More than $460 million in payments were made to Victorian households in the third round, while the fourth round delivered another 1.5 million payments to 30 June 2023. As part of the Victorian Energy Upgrades program, nearly half a million households benefited from receiving lighting, space heating and cooling, water heating and draft sealing products to help drive down their energy consumption and energy bills. Households also benefited from the Solar Homes program with rebates for solar panels, home batteries and hot water units, along with subsidies for zero emissions vehicles.

Over the past year, the department worked closely with water corporations, catchment management authorities, government agencies, Traditional Owners and the community to ensure the safe and sustainable use of Victoria’s water resources.

As part of our work to keep water affordable for all Victorians, we released two key policy documents to ensure the management of Victoria’s water resources. The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy is our plan to double the region's water supplies over the next 50 years, improve water security and protect waterways. We worked with Traditional Owners to develop the Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap, charting a pathway to genuine, meaningful outcomes in the water sector.

DEECA supported the growth of Victoria’s agriculture sector through the delivery of the 10-year Agriculture Strategy. The Agriculture Energy Investment Plan was also released, helping farmers reduce energy costs and be more energy efficient and productive. With the increasing risk of Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) outbreaks, Agriculture Victoria provided leadership to the whole of Victorian Government EAD Preparedness Program to ready the state for an outbreak. An EAD Preparedness Taskforce was also established to bolster our readiness.

The $120 million Gippsland Plantations Investment program was announced in September 2022. The program is the single largest in plantation establishment in the state’s history, and will plant an extra 16 million trees and reduce 7.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the next 25 years.

To support the transition away from native timber harvesting by 1 January 2024 we carried out significant work to fast-track implementation of the Forestry Transition program. This included implementation of a worker support package with 633 workers registered to receive support by 30 June 2023, continuation of long-term programs to help local economies diversify and the release of the Opt-out Scheme for sawmills.

To better manage declared mine risks, the Declared Mine Regulations came into effect in September 2022. Work also progressed on mine remediations at Benambra, Kralcopic Bendigo mines and Red Robin.

DEECA is committed to partnering with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to support self-determination. During 2022–23, we delivered a number of key initiatives and actions from Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025. This included delivering 66 Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training workshops to 730 staff, developing an Indigenous Data Sovereignty Pathway and increased the use of Aboriginal suppliers in our procurement processes by 18 per cent over the previous year.

As we have come together as a new department, our focus and key priority has been staff wellbeing and safety. We supported wellbeing programs for our staff including mental health and wellbeing training, continued support for COVID-19 impacts and delivered a range of employee assistance programs. As part of our ongoing focus on diversity and inclusion, we delivered a number of key initiatives in our Access and Inclusion plan, increased awareness of Aboriginal cultural safety across the department, delivered new programs to support Aboriginal employment and disability awareness training and continued important work in programs including gender equality, multiculturalism and LGBTIQ+ inclusion. These were supported by strong partnerships with our staff-led networks, which played a significant part in capturing the lived experiences of our people.

I would like to thank all DEECA staff, stakeholders and portfolio partners who made our work possible in 2022–23. We look forward to further supporting the government’s key priorities in the coming year to support thriving, productive and sustainable communities, environments and industries.

**John Bradley**

Secretary   
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

19 October 2023

# Key initiatives and projects 2022–23

In 2022–23, DEECA focused on the following outcomes for Victorian communities:

* Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community
* Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment
* Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services
* Productive and effective land management
* Safe and sustainable water resources
* Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment

Promote productive and sustainably used natural resources.

A full report of our performance against these outcomes (also known as our departmental objectives in Budget Papers) is included from page 24.

Listed below are a few of the key initiatives and projects delivered for Victorian communities in 2022–23:

## Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community

Reducing Victoria’s Emissions: In May 2023, the Victorian Government set a new 2035 target to reduce Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions by 75–80 per cent below 2005 levels and brought forward the date to achieve net zero emissions from 2050 to 2045. These world leading targets build on Victoria’s success to date, having already cut the state’s emissions by almost a third since 2005.

Management of Climate Change in Victorian Government Operations: In partnership with the Department of Treasury and Finance, DEECA developed the first [Victorian Government Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/Victorian%20Government%20Climate-related%20Risk%20Disclosure%20Statement%202022.pdf) in October 2022. The Disclosure is aligned with international best practice, including the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures and the newly established International Sustainability Standards Board, which was established at COP26 to develop a comprehensive global baseline of sustainability disclosures for capital markets.

## Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment

**Circular economy:** Recycling Victoria commenced operations on 1 July 2022 to provide strategic leadership to the waste and resource recovery sector and deliver statewide stewardship and regulatory and market oversight. Highlights across the circular economy portfolio include: Regional Circular Economy Plans were published; a range of single-use plastics, including straws, cutlery, cotton bud sticks and expanded polystyrene food and drink containers, were banned from sale and supply in Victoria from 1 February 2023; work on the Container Deposit Scheme progressed to prepare for its launch in November 2023; and Round 1 of the Regional Recycling Fund provided grants of up to $500,000 per regionally significant resource recovery facility, to help upgrade infrastructure for recyclable materials including cardboard, plastic, paper, glass and mixed recyclables.

**Environment protection and air quality:** *Victoria’s Air Quality Strategy* was released on 27 October 2022. It sets out a plan for how air pollution will be reduced up to 2030, and how major pollution sources will be tackled, while supporting communities, the economy and the environment. New initiatives under the Strategy that commenced in 2022–23 include: implementing Air Quality Improvement Precincts; undertaking wood heater policy reform and commencing a wood heater education program.

**Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program:** The three-year Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program concluded in June 2023. The program consisted of 261 activities that supported the recovery of biodiversity and wildlife impacted by the devastating 2019–20 Victorian bushfires. The program delivered approximately 1.1 million hectares of herbivore control, 368,000 hectares of predator control and 26,000 hectares of weed control to benefit the response and recovery of more than 4,400 native flora and fauna.

**BushBank:** The BushBank program is the most ambitious habitat restoration program in Victoria’s history and one of the largest of its kind in Australia. During 2022–23, Cassinia Environmental was approved as the delivery partner for the private land stream of the BushBank program. Cassina will work with BushBank to revegetate and restore native vegetation across at least 20,000 hectares.

**Deer Control Strategy:** The East and West Regional Deer Control Plans were developed following extensive consultation with the Gippsland, Hume and West Regional Deer Partnership Groups throughout the year and released on 12 June 2023. The five-year plans focus on preventing new populations from establishing, along with measures on how to effectively protect native species, waterways, national parks and reserves from deer. Critical deer control activities were also undertaken across Victoria throughout the year.

**Victorian Nature Fund:** The Nature Fund was established to encourage collaboration and partnerships between government, business, philanthropy and the community to deliver high impact projects that contribute to improving Victoria’s biodiversity. Grant applications opened on 26 August 2022 and during 2022–23 the Nature Fund allocated $10 million to fund 22 organisations that were able to leverage significant co-funding through a range of partnerships. An additional $23 million of co-funding was leveraged through these projects.

**Trust for Nature:** Trust for Nature achieved permanent protection of 2,408 hectares of private land and progressed a commitment to transfer Victoria’s largest private conservation reserve, Neds Corner, to its Traditional Owners, the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation. This is the largest parcel of private land to be returned to Traditional Owners in the state. Trust for Nature also collaborated with the Department of Treasury and Finance to arrange for land tax exemptions for covenantors.

## Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services

**Power Saving Bonus:** The third round of the Power Saving Bonus program in 2022–23 received more than 1.84 million applications, totalling more than $460 million in payments to Victorian households. The fourth round of the Power Saving Bonus program launched on 24 March 2023 and has delivered around an additional 1.5 million payments to Victorian households as at 30 June 2023.

**Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) Auctions:** In October 2022, the Victorian Government announced the six successful projects in its second VRET auction (VRET2), which will bring forward 623 megawatts (MW) of new renewable generation capacity and deliver up to 365 MW and 600 megawatt hours (MWh) of new battery energy storage. The VRET2 auction represents a major step towards meeting our commitment of sourcing 100 per cent renewable electricity for government operations by 2025. All five of the first VRET-supported wind and solar projects are completed and exporting over 800 MW, exceeding the 650 MW target.

**Gas Substitution Roadmap:** Released in July 2022, the *Gas Substitution Roadmap* provides strategic directions and actions for a coordinated and equitable transition to net zero emissions. The Roadmap was informed by a series of technical investigations, analysis and significant industry and consumer consultation.

**Victorian energy storage projects:** On 27 September 2022, the Victorian Government announced Victorian energy storage targets of at least 2.6 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and at least 6.3 GW by 2035. The Victorian Government is delivering several initiatives to support Victorian energy storage projects including the ongoing operation of the Victorian Big Battery, the Energy Innovation Fund and the Renewable Energy Zones Development Fund. Other programs contributing to energy storage include the Solar Homes program and VRET2.

**Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program:** During 2022–23, more than 463,000 households and 22,000 businesses participated in the program to help drive down their energy consumption and energy bills. Reforms to strengthen consumer protections, compliance and enforcement also occurred, including the passage of the *Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment Act 2022* in August 2022, which expands the Essential Services Commission’s (ESC) VEU Code of Conduct. Another major reform to the program included the review and setting of program fees to ensure that the ESC meets standards and achieves energy savings.

**Accelerating the adoption of zero emission vehicles:** The first 35 public electric vehicle (EV) chargers funded under the Destination Charging Across Victoria program were completed in May 2023. Projects to install 120 chargers at 57 council sites and 58 chargers at 24 businesses fleet sites across Victoria are also progressing. Through the Zero Emissions Vehicle program more than 10,000 subsidies were provided to Victorians to take up an electric vehicle, supporting Victoria reaching a record 8 per cent of passenger vehicle sales being electric.

**Solar Homes programs:** During 2022–23, more than 46,000 rebates were provided to households to install solar panels, battery storage systems and energy efficient hot water systems. A total of 23,611 interest-free loans were provided to households to support uptake of roof top solar. Highlighting the program’s focus on safety, 5 percent of installations from Solar Victoria’s rebate program were audited in 2022–23 with the number of unsafe installations falling to 0.3 per cent from 3.2 per cent in 2018–19 when the program first began. In partnership with industry and regulators there was also a focus on activities to continue to educate participants and lift compliance with new Australian Standards.

Establishment of the State Electricity Commission (SEC): In December 2022, the Victorian Government declared the SEC as a reorganising body under the *State Owned Enterprises Act 1992*, appointed an interim CEO for the SEC and established an SEC Expert Advisory Panel. It also announced that the SEC will invest $1 billion towards delivering 4.5 GW of power through renewable energy projects and establish an SEC Centre of Training Excellence. During 2023, the SEC began a conversation with Traditional Owners about potential partnership models and engaged with stakeholders across the sector, including representatives from industry and educational providers.

## Productive and effective land management

**Suburban Parks program:** In 2022–23, DEECA acquired 391 hectares of land for the Three New Parks project at Clyde, Kororoit Creek and Werribee Township, and 84 hectares of former landfill to enable future delivery of the Sandbelt Parklands project. Parkland Plans were completed for Jackson’s Creek biik wurrdha, Cardinia Creek, and Frankston to Mornington, while for marram baba Merri Creek and Quarry Hills, Future Direction Plans were underway for completion in early 2023–24. Upgrade plans were approved for Seaford Wetlands and a feasibility study for Wallan Wallan was completed. Under the Local Parks stream, 20 pocket parks and 13 off-leash dog parks were completed in 2022–23 with works well underway to deliver the remaining nine pocket parks and one off-leash dog park in 2023–24. In the Northern Metropolitan Region, five trails were delivered in 2022–23 and two remaining trails were on track for delivery in 2023–24.

**Marine and coastal policy reforms:** In 2022–23, the first year of the five-year Marine and Coastal Strategy, implementation activities included delivery of grants to support Traditional Owner-led projects, coastal hazard adaptation and coastal and marine management plans. In May 2023, Victoria’s Resilient Coast framework and guidelines were made under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* to guide strategic coastal hazard adaptation planning.

**Caring for Country Partnership Forums:** The department supported the delivery of statewide and regional Caring for Country Partnership forums. The inaugural on Country statewide forum was held in person during October 2022 and was co-chaired and hosted by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. The second on Country and in person forum was co-chaired and hosted by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation in April 2023. Regional forums were delivered to support five Traditional Owner groups in progressing self-determination during 2022–23. Priorities discussed at the forums included sustainable funding models, formal recognition and cultural fire.

**Management of the Great Ocean Road:** Amendments to the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020* commenced on 1 September 2022, making the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority the dedicated parks manager for the Great Ocean Road coast and parks. The amendments include a schedule of Crown land for management transfer to the Authority by 1 November 2025 and the establishment of the Great Ocean Road Coastal and Parks Trust Account.

**Office of the Conservation Regulator:** The Conservation Regulator undertook significant work to tackle key regulatory risks impacting land management. Significant prosecutions in 2022–23 covered offences such as the illegal removal of mature eucalyptus trees, bulldozing trees on public land, the illegal collection of firewood, destroying wildlife habitat and driving off-road in restricted areas. The Conservation Regulator conducted 54 proactive inspections of timber harvesting coupes and more than 460 proactive patrols on public land across the state during 2022–23.

**Victoria’s Great Outdoors:** Over the past four years to 30 June 2023, under the program the department has delivered: $12 million in reduced camping fees in state and national parks; 31 new campgrounds, 50 upgraded campgrounds and 29 kilometres of walking trails; 54 of the 63 Camping and Caravan grants completed; 75 Volunteering Innovation Fund grants awarded; final technical designs for the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park; a feasibility study for the Sea to Summit multi-day experience commissioned; and employed 10 Seasonal Rangers, six in parks and four in state forests, to educate and engage visitors and help maintain popular recreation sites.

## Safe and sustainable water resources

**Engaging with Traditional Owner groups on water use:** The *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap* was launched at the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape on 28 September 2022. *Water is Life* was developed with Traditional Owners and charts a pathway to genuine, meaningful outcomes for and in partnership with Traditional Owners. A statewide Traditional Owner forum was held in March 2023 to reconnect after the official launch of *Water is Life* and was attended by approximately 50 Traditional Owners from across the state.

**Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS):** The CGRSWS launched in September 2022, to secure the region’s long-term water supplies to protect jobs, farms, ecosystems, communities and the cultural values of Traditional Owners in the region. Funding of $57.8 million was secured to assist with the early implementation of the CGRSWS by the end of 2023–24.

**Flood response:** Following the October 2022 flood emergency, the Victorian Government committed $5 million over two years to fast-track the scoping and development of business cases for future flood mitigation activities. This follows several years of local and state government investment in planning and design phases. A further $5 million was allocated to flood mitigation infrastructure. This includes funding for northern catchment management authorities, local councils and the Victorian State Emergency Service to strategically assess all levees and update municipal flood emergency plans and FloodZoom.

**Integrated Water Management (IWM):** The three-year, $15 million IWM Grant program was completed in October 2022, awarding a total of 50 projects including 29 regional projects, nine metropolitan Melbourne projects and 12 Traditional Owner led projects. An additional $31.7 million was allocated to 18 recycled water and stormwater projects in the Central Gippsland region of Victoria. These projects will help to secure Victoria’s water supply and deliver a range of other community and environmental benefits including flood mitigation, improvement of waterway health, greening of our urban environments, naturalisation of our creeks and drought protection for important recreational spaces.

**Water, Country and Community Grant program – Stage 2:** Under the Water, Country and Community program, $18 million was provided to Traditional Owner water-related priorities, including self-determined water projects and funding for 24 Aboriginal Water Officer positions to 2024. The Program was expanded with a Stage 2 grant round, supporting Traditional Owners not previously funded with grants of up to $200,000 to lead projects, research or employ an Aboriginal Water officer (or equivalent) between June 2022 and June 2024.

**Integrated catchment management and stewardship:** Four new grants were provided in the 2023 round of *Our Catchments, Our Communities Leadership Grants* across categories for Women, Aboriginal Leadership and Innovation. The recipients will use the grants for leadership development and capacity improvement in the sector.

**Risk and Resilience Grants program:** Twelve of Victoria’s highest priority flood projects secured $3.3 million funding in September 2022 through the Risk and Resilience Grants program to build Victorian communities’ resilience to flooding. Projects funded include flood studies, mitigation infrastructure and upgrading flood warning and preparedness arrangements.

## Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment

**Emergency management preparedness:** The multi-agency *Community Based Bushfire Management program (CBBM)*, which makes decisions related to bushfires in equal partnership with communities, grew to include 25 communities in 2022–23. Eighty per cent of the participating communities are classed as high functioning, reflecting the department’s strong partnerships with communities and thorough community knowledge, skills and strengths, which help to inform decision-making related to bushfire risk in the local area. The CBBM program won the Victorian Government category at the 2022 Resilient Australia Awards and the Resilient Australia National Award in December 2022.

**Supporting Traditional Owner-led cultural land and fire management practices:** A total of 20 Traditional Owner cultural burns were delivered in 2022–23. As part of the Cultural Fire Grants program, a competitive program intended to enhance core cultural fire funding, $6.3 million was awarded to 10 successful Traditional Owner groups. The program supports Aboriginal Victorians to care for Country and reinvigorate Traditional Owner-led cultural land and fire management practices.

**Flood recovery:** Following the October 2022 flood emergency, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) contributed more than 15,000 shifts to support the Victorian State Emergency Service and impacted Victorian communities. FFMVic led response activities including undertaking damage assessments and completing work to repair and reopen roads, including strategic fire access roads, repairing 143 visitor sites and reopening 80 parks, plus supported flood recovery grant programs for Traditional Owner groups and wildlife flood response.

**Response to bushfires and other emergencies:** During 2022–23, FFMVic responded to 838 fires across Victoria, impacting 4,299 hectares of land. Staff were deployed to assist Western Australia respond to and recover from tropical cyclones and to Canada to provide arduous firefighters and key incident management staff to support fire management operations. FFMVic responded to approximately 50 non-fire emergency events, including cetacean (whale and dolphin) events, potential dam failures, search and rescue assist and Blue Green Algae events.

**Supporting safe egress and access on the strategic fire access road network:** In 2022–23, 10 strategic large crossings/bridges were replaced with high standard, robust structures that have a high resilience to impacts from fire and flood. A further 2,155 kilometres of road upgrades and improvements were delivered across Victoria’s strategic fire access road network, including 345 kilometres of verge and roadside vegetation management to support safe egress and access for firefighters and other road users.

## Productive and sustainably used natural resources

**Food to Market program:** The Food to Market program successfully invested in peak bodies, agri-food businesses and supply chain partners to value-add to food grown and processed in Victoria. In 2022–23, the program supported job creation and delivered productivity improvements to help businesses capitalise on new opportunities and build resilience across the agrifood supply chain.

**Supporting responsible pet ownership and companion animal welfare:** On 1 October 2022, reforms introduced under the *Domestic Animals Amendment (Reuniting Pets and Other Matters) Act 2022* came into effect, enabling vets and registered animal shelters to directly reunite lost dogs and cats with their owners. Under the Responsible Pet Ownership education program, 1,418 schools and pre-schools were visited, reaching 55,083 children. Also during 2022–23, the Animal Care and Protection initiative launched, with funding for grants and activities to support delivery of the cat management, pet census and rehoming pet reforms projects.

**Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness:** Agriculture Victoria continued to provide leadership to the whole of Victorian Government EAD Preparedness Program to ensure an effective response can be mounted to an EAD outbreak, including foot-and-mouth disease and Lumpy Skin Disease. In 2022–23, an EAD Preparedness Taskforce was established to bring together departments and agencies to develop an EAD State Response Plan and undertake other activities to rapidly progress EAD Preparedness.

**Agriculture Sector Emission Reduction Pledge:** The four-year, $20 million Agriculture Sector Pledge program continues to deliver research activities and tools and services to help farmers to reduce emissions while maintaining productivity and profitability. Progress in 2022–23 included launching the On-Farm Emissions Action Plan Pilot, research activities and production of a spatial viewer prototype that integrates land use information, industry information and climate change projections.

**Innovation in agriculture:** Agriculture Victoria continued to deliver world class research and innovation programs with industry partners in 2022–23, with research activities including: accelerating cereal, oilseed and pulse crop improvements; improving biosecurity preparedness for the grains industry; promoting a productive, sustainable and climate change ready dairy industry; and methane mitigation in dairy herds.

**Securing the supply of extractive resources:** Work continued under the Extractives Resources Strategy to improve the long-term planning and protection of extractive resources. This ensures that critical materials are available to support Victoria’s Big Build and other industries. Achievements in 2022–23 included developing Strategic Extractive Resource Areas to ensure that quarry materials can be sourced close to where they will be used, to keep transportation and construction costs down. Four Quarry Transformation Grants projects were awarded to help stimulate smart thinking about repurposing former quarry sites in ways that are innovative.

**Improving earth resources regulation:** The Risk-based Licensing Lifecycle project was completed in December 2022 to optimise the regulatory licensing model, based on a full lifecycle approach from initial licence grant through to commercial discovery. This will result in faster processing of licence applications, address licensing backlog issues and reduce administrative burden.

**Mine rehabilitation:** Critical mine rehabilitation policy and works progressed in 2022–23 to keep local communities safe, protect the environment and reduce potential costs. Mine remediation works were progressed at former mines located in Benambra, Bendigo and the Alpine National Park. Public consultation began on the proposed Trailing Liabilities Scheme, which will better enable rehabilitation works when a current title holder fails or is unable to do so. The department also began work on drafting ministerial guidelines to support the industry’s implementation of the new Declared Mine Regulations. The new guidelines and regulations will result in better management of declared mine risks and a more accurate assessment of potential long-term liability.

**Forestry Transition:** Support programs underway to assist Victoria’s native timber industry transition are being fast-tracked, scaled up and enhanced to align with the cessation of commercial harvesting by 1 January 2024. Substantial progress was made in 2022–23 in implementing the Forestry Transition program through increased engagement with businesses, communities and other stakeholders connected to the native forest timber industry.

**Gippsland Plantations Investment program:** The $120 million Gippsland Plantations Investment program is part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to grow more plantations and is the single largest investment in plantation establishment in the state’s history. Following a competitive market process in September 2022, a grant to plant an extra 16 million trees in a new estate under the program was awarded.

# About DEECA

DEECA brings together Victoria’s energy, environment, water, agriculture, forestry, resources, climate action, and emergency management functions into a single department to maximise connections between the environment, community, industry and economy.

Our challenge is to improve Victoria’s liveability with a population that is expected to almost double by 2050, while responsibly tackling climate change, protecting our natural environment and ensuring sustainable economic development in the management of our natural resources.

It is our enduring commitment to the Victorian people and environment that motivates our daily actions.

DEECA employs approximately 6,000 staff in 93 locations across the state. Our vision for diversity and inclusion is a workplace culture that embraces individual differences in all forms and fosters innovation. Our positive organisational culture drives high performance through strong leadership, diversity, collaboration and innovation, enabling us to learn from each other, grow our understanding and find new ways of delivering results.

## Strategic Framework

**Our vision:**

A thriving, productive and sustainable Victorian community, environment and industry.

**Our values:**

Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human Rights.

**Our organisational pillars:**

* High performance and delivery for government
* Trusted leadership and inclusive culture
* Strong engagement, partnerships and service excellence
* Aboriginal self-determination

Empowered people with a One-DEECA mindset.

**Outcomes:**

In 2022–23, DEECA’s outcomes and priorities that align to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework include:

* Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community
* Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment
* Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services
* Productive and effective land management
* Safe, sustainable and productive water resources
* Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment

Promote productive and sustainably used natural resources.

## Changes to the Department during 2022–23

This is the first Annual Report for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). DEECA commenced operations on 1 January 2023, after Machinery of Government changes were implemented by the Victorian Government.

Staff and functions from the former Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) were transferred to DEECA to support the ministerial portfolios of: Climate Action; Energy and Resources; the State Electricity Commission; Environment; Water; and Agriculture.

Staff from the former DELWP were also transferred to the new Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) as part of its role of supporting the ministerial portfolio of Planning and to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to support the establishment of a new precincts and land coordination function.

The impact of these changes does not always allow comparable trend data to be presented. Readers are alerted to comparability issues in the notes and analysis in each section and this should be considered when reading the information provided.

## Direct costs attributable to machinery of government changes

In December 2022, the Government issued an administrative order restructuring some of its activities via Machinery of Government (MoG) changes, taking effect from 1 January 2023. As result of the MoG changes, the department has incurred the following additional direct costs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | Costs incurred (2022–23) | Anticipated future costs (1 July 2023 onwards) |
| Direct costs | – | – |
| Consultants and contractors | 211 200 | 1 450 000 |
| Relocation | – | – |
| Telephony | – | – |
| IT and records management | 147 000 | 2 900 000 |
| Rebranding | – | – |
| Redundancies | – | – |
| New staff | – | – |
| Other | – | – |
| **Total** | **358 200** | **4 350 000** |

Direct costs incurred in 2022–23 that were attributable to the December 2022 MoG change mainly relate to the engagement of additional contract resources to deliver the required system and process changes, as well as the delivery of IT and records management components.

Anticipated future costs attributable to the MoG change mainly relate to the continued engagement of dedicated contract resources and partners to deliver the required changes.

Other costs related to MoG changes are incorporated into the department's overall expenditure and cannot be accurately extracted/separated from operational activities.

At the time of this report, no relocation costs have been incurred and future costs cannot be accurately anticipated, as the future location of staff affected by MoG is not yet known.

There were no direct costs attributable to the MoG change that have been incurred by the entities that are consolidated into the Department’s annual report pursuant to section 53(1)(b) of the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

## Our community charter

Our community charter describes what you can expect from us. We recognise that communities are made up of diverse sectors, organisations, rights holders, interest groups, influences, families and individuals.

We will work collaboratively with you to deliver services and create opportunities that support thriving, productive, and sustainable communities, environments and industries.

**In all aspects of our work, we will:**



## Sustainable Development Goals

DEECA’s vision is *Supporting thriving, productive, and sustainable communities, environments and industries*. Our actions may be local, but they contribute to a broader, global shift and more sustainable development that supports the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In a purpose-driven organisation such as DEECA, the ability to harness passion and actions is essential. The SDG framework is credible, transparent, internationally accepted and offers a unifying purpose for our work. Under the framework, we can see how our varied activities fit together to contribute to Victoria’s sustainable future.

DEECA recognises the many positive efforts already being undertaken across the organisation and our portfolio agencies towards sustainable development. DEECA’s support for the SDGs has been demonstrated in individual policies and programs (for example, *Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037 and Water for Victoria).*

The framework also connects us to the international sustainability agenda. It allows us to see how our work contributes to a more sustainable world and guides where we should focus our future efforts to contribute to more sustainable development.



**Sustainable Development Goals**

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

### A holistic and cohesive approach

DEECA is committed to taking a more holistic approach to promoting the value of SDGs. We will contribute to the achievement of SDGs in Victoria by:

* embedding the SDGs across relevant policies, programs, and service delivery work
* identifying targets, and monitoring and reporting on our progress

collaborating with partners who are also committed to the SDGs.

Our aim is that by clearly communicating our support for the SDGs:

* they increasingly inform DEECA’s general business
* our stakeholders, partners and the broader community are encouraged to contribute further to sustainable development
* our employees take pride in the work we are doing to contribute to the SDGs

we are better positioned to measure, monitor and enhance our critical contribution to Victoria’s sustainable development.

### DEECA’s immediate actions

DEECA is already involved in promoting and delivering sustainable development in Victoria. We acknowledge however, that the SDGs are ambitious and that ‘business as usual’ is not enough. In this Annual Report, we have continued our journey to further our contribution to the goals.

DEECA’s major programs of work in 2022–23 closely align with eight of the SDGs:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **6 Clean Water and Sanitation** | **7 Affordable and Clean Energy** | **9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** |
| **11 Sustainable Cities and Communities** | **12 Responsible Consumption and Production** | **13 Climate Action** |
| **14 Life Below Water** | **15 Life on Land** |  |

This Annual Report articulates how DEECA performs in relation to relevant SDGs. In many areas, readers will notice the inclusion of appropriate SDG tiles where our performance aligns with SDG objectives. The associated analysis includes key performance indicators providing quantitative evidence of progress.

DEECA will continue to identify opportunities to embed the SDGs in its work and will seek to expand the presentation of data in future annual reports to further demonstrate our contribution to the goals.

## Aboriginal self-determination

Aboriginal self-determination is one of our five key organisational pillars. DEECA is committed to partnering with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to advance self-determination. We recognise the relationship of Traditional Owners to Country and their contribution to the management of both built and natural environments, including natural resources such as land and water. We are committed to transforming systems and service delivery so that Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians control decision-making over the matters that affect their lives.

DEECA’s *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025* formalises our commitment to support self-determination and outlines how the department will embed self-determination in its work from 2020 to 2025.

Key initiatives and actions delivered in 2022–23 that are informed or underpinned by the directions in *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu*, include:

* extension of funded Department Liaison Officers for a further four years to support resourcing for Traditional Owners Corporations to support, monitor and evaluate reform progress
* delivery of 66 Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training workshops to 730 DEECA staff (comprising 117 executives), including delivering on commitments to provide staff in all regions with access to cultural awareness training, cultural starter kits for new starters and providing development opportunities for all DEECA staff to enhance cultural capability and cultural safety in the workplace
* delivery of DEECA’s Learning and Development package for Traditional Owner Groups
* development, delivery, and engagement of Aboriginal staff in the Aboriginal Staff Network, Aboriginal Talent Pool and Aboriginal work shadowing program, supporting recruitment and development opportunities aligned to DEECA’s Aboriginal Employment Strategy
* identification of legislative and non-legislative reforms to elevate Aboriginal Self-Determination, including renewal of Victoria’s public land legislation, *Wildlife Act 1975 and Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
* commencement of Traditional Owner-led budget bid processes, lodging budget bids grounded in self-determination as part of the 2022–23 and 2023–24 budget processes
* progression of DEECA’s streamlined funding reforms model, with commencement of a pilot project with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, exploring options for the reform of DEECA’s funding agreements process
* development of an Indigenous Data Sovereignty Pathway, positioned and informed by the rights of Victoria’s First Nations people to control the collection, access, management, and use of Aboriginal data
* launch of DEECA’s Social Procurement Strategy 2022–2025, promoting procurement initiatives to support increased utilisation of Aboriginal suppliers, resulting in an increase from 1.07 per cent 2021–22 to 1.26 per cent in 2022–23
* positioned the department to proactively contribute to and support the Yoorrook Justice Commission by establishing guidance, systems and processes to respond to Yoorrook Notices to Produce, including the delivery of policy reform workshops supporting the department’s engagement
* strengthened Traditional Owner’s decision making in sustainable water management, waste management and resource recovery by incorporating shared decision making into policies, programs and systems through the launch of *Water is Life* in September 2022; and increased formal partnership agreements between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies from 66 in 2019 to 236 in 2022
* delivery of funding commitments to support work across Water Country and Community and renewable energy projects
* facilitation of Self-Determination in the negotiation and implementation of native title determinations and *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*
* continued to progress delivery of the Cultural Fire objectives described in regional Self-Determination and Caring for Country Plans, including increasing cultural burns on public land from 10 in 2020 to 15 in 2021 and 13 in 2022
* delivery of an operational review of the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forums, including funding an independent secretariat and additional policy support for the Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus, enabling an enhanced Traditional Owner-led method to hold DEECA accountable

protection and promotion of Aboriginal cultural heritage through many on Country projects throughout the state, including establishment of the ongoing Protection Declaration for Ghow Swamp, which came into effect on 6 October 2022. The Declaration specifies the measures to be taken to protect Ghow Swamp Aboriginal Place, which has been an immensely significant place for Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years and is also a location where a large number of Aboriginal people were laid to rest.

## Our Ministers

**Hon Lily D’Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy and Resources

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for the State Electricity Commission

Minister D’Ambrosio is also Coordinating Minister for the department. Minister D’Ambrosio has been Member of the Legislative Assembly for Mill Park since 2002.

**Hon Harriet Shing MP**

Minister for Water

Minister Shing is also Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Equality. Minister Shing has been Member of the Legislative Council for Eastern Victoria since 2014.

**Hon Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Environment

Minister Stitt is also Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep. Minister Stitt has been Member of the Legislative Council for Western Metropolitan Region since 2018.

**Hon Gayle Tierney MP**

**Minster for Agriculture**

Minister Tierney is also Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education. Minister Tierney has been Member of the Legislative Council for Western Victoria since 2006.

**Ms Michaela Settle**

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture

Ms Settle has been a Member of the Legislative Assembly since 2018. Ms Settle was elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Eureka in 2022.

## Our executive

DEECA is led by the Secretary John Bradley who reports to our ministers on page 15. As at 30 June 2023, the Secretary was supported by seven Deputy Secretaries, the Chief Executive Officer of Solar Victoria, the Head of Recycling Victoria and the Interim CEO of the State Electricity Commission Implementation Office.

**John Bradley PSM**

Secretary

John Bradley is the Secretary of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. John was appointed to the role within the former DELWP in September 2017.

John is the President of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) Victoria and serves on the Victorian Secretaries Board. He was appointed the administrator of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (responsible for legacy functions of the former entity) in December 2022 and Chair of the State Electricity Commission Expert Advisory Panel.

Prior to becoming Secretary, John was CEO of Energy Networks Australia and previously served as Director General of the Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet and Director General of the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management. He was previously the CEO of Queensland Water Commission during the Millennium Drought and an Executive Director of the Western Australian Office of Energy.

John holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Queensland and a Master of Business Administration from the Queensland University of Technology.

**Dr Graeme Emonson PSM**

**Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services**

Graeme Emonson is the Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services. Graeme was appointed to the role in July 2020. Prior to this, Graeme held the role of Executive Director, Local Government Victoria within the former DELWP from February 2016 to June 2020. Prior to joining the former DELWP, Graeme held several roles at Chief Executive Officer level in the Victorian local government sector.

Graeme has a strong interest in leadership, organisational effectiveness, and governance. He has a PhD in leadership, a Master of Business (Public Sector Management) and a Bachelor of Business.

He is a Victorian Fellow and Board Member of the IPAA Victoria, member of the International City and County Managers’ Association, and a Fellow of Local Government Professionals (LGPro). In June 2020, Graeme was awarded the Public Service Medal for distinguished public service to the Victorian local government sector.

**Christine Ferguson PSM**

**Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions**

Christine Ferguson is the Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions. She was appointed to the role in July 2020.

Prior to this, Christine held many key positions within the former DELWP. She was previously Executive Lead for Recycling Sector Reform during a crucial period in the industry’s history, Regional Director of the Grampians Region for three years, and Regional Director for Hume with the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and DELWP for two years.

Before joining the department, Christine held leadership roles at the former Victorian Department of Human Services. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a professional member of the IPAA Victoria.

In 2020, Christine was recognised with a Public Service Medal for her outstanding public service to policy and program delivery in Victoria.

**Elizabeth Molyneux**

**Deputy Secretary, Energy**

Elizabeth Molyneux commenced as Deputy Secretary, Energy, in October 2022. Prior to this, Elizabeth held senior roles at AGL Energy, including General Manager Policy and Markets, and General Manager Energy Markets Regulation, and was also a Director at Ovo Energy Australia.

With 25 years of experience in energy markets and policy reform, Elizabeth has expertise in energy wholesale and retail markets, network regulation, new energy technologies and consumer protection frameworks.

Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Science and postgraduate qualifications in Economics and Applied Finance and Investment.

**Helen Vaughan PSM**

**Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments**

Helen Vaughan is the Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments. Helen was appointed to the role in January 2018. She previously worked in executive roles as Regional Director, most recently for the former DELWP in south-western Victoria, and for the former DEPI and Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Helen has extensive experience in both the New South Wales and Victorian public service in policy, research, and policy implementation roles, focused mainly on natural resource and emergency management.

Helen holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) from the Australian National University and in June 2022 received a Public Service Medal for outstanding public service in policy and program delivery, particularly in the area of natural resource management.

**Carolyn Jackson**

**Deputy Secretary, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples**

Carolyn Jackson is the Deputy Secretary, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples. Carolyn was appointed to the role in August 2021, leading the department’s climate action and reforms to the waste and recycling sector, public land legislation and environmental and biodiversity protections. Carolyn also leads DEECA’s First Peoples self-determination reform agenda and the support that DEECA is providing the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

Previously Carolyn was the Executive Director, Energy Demand, Programs and Safety within the former DELWP, and was formerly the Executive Director, Finance and Planning (Chief Finance Officer) within the Corporate Services group of the former DELWP.

Carolyn holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) and a Bachelor of Laws, as well as a Master of Professional Accounting.

**Paul Smith**

**Deputy Secretary, Forestry and Resources**

Paul Smith is the Deputy Secretary, Forestry and Resources. Paul was appointed to this role in July 2020 in the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR). Previously, Paul was Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Country Fire Authority.

Paul has extensive experience across natural resource management and environmental policy and held the role of Deputy Secretary, Energy, Environment and Climate Change in the former DELWP from 2013 to 2018.

Paul has a PhD in Sociology and a Bachelor of Social Science with Distinction.

**Matt Lowe**

**Deputy Secretary and Chief Executive, Agriculture Victoria**

Matt Lowe is the Deputy Secretary and Chief Executive, Agriculture Victoria. Matt was appointed to the role within the former DJPR in June 2020. During that time, Agriculture Victoria responded to Australia’s largest ever outbreak of avian influenza and significantly scaled up its preparedness to emergency animal disease.

Prior to Agriculture Victoria, Matt worked in a number of executive roles across economic and social policy domains, primarily at the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) in Victoria.

Matt holds a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) and Science from the University of Melbourne.

**Stan Krpan PSM FAICD**

**Chief Executive Officer, Solar Victoria**

Stan Krpan was appointed as the CEO of Solar Victoria in July 2019. Prior to this Stan was the CEO of Sustainability Victoria for eight years.

Stan has held positions as the Co-Chair of Building Victoria’s Recovery Taskforce in 2020 and inaugural CEO of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce in 2017. His career as an executive in the public sector has involved significant policy and regulatory reform across a diverse range of sectors including renewable energy, workplace health, safety and environment, sustainability, and climate change.

He is a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration, and an Alumnus of the Williamson Community Leadership Program.

Stan holds a Bachelor of Economics/Laws and a Master of Laws.

**Tony Circelli**

**Head, Recycling Victoria**

Tony Circelli was appointed as Head, Recycling Victoria in October 2022. Prior to this, Tony was CEO of the South Australian Environment Protection Agency (EPA) from 2014 to 2022. Tony has spent more than 30 years in the environment protection field, with extensive knowledge and experience in environment and sustainability issues, modern regulatory practice, and organisational strategy and reform. He has led numerous policy and operational reforms in areas including chemicals and public health, site contamination, waste and resource recovery, container deposit systems and waste to energy.

Tony has been a Director on numerous government Boards including Presiding Member of SA’s Radiation Protection Control Committee, the SA EPA Board, the national Heads of EPA forum, a past Director of CRC CARE and past Chair of the national Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators neTwork (AELERT).

Tony has an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Adelaide and a Master of Business Administration from Deakin University. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Fellow of the Governor’s Leadership Foundation.

**Chris Miller**

**Interim CEO, State Electricity Commission Implementation Office**

Chris Miller is the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the State Electricity Commission (SEC) Implementation Office. Chris was appointed to the role in December 2022 and appointed as the CEO of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (responsible for legacy functions of the former entity) in December 2022.

Prior to this, Chris was Deputy Secretary for Tourism and Events at the former DJPR.

Before joining DJPR, Chris was Executive Director, Infrastructure, Planning and Major Projects in DPC, where he advised the Premier on Victoria’s infrastructure, transport, planning, building, and precincts portfolios. Within DPC, Chris also held the roles of General Counsel and Acting Deputy Secretary, Economic Policy and State Productivity.

Prior to joining the Victorian public service in 2015, Chris worked in various roles at EnergyAustralia. During his time at EnergyAustralia, Chris worked across various parts of the energy value chain. This included advising on legal and regulatory matters, electricity and renewable derivatives, large scale generation development projects, particularly in the renewables sector, and the negotiation of long-term gas supply, transportation and storage contracts. Prior to joining EnergyAustralia, Chris practised as a commercial lawyer at King & Wood Mallesons.

Chris holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) and a Graduate Diploma in Energy and Resources Law.

## Our functions and services

As at 30 June 2023, the following DEECA business groups worked to support our ministers, the Secretary and portfolio partners in delivering the government’s priorities:

**Agriculture Victoria**

Supports an agriculture, food and fibre sector that is strong, innovative, and sustainable. It does this by working with community and industry to enhance productivity, improve animal welfare, connect the sector with international markets, create jobs, support growth, and maintain effective biosecurity. The group works with the agriculture sector to both reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate, and helps the sector recover from the impacts of drought, bushfires, and other natural disaster emergencies. It also ensures the sector is well‑placed to respond to other challenges such as pests, weeds, disease, and increased resource scarcity. The group works alongside industry and research institutions to modernise Victorian agriculture through innovation, investment and education.

**Energy**

Supports the significant transformation of the energy sector that is underway in Victoria. The Group’s primary responsibility is to support current and future energy projects, programs and reforms. These initiatives and policy interventions seek to achieve five key goals: increase the affordability, consumer control and access to energy services; improve the reliability, security, and stability of the energy system; reduce emissions from Victoria’s energy system; increase jobs and economic development in the energy sector; and enable Aboriginal self-determination in the energy transition. Together with Solar Victoria, the State Electricity Commission Implementation Office and Sustainability Victoria, the group is responsible for delivering Victoria’s energy policies and programs, boosting jobs in emerging energy industries and growth in the clean economy, while ensuring the reliability, sustainability and affordability of Victoria’s energy system.

**Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples**

Leads the Victorian Government’s climate action and provides advice to government on directions, principles, strategies, policies, and actions related to environmental protection, the management of public land and protecting the state’s biodiversity. The group leads the government’s transition to a circular economy and coordinates across government to reform the waste and recycling system while creating jobs and supporting economic growth. The group also holds responsibility to drive the Aboriginal self-determination reform agenda across DEECA by building the cultural capability of the organisation by providing self-determination policy advice and strategic direction to guide DEECA’s partnerships and engagement with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. Through the Truth, Treaty and Reform Branch, the group ensures that DEECA and its portfolio entities meet the requests of the Yoorrook Justice Commission, responds to Victoria’s Treaty process, including DEECA’s Treaty readiness work, and supports the resolution of native title related matters and agreement-making with Traditional Owners under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010.

**Forest, Fire and Regions**

Is DEECA’s main connection to Victorian communities, delivering integrated, accessible, and high-quality programs, projects, and services across all DEECA portfolio areas. The group employs around 2,570 people in every corner of Victoria, including a seasonal surge workforce of about 600 people, and provides a range of place-based services from more than 80 locations across the state. Forest, Fire and Regions works with Traditional Owners, communities, portfolio agencies, external stakeholders, and ministers to implement DEECA’s statewide objectives relating to coastal protection asset management and reform, forest management, conservation regulation, fire and emergency management and recovery. Forest, Fire and Regions employs people from the communities we serve in every part of the state, and fosters community and environmental sustainability and conservation to preserve the environment for generations to come.

**Forestry and Resources**

Develops policy, programs, and regulation to enable investment and generate jobs through the sustainable development of the state’s earth resources (including extractives, minerals, and petroleum) and forestry. The group is assisting the transition of the native timber sector and the rural communities where they are operating, while continuing to expand Victoria’s plantations including through farm forestry programs. The group supports Victoria’s transition to net zero through helping industries decarbonise and take advantage of Victoria’s shift to net zero by 2045, and also helps ensure primary industries and the communities that sustain them are well adapted to a changing climate.

**Recycling Victoria**

Is the state’s primary waste, recycling, and resource recovery services regulator. It has been established to: provide leadership, stewardship and oversight of waste, recycling and resource recovery services; and support the development of a circular economy. Transitioning to a stronger circular economy will encourage innovation, give rise to more sustainability focused jobs, provide quality goods and services to end users, and enable more consistent and high-quality recycled material for remanufacturing into new goods that are supplied to the marketplace. Recycling Victoria focuses on building a world class circular economy system that minimises the impact on non-renewable resources, maximises waste avoidance, and makes a strong contribution towards a more sustainable, environmentally friendly and climate resilient future for all Victorians.

**Solar Victoria**

Enables Victorians to access affordable, reliable, clean energy, now and into the future. Solar Victoria achieves this by boosting access to affordable energy, supporting industry growth and innovation, raising safety and quality standards and accelerating Victoria’s energy transition. Solar Victoria administers the Solar Homes program, which offers rebates to make solar panels, energy efficient hot water, batteries and solar for rental properties more affordable. By encouraging uptake in solar products and more energy efficient water heating, Solar Victoria helps Victorian households reduce their energy bills, boosts renewable energy supply and supports jobs in the renewable energy sector.

**State Electricity Commission Implementation Office**

Delivers the Victorian Government’s commitment to bring back the State Electricity Commission (SEC) to speed up Victoria’s transition to renewable energy. The new SEC will invest in renewables to power Victoria’s renewable energy future. It will invest an initial $1 billion towards delivering 4.5 gigawatts of power through renewable energy projects – the equivalent replacement capacity of coal-fired power station Loy Yang A, which is set to close in 2035. This will provide renewable, more reliable, and affordable power to Victorian households, businesses, and industries. The SEC will also invest in the training and skills to build a renewable energy workforce equipped to deliver our ambitious renewable energy target, helping to create 59,000 jobs.

**Water and Catchments**

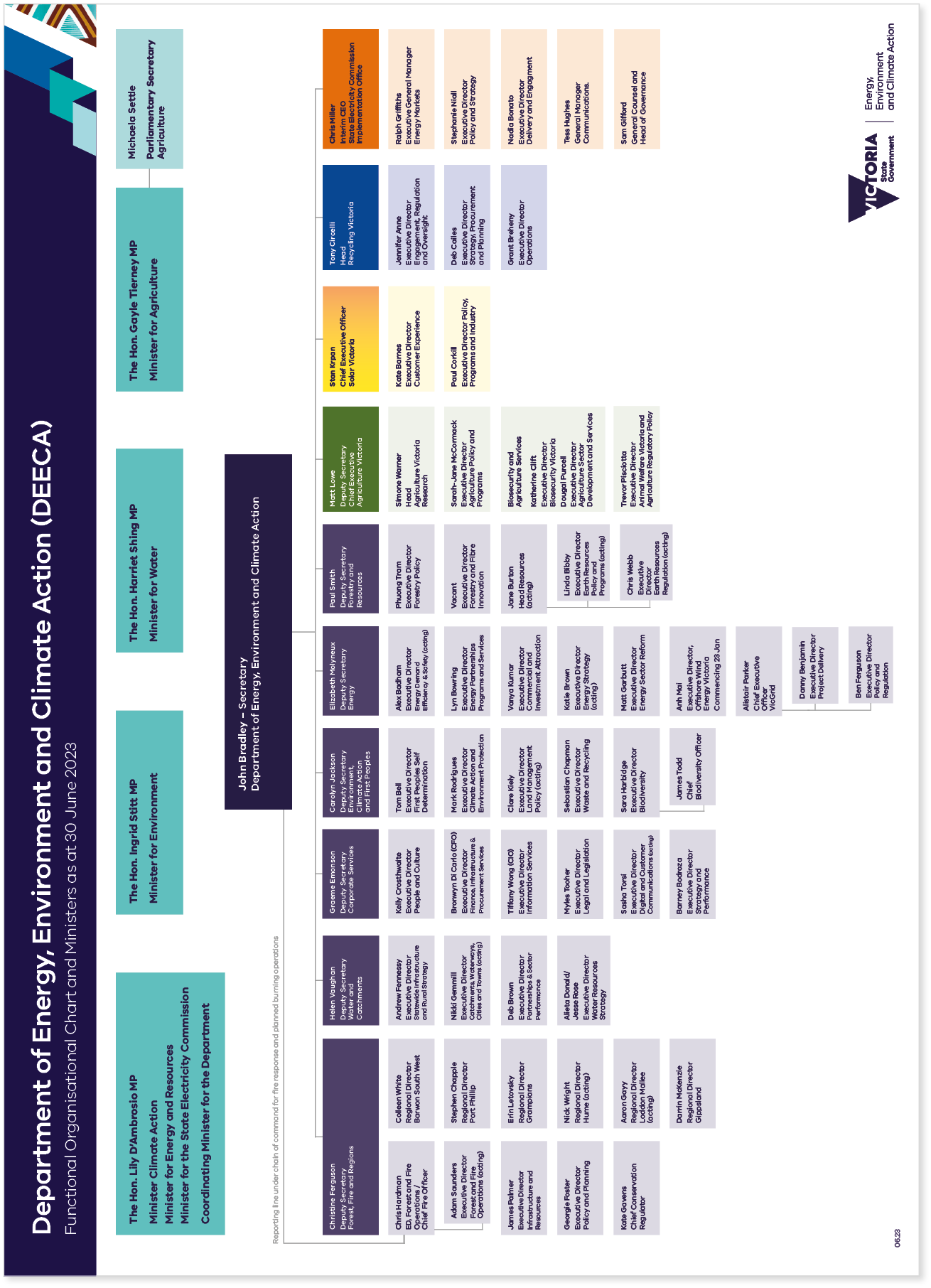
Works to ensure that Victoria has safe, sustainable, and productive water resources to meet urban, rural, environmental, and cultural needs, now and in the future. The group works in partnership with water corporations, catchment management authorities, government agencies, industry, community, and Traditional Owners to balance the economic, environmental, and social values of water. This work helps to deliver healthy waterways and aquifers, secure water supplies across Victoria and ensure sustainable irrigation and agriculture, along with greener and more liveable cities and towns. The group is responsible for the implementation of the government’s long-term water plan, *Water for Victoria*, which sets the strategic directions for the state’s water management for decades to come.

**Corporate Services**

Enables good governance, delivers efficient and effective services that meet customer needs and partners to deliver our Strategic Framework and associated outcomes. The group provides whole-of-department services, systems, processes, policies, strategies, standards, reporting and analysis across finance, people and culture, information services, digital and customer communications, legal and legislation, strategic planning, governance and performance. The group provides services and support to build a capable workforce and also has a broader whole-of-Victorian Government view with a focus on public sector reform and future capability.

**Organisational structure**

The organisational chart shows the department’s structure and senior executives as at 30 June 2023:



## Governance

Under the *Public Administration Act 2004*, the Secretary is accountable to the Minister for Water, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for the State Electricity Commission, Minister for Environment and the Minister for Agriculture. Several departmental committees are in place to focus on governance. The below committees are those the department is required to report on under Financial Reporting Directive 22 (FRD22).

### Executive Board

The DEECA Executive Board is responsible for leading the governance and stewardship of the department. It supports the Secretary’s decision-making by providing strategic advice and assurance regarding the department’s overall performance, overseeing delivery of key projects, programs and enterprise-wide systems, managing risk, establishing workforce policies and setting the tone for DEECA’s culture.

The DEECA Executive Board consists of the Secretary and our seven deputy secretaries. The Board supports the Secretary to fulfil his statutory responsibilities and has four areas of strategic oversight:

* **Policy and Strategy** – oversight of significant policy, program and strategy activities of the department.
* **Corporate Stewardship** – oversight of the department’s capabilities, processes and systems.
* **Operations and Performance** – oversight of the operational performance, trends and outlook to achieve effective and efficient delivery of the department’s services, policy, projects and programs.

**Transformation Taskforce** – oversight of the establishment of DEECA and leads enterprise-wide reform initiatives including new ways of working and culture and leadership.

The Board is supported by stewardship committees and assurance committees that draw on the expertise of our senior leaders across the organisation to develop, inform and guide strategy and decisions through a One-DEECA approach.

Following the Machinery of Government changes to establish DEECA, two reform taskforces that supported the former DELWP Executive Board – Customer, Stakeholder and Digital Experience Taskforce and End-to-End Operations Reform Taskforce – were wound up. (Further detail in Appendix 11).

### Stewardship Committees

The department’s twelve stewardship committees focus on department-wide strategic priorities and provide strategic advisory support to the Executive Board across a suite of corporate, service delivery and policy functions.

**Biodiversity Committee**

The Biodiversity Committee approves and oversees the delivery of the five-year business/implementation plan for Biodiversity 2037 with a focus on flagship programs and ensures a partnership with Traditional Owners in managing biodiversity on Country.

**Data and Technology Committee**

The Data and Technology Committee leads and oversees DEECA’s digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability, capacity, performance and strategic direction, including enabling it to leverage the advantages of data and technology, to manage its strategic ICT risks and achieve its outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

**Distributed Energy Resources Committee**

The Distributed Energy Resources Committee oversees the intersections in energy programs and initiatives and identifies opportunities and need for alignment and coordination. The Committee also identifies and manages key risks and issues, particularly in relation to regulation, compliance and enforcement to ensure those are addressed.

**Emergency Management Committee**

The Emergency Management Committee oversees the delivery of DEECA’s emergency management policy, strategic operational frameworks and systems, and ensures that the Secretary and the Executive Board have a clear line of sight of the department’s emergency management activities, including all Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies.

**Energy Transition Committee**

The Energy Transition Committee provides strategic policy direction, including positions for DEECA Board endorsement, which balances multiple government objectives and increases consistency of decision making and supports a flow of information between regions and ‘on the ground’ to the centre of DEECA.

**Finance and Procurement Committee**

The Finance and Procurement Committee leads the department’s compliance with the requirements of the Victorian Government Financial Management and Procurement Frameworks to enable DEECA to achieve its strategic outcomes in an effective, efficient and economical manner.

**People and Culture Committee**

The People and Culture Committee leads, oversees and optimises DEECA’s organisational culture and strategic people capability to achieve the department’s strategic outcomes in a way that promotes the responsible stewardship of DEECA’s five organisational pillars.

**Policy and Legislation Committee**

The Policy and Legislation Committee leads and oversees DEECA’s policy and legislative reform agenda on behalf of the Secretary and the Executive Board, and advises on its oversight, direction, monitoring and review for Cabinet and government.

**Recycling Victoria Committee**

The Recycling Victoria Committee oversees the establishment of Recycling Victoria as a self-sustaining operation, consistent with One-DEECA and ready to deliver its legislative functions.

**Self-determination Committee**

The Self-determination Committee provides a forum for all groups to provide a coordinated One-DEECA approach to Self-Determination enabling policy and process initiatives on behalf of the Secretary and the DEECA Executive Board.

**Committee Portfolio Governance and Integrity Committee**

The Portfolio Governance and Integrity Committee (PGIC) – The portfolio Governance and Integrity Committee led and oversaw the direction, management and review of former DELWP’s portfolio governance and integrity, across the department and its portfolio agencies.

**Solar Victoria Committee**

The Solar Victoria Committee (SVC) – The Solar Victoria Committee oversaw and provided advice on the strategic direction and delivery of the Solar Victoria Programs.

### Assurance committees

Three standalone committees support the DEECA Executive Board by providing advice on important responsibilities and functions.

**Executive Staff and Remuneration Committee**

The Executive Staff and Remuneration Committee ensures a fair and equitable approach to the employment and setting of remuneration for the Senior Executive Service (SES), Principal Scientist (PS) and Senior Technical Specialist (STS) classifications.

**Safety and Wellbeing Committee**

The Safety and Wellbeing Committee leads and oversees the strategic risk management of staff safety and wellbeing across DEECA in line with its legislative and statutory obligations, on behalf of the Secretary and the DEECA Executive Board.

**Risk and Audit Committee**

The Risk and Audit Committee is an independent body established in accordance with the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*. It provides assurance to the Secretary that the department’s risk and control environment is operating effectively and efficiently. The department’s Risk and Audit Committee Charter prescribes that meetings must be held every three months with separate meetings to consider the attestation under the Victorian Government Risk Management Framework and financial statements. In 2022–23, the Risk and Audit Committee met nine times.

In 2022–23, the Risk and Audit Committee members were:

* Peter Lewinsky (Chair): Independent member
* Linda McNeill: Independent member
* Mark Peters: Independent member
* Rachel Thomson: Independent member
* Dr Graeme Emonson: Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services
* Helen Vaughan: Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments

Carolyn Jackson: Deputy Secretary, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples.

# Departmental objectives, indicators and outputs

This section provides an overview of key activities that are important to the achievement of DEECA’s medium-term objectives (also known as Outcomes in the department’s Corporate Plan). It also reports on the delivery of the department’s outputs, including performance results for output measures published in the 2022–23 Budget Paper Number 3: Service Delivery (BP3) and performance of the department’s key initiatives.

This is the first Annual Report for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). DEECA commenced operations on 1 January 2023, after Machinery of Government changes were implemented by the Victorian Government.

The table below provides a summary of DEECA’s objectives, indicators and outputs for 2022–23:

| Departmental objectives | Indicators | Outputs |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community | * Reduction in Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2005 * Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for Victorian schools participating in the Resource Smart Schools program | Climate Change |
| Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment | * Participation in community-based environmental programs * Reduction in pollutants from priority hotspots * Environment Protection Authority prosecutions result in a finding of guilt or a clarification of the law * Reduction in waste generation per person * Increase in diversion of municipal and industrial waste from landfill | Environment and Biodiversity  Statutory Activities and Environment Protection  Waste and Recycling |
| Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services | * Relative share of Victoria’s energy sourced from renewables * Percentage of surveyed users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report that they plan to switch offers after using the website * Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program * Solar systems installed under the Solar Homes program | Energy  Solar |
| Productive and effective land management | * Level of park visitor satisfaction across the Parks Victoria estate * Bay and park assets rated in average to excellent condition * Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA’s progress in enabling self-determination | Management of Public Land and Forests  Parks Victoria |
| Safe and sustainable water resources | * Proportion of intended properties (or equivalent) in the Goulburn Murray, Macalister, Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigation districts connected to a modernised irrigation delivery system * Number of river reaches/wetlands with maintained or improved environmental condition | Effective Water Management and Supply |
| Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment | * Percentage of bushfires contained at first attack and/or under five hectares to suppress bushfires promptly, keep bushfires small and minimise loss * Area treated through planned burning and other treatments to maintain the statewide bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent * Percentage of agreed departmental emergency management obligations met on time and to standard * The economic impact of fire prevention and preparedness investment | Fire and Emergency Management |
| Promote productive and sustainably used natural resources | * Value of Victorian agriculture production * Value of Victorian food and fibre exports * Metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria * Level of production of minerals and extractives | Agriculture  Resources |

Note:

(i) Output costs reported under departmental objectives, indicators and outputs vary to the output costs reported in Note 4 of the financial statements. This is due to different methodologies being used in allocating department wide costs and is detailed from page 188.

## Changes to the department in 2022–23

As part of Machinery of Government changes as at 1 January 2023, the objectives, indicators and outputs from the former Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) were transferred to DEECA to support the ministerial portfolios of: Climate Action; Energy and Resources; the State Electricity Commission; Environment; Water and Agriculture. Other objectives, indicators and outputs from the former DELWP were also transferred to the new Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). Results for objective indicators and output performance measures on the following pages are complete for the 2022–23 financial year.

Changes to the department’s objectives, indicators and outputs are summarised as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Departmental Objective | Objective Indicator | Outputs | Reason for Change |
| Promote productive and sustainably used natural resources | * Value of Victorian agriculture production * Value of Victorian food and fibre exports * Metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria * Level of production of minerals and extractives | Agriculture  Resources | Objective and associated indicators/outputs transferred into DEECA from the former DJPR, due to the Machinery of Government administrative restructure that came into effect on 1 January 2023 |
| Productive and effective land management | * Increase in utilisation of Land Use Victoria’s mapping and spatial data products relative to 2016–17 | Land Use Victoria | Output and indicator transferred from the former DELWP to DTP, due to the Machinery of Government administrative restructure that came into effect on 1 January 2023 |
| A safe and quality built environment | * Improved liveability, sustainability and inclusiveness of public spaces and neighbourhoods * Effective protection of cultural and natural heritage | Planning and Heritage  Building | Objective and associated indicators/outputs transferred from the former DELWP to DTP, due to the Machinery of Government administrative restructure that came into effect on 1 January 2023 |

## Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community

* 13 Climate action
* 7 Affordable and clean energy
* 11 Sustainable cities and communities

12 Responsible consumption and production

### Progress towards achieving this objective

**Context**

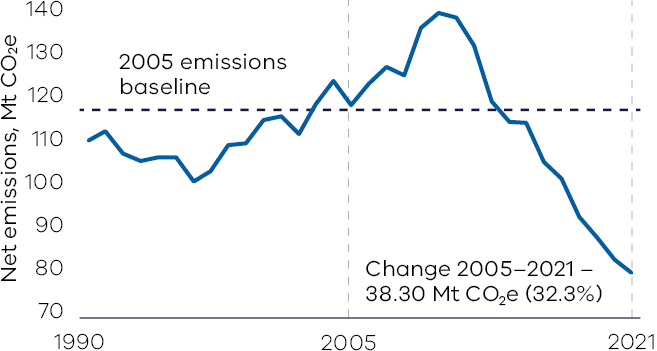
DEECA leads the Victorian Government’s climate action, in line with the *Climate Change Act 2017*.

The Act provides Victoria with a world-leading legislative foundation, which cements our net zero emissions goal in law. The Act establishes a comprehensive framework to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions while we plan for and adapt to our changing climate, drive our transition to a climate resilient community and economy and build the state’s resilience to climate change.

The Victorian Government has set ambitious but achievable interim emissions reduction targets for Victoria along the road to net zero emissions by 2045, including 15–20 per cent by 2020, 28–33 per cent by 2025, 45–50 per cent by 2030 and 75–80 per cent by 2035. The 2020 target was met in 2017 when Victoria’s emissions fell to 15.5 per cent below 2005 levels. The latest available Commonwealth data shows that in 2021, Victoria’s emissions had fallen further to 32.3 per cent below 2005 levels.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| Reducing Victoria’s Emissions | An Independent Expert Panel was appointed in January 2022 to provide advice on a 2035 interim emissions reduction target for Victoria. The Panel’s advice was provided to the Minister for Climate Action on 1 March 2023 and tabled in Parliament on 16 May 2023, as required under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. The advice recommended a 2035 target of 80 per cent below 2005 levels, a pathway to net zero emissions and emissions reduction opportunities to achieve the target. The Panel’s advice was informed by consultations with stakeholders including two stakeholder roundtables held in October 2022, with Victorian youth and regional stakeholders in the Latrobe Valley. In May 2023, the Victorian Government set a new 2035 target to reduce Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions by 75–80 per cent below 2005 levels and brought forward the date to achieve net zero emissions from 2050 to 2045. These world leading targets build on Victoria’s success to date – having already cut the state’s emissions by almost a third since 2005. Together with our target to halve Victoria’s emissions by 2030, these ambitious commitments will see Victoria playing its part in global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C by the end of the century to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.  The Snapshot Climate Tool was launched on 27 October 2022. This tool is a locally developed innovative source of spatial information about greenhouse gas emissions. The department supported a major update to improve the detail, accuracy, and usefulness of spatial emissions profiles available to local councils and communities to inform climate action. |
| Climate Change Adaptation | DEECA is preparing the next Climate Science Report, due in October 2024 under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. The 2024 Report will provide the public and decision-makers with the best practicably available climate science.  DEECA continued to monitor the implementation of the 127 actions in the seven statewide Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans for 2022–2026 which were released in February 2022.  In May 2023, the Victorian Government announced an investment of $166 million to build the climate resilience of the state, including $141.5 million to install air conditioners in more than 40 of Victoria’s public housing high-rise towers and $13.8 million for improving the resilience of marine and coastal environments by addressing critical erosion and flood risks; protecting marine and coastal assets and supporting adaptation and resilience of coastal communities. |
| Management of Climate Change in Victorian Government Operations | In August 2022, DEECA developed [Guidance on Directors’ Duties with respect to Climate Risk](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/directors-duties-respect-climate-risk) and published on the Victoria Public Sector Commission website. The guidance assists public entity directors understand their duties with respect to climate risk under the *Public Administration Act 2004* and the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities.  In partnership with the Department of Treasury and Finance, DEECA published the first [Victorian Government Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/Victorian%20Government%20Climate-related%20Risk%20Disclosure%20Statement%202022.pdf) in October 2022. The purpose of the Disclosure is to communicate understanding about the climate-related risks and opportunities that are relevant to Victoria, and the actions the Victorian Government is taking to manage the risk and capitalise on the opportunities. The Disclosure is aligned with international best practice, including the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures and the newly established International Sustainability Standards Board, which was established at COP26 to develop a comprehensive global baseline of sustainability disclosures for capital markets.  DEECA led the introduction of best-practice environmental and emissions reporting requirements for the Victorian Government public sector through a major update to Financial Reporting Direction 24: Reporting of Environmental Data by Government Entities. DEECA is leading the development of policies and actions to reduce government operational emissions under the Whole of Government emissions reduction pledge 2021–25, including the commitment for 100 per cent renewable electricity in government operations by 2025.  The Victorian Government is transitioning 400 zero emission vehicles (ZEV) into the Government fleet and as at June 2023, around half have already been delivered for use by Victorian Government departments and agencies, with all remaining vehicles on order. Almost 400 chargers have been installed at more than 40 locations throughout the state. DEECA is adding to the roll out of ZEVs through its commitment to ‘ZEVs first’ for its shared passenger vehicle fleet as current vehicles leases expire. As at 30 June 2023, DEECA itself has 38 ZEVs in its shared passenger vehicle fleet. |

**Indicator: Reduction in Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2005**



The Victorian Government is committed to reducing the state’s [Greenhouse Gas Emissions](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/greenhouse-gas-emissions) by:

* 15–20 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020
* 28–33 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025
* 45–50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030
* 75–80 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035

Net zero emissions by 2045.

A report on Victoria’s [Greenhouse Gas Emissions](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/greenhouse-gas-emissions) is published every year by the Victorian Government, based on the most recent data available. This draws on emissions data prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water in accordance with internationally agreed rules. There is a two-year lag between reporting periods and when the data is available for use. The 2020 target was met three years ahead of schedule (in 2017) when Victoria’s emissions fell to 15.5 per cent below 2005 levels. The latest available Commonwealth data shows that by 2021, Victoria’s emissions had fallen further to 32.3 per cent below 2005 levels.

Most of these reductions occurred in the electricity sector, with the other key contributor being increased absorption of emissions in the land sector. Data for 2020 and 2021 also reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced transport emissions as people travelled less.

**Indicator: Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program**

This new objective indicator replaced the 2021–22 indicator ‘Reduction in annual energy costs for Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program’. The new indicator better reflects progress towards the objective of net zero emission, climate ready economy and community.

ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) is delivered in partnership with Sustainability Victoria. Through the program, Victorian schools are recruited and assisted to work through a sustainability framework with the aim of achieving five-star sustainability status. Once a school has signed up to the program, activities undertaken, billing data, curriculum and other documentation is uploaded to an online platform as evidence the school is embedding sustainability into their operations, curriculum and community.

In 2022, Victorian schools avoided 7,962 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emitted through their participation in RSS due to benefits realised as schools embed sustainability in their curricula, implement school-wide behaviour change initiatives and other actions such as replacing less efficient appliances and the upgrade and/or installation of energy saving infrastructure such as motion-sensor lighting and rooftop solar PV.

Notes:

CO2e emissions abatement is calculated per calendar year to align with schools’ reporting period.

The 2022 result has been calculated using the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources formula for 2022–23, where 1 kilowatt hour (kWh) equals 0.96kg of CO2e emitted.

The CO2e ratio will be updated annually as the energy grid becomes greener.

In future years, historical CO2e figures may change. This is because participating schools can retrospectively adjust their energy billing data in the RSS Online system after annual reporting is complete.

**Climate Change**

This output leads the development and implementation of strategic, whole of government climate change policy and programs that contribute to Victoria’s 2045 target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions and building the State’s resilience to climate change.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program | number | 528 | 700 | (25) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to ongoing COVID-19 impacts on the education sector, resulting in lower levels of engagement with extracurricular activities such as the ResourceSmart Schools program.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Annual energy saved by Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program | kWh | 8 293 727 | 8 500 000 | (2) | 2 |

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Stakeholder satisfaction with climate change engagement events | per cent | 97 | 75 | 29 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to designing Climate Risk Community of Practice sessions based on participant feedback.

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Delivery of agreed milestones for climate change policy, advice and research within agreed timeframes | per cent | 100 | 80 | 25 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to all agreed milestones for climate change policy branch deliverables being met, reflecting effort invested in the timely delivery of policy, advice and research.

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Completion of Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report | date | Oct 2022 | Oct 2022 | 0 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 26.9 | 27.6 | (3) | 1 |

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment

* 15 Life on land
* 11 Sustainable cities and communities
* 12 Responsible consumption and production

13 Climate action

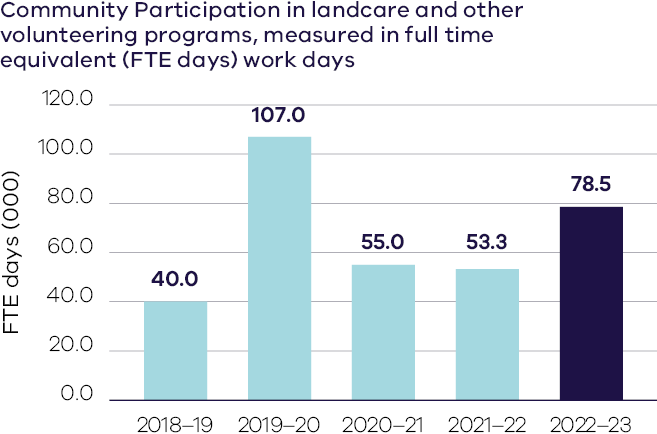
### Progress towards achieving this objective

**Context**

DEECA works with portfolio partners and external stakeholders to develop effective, evidence-based policies, programs, regulatory responses, and compliance activities for improved outcomes across a range of areas. These include environment protection, waste and resource recovery, ecosystem resilience, native vegetation management, wildlife, threatened species and land management practices.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| Recycling Victoria | Recycling Victoria (RV) commenced operation as a new business unit within DEECA on 1 July 2022, to provide strategic leadership to the waste and resource recovery sector and deliver statewide stewardship and regulatory and market oversight.  The *Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Act 2022* received royal assent in September 2022. It established the Waste to Energy scheme, introduced the Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan and provided powers relating to circular economy market powers, and risk, consequence and contingency planning.  In October 2022, [Regional Circular Economy Plans](https://www.vic.gov.au/regional-circular-economy-plans) were finalised, identifying a series of priorities for each region, including local investment such as new or upgraded recycling infrastructure, behaviour change and education programs and growing local markets for recycled materials and products.  Round 1 of the Regional Recycling Fund provided grants of up to $500,000 per regionally significant resource recovery facility, to help upgrade infrastructure for recyclable materials including cardboard, plastic, paper, glass and mixed recyclables.  Problematic single-use plastic drinking straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, cotton bud sticks and expanded polystyrene food and drink containers were banned from sale and supply in Victoria from 1 February 2023. Removing these selected items from circulation will avoid single-use plastic litter from entering the environment.  With the appointment of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) scheme coordinator and three network operators in April 2023, the CDS is set to commence in Victoria on 1 November 2023. The CDS will maximise the recovery and recycling of beverage containers and create new economic opportunities and jobs across the state.  Household recycling reforms continue to be rolled out across the state, with a new four-stream system that includes separated glass and organics streams in addition to existing landfill and mixed recycling.  The first stage of the Waste to Energy Scheme enabling licensing of existing operators commenced on 1 June 2023. |
| Environment protection policy and legislative reform to reduce the harmful impact of pollution on human health and the environment | *The Environment Protection Act 2017* was amended in September 2022 via the *Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other matters) Act 2022* to ensure the new environment protection framework operates as intended.  Amendments were also made to the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 to more safely manage the storage and use of tyres on farms and specify matters in relation to wind turbine noise from wind energy facilities.  DEECA is leading the development of a new subordinate instrument to rehouse saved clauses from the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) and consulted publicly on the exposure draft in May 2023. The purpose of the new instrument is to address the risks of increased environmental harm in areas where there are no other adequate risk controls in place to address the risks that the obligations within the clauses address. This new instrument is expected to be finalised by December 2023.  The department also provided input to Commonwealth-led reforms for industrial chemicals, in particular per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).  DEECA developed a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework to generate insights into the operation of the reformed environment protection framework, and to enable application of these insights to framework stewardship.  EPA developed and released two new guidelines in October 2022 to support Victorian landowners to comply with new contaminated land duties which came into effect from 1 July 2021.  During June to August 2022, DEECA engaged with planners, consultants, developers, legal firms and other relevant stakeholders on how the new planning framework for contaminated land is working. A report summarising issues raised in workshops and submissions and responses from DEECA was published on the Engage Victoria website in March 2023. Work will continue in 2023–24 to improve guidance and address issues in the planning process. |
| Environment protection and air quality | Victoria’s *Air Quality Strategy* was released on 27 October 2022. The Strategy sets out a plan to 2030 for how air pollution will be reduced and how major pollution sources will be tackled, while supporting communities, the economy and the environment. The strategy outlines four strategic objectives:   1. targeting the main causes of air pollution in Victoria today 2. helping vulnerable Victorians and supporting the broader community 3. raising the bar on air quality information 4. ensuring a clean air future.   New initiatives under the Strategy in 2022–23 include:   * implementing Air Quality Improvement Precincts – the Victorian Government has committed $2.84 million to establish Air Quality Improvement Precincts in Melbourne’s Inner West and Outer West in partnership with EPA, businesses, local government and the community to identify and implement actions to reduce localised PM10 and PM2.5 air pollution. * undertaking wood heater policy reform – the department commenced an options analysis for wood heater policy reform to reduce the impact of wood smoke on people’s health. * commencing a wood heater education program – the department developed a wood heater education campaign to inform wood heater owners about the impact of wood heater smoke on people’s health and wellbeing, explain how to operate a wood heater to minimise the generation of smoke and inform those affected by wood smoke on steps they can take to address their concerns. |
| Redevelopment of the Port Phillip EcoCentre | The new Port Phillip EcoCentre building contract was successfully awarded in March 2023. Construction of the new, sustainable community building in St Kilda commenced in June 2023 and delivery is expected to be completed by early 2024. The new EcoCentre will meet new updated environmental standards and create a sustainable community space to support the City of Port Phillip’s educational programs and services. |
| Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027 | The delivery of reporting and governance for the Port Philip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027 (EMP) continued through 2022–23. New online reporting was delivered with digital report cards across the EMP’s priority areas, Stewardship, Water Quality and Habitat and Marine life. |
| Nature restoration for carbon storage – BushBank program | BushBank is the most ambitious habitat restoration program in Victoria’s history and one of the largest of its kind in Australia. The program supports revegetation across public and private land to improve habitat for biodiversity while increasing carbon sequestration. During 2022–23:   * successful applicants of the BushBank First Peoples grant were announced in August 2022 with $3.7 million being committed to projects that support self-determination of Victoria’s First Peoples in restoration and carbon markets. * an extended offer of up to $4.2 million under the First Peoples grant was also approved for eligible Registered Aboriginal Parties who did not receive funding during the initial first round. * Cassinia Environmental was approved as delivery partner to restore and revegetate 20,000 hectares of private land, to leverage the Victorian Government’s contribution of $31 million to achieve this ambitious goal. * 47 hectares were restored in 2022–23 in addition to 30.9 hectares reseeded in 2021–22 as part of the $2.75 million commitment to restore 400 hectares of public land across Victoria over five years from 2021–22 to 2026–27. |
| Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program | The three-year Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program concluded in June 2023. The program consisted of 261 activities that supported the recovery of biodiversity and wildlife impacted by the 2019–20 Victorian Bushfires and improved capability of the sector to respond to and recover from future events. Key achievements of the program include:   * employment opportunities for at least 22 Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians including training to build capability for environmental restoration. * improved knowledge about species and habitat response and recovery to fire, including interventions such as emergency extractions and translocations. * development of nature havens, including Wilsons Promontory and Neds Corner, through partnerships including Djaara and Bush Heritage as a legacy of the program. * delivery of an integrated threat management program resulting in 1,184,694 hectares of introduced-herbivore control, 368,405 hectares of predator control and 26,612 hectares of weed control to mitigate impacts of the bushfire on sensitive species and ecosystem recovery. * enhanced coordinated response of the wildlife welfare sector, including carers and vets, through development of guidelines for managing wildlife rehabilitation following fire and expanded training programs. * development of technical reports to better inform future bushfire biodiversity response and recovery actions, including social research into perceptions of community on pest animal management and a review of Victoria’s aerial shooting program initiated under the Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery Program.   An evaluation of the program is being completed to assess the effectiveness of investment and management actions undertaken to guide future biodiversity recovery actions. |
| Victorian Deer Control Strategy | Following the release of the Peri-urban Deer Control Plan in March 2022, the East and West Deer Control Plans were developed throughout 2022–23 and released on 12 June 2023. The Plans were developed following the establishment of the Gippsland, Hume and West Regional Deer Partnerships Groups, along with consultation with the statewide Deer Advisory Committee.  Critical deer control was also undertaken across Victoria under a $6.5 million program to support critical deer actions across the state. A further $1.82 million has been allocated to continue priority actions following the release of the East and West Regional Deer Control Plans. |
| Victorian Nature Fund | The Nature Fund was announced and grant applications opened on 26 August 2022 to encourage collaboration and partnerships between government, business, philanthropy, and the community to deliver high impact projects that contribute to improving Victoria’s biodiversity.  In 2022–23, the Nature Fund allocated $10 million to fund 22 organisations that were able to leverage significant co-funding through partnerships with a range of funders. An additional $23 million of co-funding was leveraged through these projects.  The projects are delivering actions to provide long term benefits for a range of threatened species (both flora and fauna), and across a range of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems including wetlands. These include:   * supporting the recovery of the critically endangered Fairy Tern * improving the condition of endangered grasslands in western Victoria * restoring habitat for the endangered central Victorian Ant-blue butterfly * supporting Right Way Management of Reserves on Dja Dja Wurrung Country * monitoring and predator control to support White-Footed Dunnart and Long-nosed Bandicoot led by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. |
| Protecting Biodiversity | The Protecting Biodiversity program continued to fund actions for biodiversity and threatened species across key landscapes in Victoria throughout 2022–23.  The program is funding 36 projects across the state to enhance and protect biodiversity in some of Victoria’s most iconic landscapes including the Grampians, Otways, Mallee Sunset Country, Barmah, East Gippsland and the Alps as well as landscapes impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires. Some of Victoria’s most recognisable yet threatened species such as the Malleefowl, Long-footed Potoroo and Spot-tailed Quoll call these places home and therefore DEECA is ensuring its actions are strategic, targeted and sustained.  Importantly, a number of projects are led or co-led by Traditional Owner groups. At Ned’s Corner in the state’s northwest, the First People of the Millewa Mallee are using this investment to heal Country in preparation for the largest hand back of land to Traditional Owners in Victoria’s history.  Examples of projects that progressed across the state in 2022–23 include:   * managing the impacts of goats and deer over-browsing of native flora and trampling of vegetation, soil and waterways in Gariwerd (Grampians National Park) and the Black Range State Park * reducing the impact of invasive species including rabbits, goats, pigs and weeds in Victoria’s north-western National Parks, to give native trees and plants the chance to naturally regrow and recover creating benefits for the wider ecosystem * controlling feral pigs in Eastern Victoria to reduce their impacts across a variety of alpine environments, especially in sensitive ecosystems and areas of high value biodiversity * managing foxes, feral pigs and weeds in the Otways National Park to protect native fauna from predation. |
| Wildlife care and protection | DEECA supported wildlife shelters and foster carers to rehabilitate and release injured and orphaned wildlife providing a total of $265,000 to more than 100 rehabilitators, including support for flood response. A further $890,000 was provided for targeted wildlife projects during 2022–23, including the Wildlife Victoria hotline.  The Faunal Emblems and Icon Species programs funded a range of projects totalling $2 million to support the long-term outlook for 12 of Victoria’s endangered species, including Helmeted Honeyeater, Leadbeater’s Possum, Orange-bellied Parrot, Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and Eltham Copper Butterfly. Projects included habitat protection through revegetation and fencing, predator control, mapping critical habitat and captive breeding programs.  DEECA, in partnership with Zoos Victoria, developed the [Victorian Wildlife Rehabilitation Guidelines](https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/victorian-wildlife-rehabilitation-guidelines/victorian-wildlife-rehabilitation-guidelines) to align with the latest scientific literature on wildlife welfare, raising the standards of care across the sector. The highly anticipated guidelines are a comprehensive resource to enhance the welfare of Victoria’s sick, injured and orphaned wildlife and were released in August 2023.  A Wildlife Emergency Support Network has been established to assist the department during wildlife emergency response events. This is an outcome of a Wildlife Welfare Roundtable in 2020. Following an expression of interest process in September 2022, the former DELWP appointed Zoos Victoria to coordinate the network until June 2024, subject to a planned review in July 2023. Updates about the network are being published at [Wildlife Emergency Support Network](https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/wildlife-emergencies/wildlife-fire-emergencies/wildlife-emergency-support-network)  Work began in 2022–23 to protect Victoria’s threatened Grey-headed Flying-fox colonies, including installing sprinkler infrastructure to assist the iconic Yarra Bend colony from heat stress events, strategic planning for future conservation work and engaging with the community as part of the ‘Wildlife care and protection’ initiative. This work has been supported by a number of volunteers, with more than 70 people attending a community day in February 2023 to celebrate achievements and works completed to date. |
| Wildlife care and protection (continued) | The Wildlife Veterinary Outreach Program aims to set standards for the consistent assessment and care of native wildlife to improve welfare outcomes and protect population health. Through a pilot program and initial engagement process that commenced in 2021–22, Zoos Victoria developed a list of priority clinics for each region in Victoria and has delivered training to more than 130 general practice vets and vet nurses. A total of 18 outreach resource documents have also been prepared to support the training which covers the basic assessment of common wildlife species presenting to veterinary clinics.  On 8 May 2023, DEECA released the *Victorian Koala Management Strategy*. A $3.3 million program is supporting actions under the strategy, including delivering on-ground koala management programs and undertaking vital research that will help to conserve Victoria’s koala populations into the future. The strategy was developed collaboratively with significant input from Traditional Owners, scientists, animal welfare organisations, wildlife carers, veterinarians, the blue gum plantation industry, Zoos Victoria, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria, as well as universities and government agencies from Victoria and interstate. |
| Biodiversity Community Programs – Environmental Volunteering and Landcare | A range of Biodiversity Community programs were delivered during 2022–23 with grant funding of almost $11.5 million for community groups. These supported the environmental volunteering and Landcare community in delivering on-ground action to protect, restore and enhance Victoria’s unique biodiversity, through the Victorians Volunteering for Nature – Environmental Volunteering Plan, Victorian Landcare Program, Community Action for Biodiversity Program and Port Phillip Bay Fund. |
| Wildlife Victoria | In 2022–23, $502,000 was provided to Wildlife Victoria for maintaining the efficiency and quality of the Wildlife Victoria hotline, providing community reporting and coordination for wildlife in distress. In the 2022 calendar year, Wildlife Victoria reported that their Response Service received more than 110,000 requests for assistance and supported approximately 80,000 sick, injured or orphaned animals. Funding also supported the development and implementation of strategies to train and support Wildlife Victoria’s volunteer base of more than 1,300 registered volunteers throughout Victoria. Community engagement and outreach activities were also completed, with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse communities. |
| Victorians Value Nature – behaviour change and engagement | Victorians Value Nature (VVN) provides broader behaviour change and social research support for the department and will support development of a shared measurement approach for Victorian Government partners across the people-nature sector.  DEECA delivered the Victoria Nature Festival from 12 to 25 September 2022. This flagship event, delivered through key Victorian Government partnerships, provided 184 events, experiences and digital content across the state. The majority of engagement occurred through Facebook. In addition, more than 33,000 people attended in-person and live online events, with over 11,000 online content interactions with additional on-demand digital content. Attendees who completed the evaluation survey reported high levels of satisfaction. DEECA produced a festival impact report for delivery partners in February 2023.  DEECA is developing a Victorian Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy, which is anticipated to be released in 2023–24. This is a recognised priority for Victoria’s environmental volunteering sector and will provide a shared vision and direction for the sector to support the community to co-contribute with in-principle delivery partner support for actions. Catchment Management Authorities, Agriculture Victoria, the Victorian Environmental Friends Network, Parks Victoria and seven Registered Aboriginal Parties were consulted during the strategy’s development. This resulted in additional sections on Traditional Owners as a strategic focus area alongside a new section on Data Sovereignty and the importance of engaging young people in citizen science. A [supporting citizen science technical report](https://www.ari.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0029/624908/ARI-Technical-Report-355-Citizen-Science-Scoping.pdf) was also released in December 2022.  DEECA published a [VVN survey summary](https://www.ari.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/631794/Victorians-Valuing-Nature-statewide-survey-results-high-level-summary-2019-2021.pdf) in April 2023 which highlights key behavioural insights across the Victorian community from 2019 to 2021, with a particular focus on the [Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/520594/Metro-Open-Space-Strategy-FA4-book-WEB.pdf), biodiversity regulatory reform and Zoos Victoria. The insights and data from the survey will help make biodiversity programs across Victoria more impactful and enables the department to better measure progress and build a foundational understanding of how Victorians connect with and act for nature. |
| Trust for Nature | The Victorian Government works in partnership with Trust for Nature to preserve biodiversity values on private land. In 2022–23, funding assisted Trust for Nature in:   * registering 37 covenants, permanently protecting 2,408 hectares of private land * progressing the transfer of Victoria’s largest private conservation reserve, Neds Corner, to its Traditional Owners, the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation * restoring and maintaining habitats on private land that support important biodiversity, as well as improving management of land under existing covenants through partnerships and incentives and offering workshops and training to landholders * improving Plains-wanderer habitat via several co-investment partnerships with the Commonwealth Government, Catchment Management Authorities, Enel Green Power and private philanthropists. Trust for Nature has also partnered with clothing retailer Country Road to expand on this important work * delivering Iconic Estates phase 2, which is on track to secure 1,350 hectares of new private land under protection by 2025 * strengthened relationships with Traditional Owner partners including with the Gunditjmara, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai peoples. |
| Office of the Conservation Regulator regulatory functions in relation to risks impacting Victoria’s biodiversity | During 2022–23, the Office of the Conservation Regulator led activities to address risks that impact on Victoria’s biodiversity.  Significant investigations into the illegal take of timber for firewood on public land and the illegal clearing of vegetation on public land led to substantial prosecutions and financial penalties, including an earthmoving contractor being convicted and ordered to pay nearly $22,000 for the illegal removal of mature Eucalyptus trees in the Annya State Forest, near Heywood.  To ensure that people and coastal wildlife could co-exist safely over summer, a summer patrolling and education campaign was successful in raising awareness of coastal wildlife and the importance of safe interactions, particularly for Hooded Plovers and marine mammals. The Conservation Regulator led ‘Operation Leonina’, a multi-agency operation to protect an elephant seal which rested at Blairgowrie beach for several weeks and gained wide-spread public attention. |
| Office of the Conservation Regulator regulatory functions in relation to risks impacting Victoria’s biodiversity (continued) | In 2022–23, the illegal possession of wildlife continued to be a regulatory priority, which was reflected in a high number of investigations targeting the illegal trade, possession and destruction of wildlife. Alongside these regulatory actions, the Conservation Regulator continued to improve the overall framework for wildlife licensing and permissions during 2022–23 – including the digitisation of applications to hold wildlife licences and authorities which has streamlined the process for thousands of applicants across the state.  The Conservation Regulator also partnered with Crime Stoppers and Agriculture Victoria in 2022 for the ‘Don’t Buy In’ campaign which encouraged people to buy native pets responsibly and avoid supporting the illegal native and exotic animal trades.  The Conservation Regulator used a multi-pronged approach to prevent harm and protect biodiversity from timber harvesting, including surveying coupes prior to harvesting through the Forest Protection Survey Program. In 2022–23 more than 300 surveys were completed with more than 7,000 detections reported.  A total of 56 proactive compliance inspections were also undertaken in 2022–23, exceeding the annual target of 30. Authorised officers received and assessed 78 threatened species reports and 24 allegations of non-compliance. Following changes to the *Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004*, in 2022–23, the Conservation Regulator has also issued nine notices to produce documents to VicForests or its contractors. Following civil litigation and evolving expert scientific advice, the Conservation Regulator continued to support VicForests to provide guidance around compliance with the precautionary principle. |

**Indicator: Participation in community-based environmental programs**



FTE days (000)

* 2018–19: 40
* 2019–20: 107
* 2020–21: 55
* 2021–22: 53.3

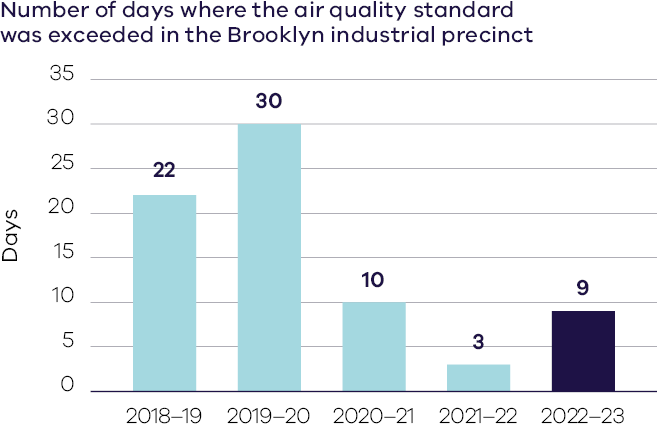
2022–23: 78.5

Under the [Victorians Volunteering for Nature – Environmental Volunteering Plan (2018)](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0035/394883/VVfN-Environmental-Volunteering-Plan_WEB.pdf), an annual stocktake of active environmental volunteer numbers, groups and categories occurs across the state.

The [Volunteering Naturally 2022](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/631996/Volunteering-Naturally-2022-Report.pdf) report identified more than 173,000 active volunteers, 2,000 groups and reported almost 1.5 million volunteer hours in 2021–22. This was estimated to make a $63 million economic contribution to Victoria.

In 2022–23, community participation through the Landcare and other environmental volunteering equated to 78,450 full time equivalent days.

**Indicator: Reduction in pollutants from priority hotspots**



Days:

* 2018–19: 22
* 2019–20: 30
* 2020–21: 10
* 2021–22: 3

2022–23: 9

The residential area south of the Brooklyn industrial precinct has a history of poor air quality events, due to high dust levels from activities in the precinct. EPA has monitored the major component of dust in the air, PM10 (particles smaller than 10 micrometres), in Brooklyn since October 2009. EPA has maintained its strategic regulatory focus on reducing air pollution in the precinct to lower environmental risk in the area and improve public health outcomes.

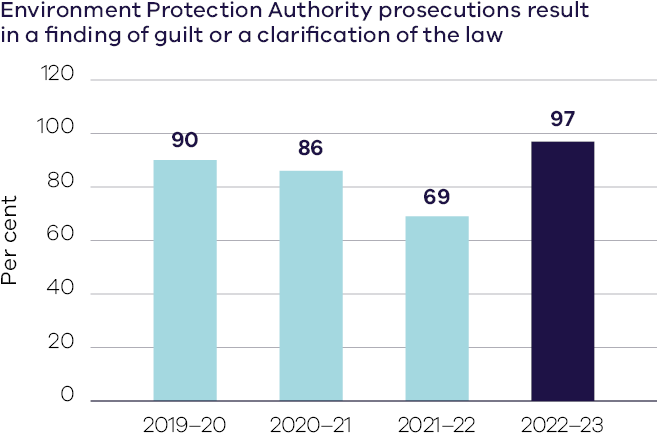
In 2022–23, the national air quality standard was exceeded on nine occasions, and most were attributed to activities within the precinct. On three occasions, higher PM10 readings were also measured at other stations (Geelong and Footscray) indicating the cause was likely more widespread on these days, for example, a strong wind change across the Melbourne area causing elevated dust. EPA provided 11 alerts to notify local industry of high-risk dust days. This was followed up by EPA Officers conducting random inspections to ensure local industry enacted their dust management plans and implemented appropriate control measures.

Where EPA Officers determined a non-compliance, remedial notices focused on:

* preventing dust by sealing unsealed traffic surfaces
* preventing dust from materials handling activities

preventing mud being driven onto public roads.

**Indicator: Environment Protection Authority prosecutions result in a finding of guilt or a clarification of the law**



Per cent:

* 2019–20: 90
* 2020–21: 86
* 2021–22: 69

2022–23: 97

\* The 2022–23 result includes summary and indictable prosecutions. Data prior to 2022–23 relates to indictable prosecutions only.

This is a new departmental objective indicator for 2022–23 to reflect that matters commenced by the EPA have a sound legal basis and are in the public interest.

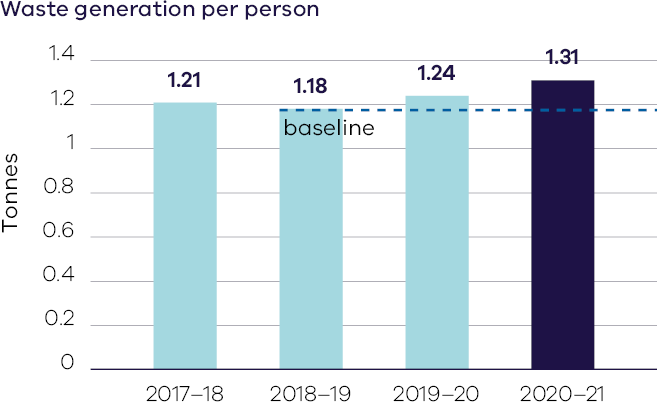
EPA concluded 63 summary and indictable prosecutions in 2022–23, of which 61 were successful. This is nearly double the 2021–22 result of 37 summary and indictable prosecutions completed and represents a historic high of successful prosecutions.

Most prosecutions dealt with offences under the previous *Environment Protection Act 1970*, reflecting the lag between investigation, charging and ultimate completion of matters. In the first half of 2023, there was a significant increase in the number of matters dealing with offences under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (EP Act 2017) including the first criminal and civil proceedings for breaches of the General Environmental Duty (GED). EPA has been granted stronger powers under the EP Act 2017, which have been implemented through an ’education to comply’ approach. However, it was also expected the new legislation would bring an increase in the need for stronger compliance and enforcement action, along with legal challenges, as reflected in this report.

EPA takes a proportionate approach to compliance across all sectors and continues to work with duty holders to help them understand and meet their obligations. For those who continue to disregard their regulatory responsibilities, EPA will use all powers available to protect human health and the environment.

Furthermore, EPA had a significant number of active criminal matters in the courts reaching more than 90 active matters. This is a noteworthy achievement as the highest number of EPA matters before the courts at any one time to date.

**Indicator: Reduction in waste generation per person**



Tonnes:

* 2017–18: 1.21
* 2018–19: 1.18
* 2019–20: 1.24

2020–21: 1.31

\* The 2018–19 result is the baseline from which the target: ‘reduction in waste generation per person of 15 per cent by 2030’ is being measured. Note that figures for 2018–19 and 2019–20 as reported in the department’s 2021–22 Annual Report have been adjusted to exclude construction and demolition waste, which is no longer included in calculations for this indicator.

The most recent available data for 2020–21 has been compiled from the Victorian Recycling Industry Annual Survey as well as data on waste to landfill from EPA Victoria. The compilation of this dataset can be viewed via [Victoria’s Waste Projection Model dashboard](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-waste-projection-model-dashboard). The total municipal solid waste and commercial and industrial waste generated in 2020–21 was 1.31 tonnes per person, an increase from 2019–20 where 1.24 tonnes of waste was generated per person.

It is likely that change behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the increase in waste generated per person in 2020–21.

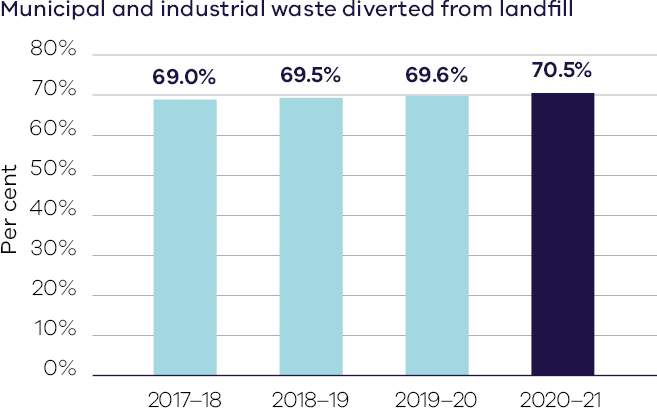
Reducing waste require changes in behaviour, systems and business operations, and it can take time for these changes to occur and their impact to be realised. The department is delivering a number of key commitments under the Victorian Government’s circular economy policy, [*Recycling Victoria: a new economy*](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy) to support Victorians to reduce waste, as set out below.

* From 1 February 2023, single-use plastic drinking straws, plates, cutlery, drink stirrers, cotton bud sticks and expanded polystyrene food service items and drink containers are banned from sale and supply in Victoria. The ban is supporting Victorians to reduce waste and litter by avoiding single-use plastic items and choosing reusables instead.
* The department provides oversight for Sustainability Victoria’s [*Small Acts, Big Impacts*](https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/recycling-and-reducing-waste/at-home/small-acts-big-impact/small-acts-general) *campaign*. This campaign supports households to reduce waste and reduce contamination in recycling.
* Victoria’s $7 million [Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre](https://www.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-business-innovation-centre-cebic) (CEBIC) is equipping Victorian businesses with the support they need to take advantage of circular economy business opportunities including funding, engagement opportunities, thought-leadership and open-source research. The virtual hub is bringing governments, industry, research organisations and communities together to foster business innovation and collaboration across supply chains to reduce waste, increase reuse and generate new streams of revenue for businesses.

The Victorian Government increased Victoria’s waste levies, effective from 1 July 2023. Increasing the cost of sending waste to landfill incentivises waste avoidance and reduction, along with resource recovery and recycling.

Progress towards achieving the reduction in waste generation target also relies on a range of actions to be taken by businesses and the community, to reduce the waste that they generate.

**Indicator: Increase in diversion of municipal and industrial waste from landfill**



Per Cent:

* 2017–18: 69
* 2018–19: 69.5
* 2019–20: 69.6

2020–21: 70.5

This new indicator for 2022–23 reports on the percentage of municipal, construction and demolition, and commercial and industrial waste diverted from landfill to reduce waste, increase recycling and create more value from recovered resources. Hazardous waste is not included in this indicator. This indicator reports on 2020–21 data due to the lag in the receipt of final statewide data. The diversion of waste from landfill result of 70.5 per cent, an increase from the previous year result of 69.6 per cent, is on track towards the target of 72 per cent by 2025. The direction is also favourable towards the target of 80 per cent landfill diversion by 2030. While Victorians generated more waste in 2020–21 (16.09 megatonnes), a greater proportion of what was generated was recovered (10.37 megatonnes), resulting in an overall increase to the resource recovery rate (70.5 per cent).

The compilation of this dataset can be viewed via [Victoria’s Waste Projection Model dashboard](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-waste-projection-model-dashboard). The department is delivering a number of key commitments under the Victorian Government’s circular economy policy, [*Recycling Victoria: a new economy*](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy)which together are supporting Victorian businesses and communities to increase diversion of waste from landfill and recycle more, including:

* implementing a standardised four-stream household recycling system across the state, where each household will get access to a bin or service for: glass recycling; food organics and garden organics; mixed recyclables (paper, cardboard, plastics and metals) and general rubbish
* implementing a container deposit scheme
* giving Victorian households access to a food and garden organics service by 2030, to potentially divert up to 650,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill each year
* releasing *Victoria’s Waste to Energy Framework* so that waste to energy facilities can support diversion of waste otherwise destined for landfill. The Framework places an annual limit of 1 million tonnes on the amount of permitted waste that can be utilised for thermal waste to energy, ensuring that material is recycled where possible, ahead of being used in thermal waste to energy facilities

investing significantly in recycling infrastructure to recover materials that would have gone to landfill. To date, the Victorian Government has invested $96.4 million in grants to increase Victoria’s recycling capacity by 1.63 million tonnes per year by 2025.

Recycling Victoria is also working towards improving waste data and intelligence and understanding the short and long-term factors that contribute to diverting waste from landfill. It is anticipated this will be used to support programs such as the [Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan](https://www.vic.gov.au/recycling-infrastructure-planning), and other actions and benefits realisation to ensure Victoria’s targets of diverting 72 per cent of overall waste from landfill by 2025 and 80 per cent by 2030 are met.

**Environment and Biodiversity**

This output leads the development and implementation of strategic, whole of government environmental policy and delivers investment, regulatory and research functions that support Victoria’s diverse and resilient ecosystems.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Hours volunteered across all government funded environmental volunteering programs | number | 909 740 | 965 350 | (6) | 3 |

Performance is below target reflecting the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on volunteerism activities and opportunities. However environmental volunteering is continuing to bounce back with more volunteering hours each year.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| New permanently protected native vegetation on private land | hectares | 2 408 | 800 | 201 | 1 |

Performance is above target because a number of covenants that were in the pipeline or paused due to COVID-19 were able to be progressed.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Hectares of weed control in priority locations | hectares | 25 000 (estimate) | 140 000 | (82) | 3 |

A final result will be available by early 2024 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is lower than the target due to the impact on weed control efforts from significant storm and flooding events over 2022–23.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Hectares of pest predator control in priority locations | hectares | 535 000 (estimate) | 400 000 | 34 | 1 |

A final result will be available by early 2024 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to the continuation of predator control activity initiated through the bushfire recovery program and the prioritisation of work by modelling cost-effectiveness for predator control.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Hectares of pest herbivore control in priority locations | hectares | 900 000 (estimate) | 500 000 | 80 | 1 |

A final result will be available by early 2024 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to the continuation of herbivore control activity initiated through the bushfire recovery program, which included considerable aerial control as well as the prioritisation of work by modelling cost-effectiveness for herbivore control.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Hectares of revegetation in priority locations for habitat connectivity | hectares | 490 (estimate) | 1 000 | (51) | 3 |

A final result will be available by early 2024 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is lower than the target due to a rescope of the private land component and Traditional Owner streams of the BushBank program. This led to delivery being delayed into 2023–24, however the changes will result in considerably greater biodiversity outcomes in future years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Strategic compliance and enforcement operations implemented by the Conservation Regulator | number | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 |

**Quality**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Presentations made and scientific publications in peer reviewed journals | number | 60 | 60 | 0 | 1 |
| Annual Arthur Rylah Institute Client Survey respondents rank the level of overall satisfaction with ARI’s research as good, very good or excellent | per cent | 98 | 95 | 3 | 1 |
| Preharvest surveys of areas planned for timber harvesting completed | per cent | 64 | 64 | 0 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Native Vegetation Credit Extracts processed within 10 days | per cent | 99 | 96 | 3 | 1 |
| Planning referrals relating to native vegetation processed within statutory timeframes | per cent | 83 | 80 | 4 | 1 |
| Wildlife Licence renewals processed by target dates | per cent | 81 | 96 | (16) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to a one-off delay in printing and sending a large number of renewal licences by an external supplier. This did not cause any person to be non-compliant with the law and no commercial licence holders were affected by the incident. Remedial actions have been implemented in order to address the issue.

**Cost**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total output cost | $ million | 209.7 | 159.8 | 31 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to receiving additional funding for the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) program.

Source: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

**Statutory Activities and Environment Protection**

This output involves protecting the environment and people by preventing and reducing harm from pollution and waste through better regulation, conducting research and gathering intelligence to inform compliance and enforcement activities, collaboration and the provision of advice. These activities support a liveable and prosperous state by leveraging good environmental performance and a shared responsibility among all Victorians to maintain clean air, water and land, and enjoy minimal disturbance from noise and odour.

The performance measures below compare targets and expected or actual results from the delivery of programs and services as part of this output:

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Inspections that assess premises whose operations could represent a significant risk to the environment and human health | number | 516 | 360–400 | 29 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to efficiencies realised through establishment of a preventative inspections program in 2022–23 and increased staff familiarity with new systems, legislation and ways of working, reducing the time it takes to complete inspection related activities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Environment condition notifications provided to Victorians | number | 995 | >800 | 24 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to an increase in notifications in response to Victorian flooding events in late 2022 and the implementation of a new notification strategy.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Community and duty holder trust in EPA | Scale 1–100 | 67 | 70 | (4) | 2 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Environmental audits and preliminary risk screening assessment reports are reviewed to ensure administrative compliance with legislation and guidelines within 14 days of submission | per cent | 83 | 80 | 4 | 1 |
| EPA confirms duty holder compliance with remedial notice requirements, or escalates for further action, within 14 days of the compliance due date | per cent | 82 | 80 | 3 | 1 |
| Pollution reporters requesting follow up by EPA receive contact within three working days | per cent | 55 | 75 | (27) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to an increased number of pollution reports (over 30 per cent more compared to 2021–22) resulting in delays in contacting pollution reporters. Implementation of process improvements is underway to enable faster response times in 2023–24.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for licences, permits and registrations completed within statutory timelines | per cent | 89 | 70 | 27 | 1 |

Performance is above target as registrations are high volume and are auto-approved without EPA involvement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Planning matters responded to within agreed timeframes | per cent | 96 | 65 | 48 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to EPA providing streamlined advice on lower risk planning matters.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for internal review of remedial notices completed within statutory timeframes | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| EPA provides technical advice to lead agencies within agreed timelines during emergency incidents | per cent | 100 | 90 | 11 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to EPA prioritising the provision of timely technical advice to lead agencies during emergency incidents, and reflects a continued focus on process and system improvement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| EPA responds to priority waste incidents within one day of notification | per cent | 100 | 90 | 11 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to EPA prioritising response to priority waste incidents within one day of notification, and reflects a continued focus on process and system improvement.

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 131.8 | 196.4 | (32.8) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to the expenditure profile of Recycling Victoria – Circular Economy initiatives.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

**Waste and Recycling**

This output delivers investment into reducing waste, transforming recycling services and increasing value from recycled materials. These activities support industry, innovation, research and development and clean technologies to create new markets and business opportunities for recycled materials.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Proportion of Victorian households with access to organic food and garden waste recycling services | per cent | 50 (estimate) | 47 | 6 | 1 |

A final result will be available by 31 December 2023 after analysis of the 2022–23 Victorian Local Government Annual Survey data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to strong council participation in food organics and garden organics recycling services, resulting in a higher number of households being offered services than anticipated.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Proportion of Victorian households with access to separated glass recycling services | per cent | 22 (estimate) | 14 | 57 | 1 |

A final result will be available by 31 December 2023 after analysis of the 2022–23 Victorian Local Government Annual Survey data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to incentives for local councils to transition early to separated glass recycling services.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Victorian local council sites supported to upgrade infrastructure to safely collect and sort e-waste for recovery | number | 139 | 140 | (1) | 2 |

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Cumulative increase in the capacity of Victoria’s resource recovery infrastructure | tonnes | 1 475 308 | 1 500 000 | (2) | 2 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Average assessment time (calendar days) for major investment grants from application closure to recommendation | days | 89 | 75 | (19) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to a significant grant program (Waste to Energy Fund – Bioenergy) requiring a longer than usual assessment process, which involved the need to identify risk mitigations for recommended projects and additional due diligence checks and approvals.

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 145.9 | 57.4 | 154 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding related to Recycling Victoria established on 1 July 2022, and additional funding made available for the Environment Protection Authority for remediation works at Lemon Springs.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services

* 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
* 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
* 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

13 Climate Action

### Progress towards achieving this objective

**Context**

Victoria’s energy sector is undergoing a major transformation as coal-fired generators retire, which requires government leadership to deliver major social and environmental benefits and a strong economy.

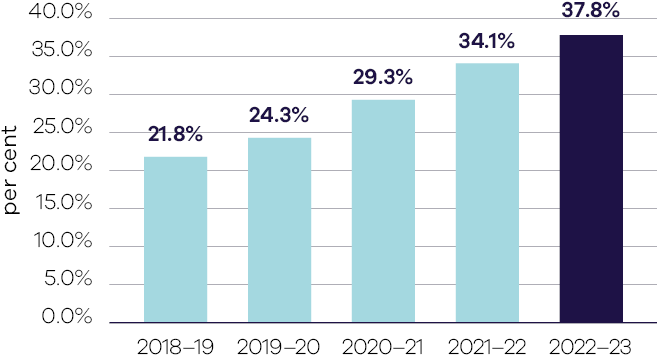
Renewable energy will play a key role in achieving Victoria’s emissions reduction targets – including by decarbonising the gas sector and other parts of the economy – and providing a sustainable supply of affordable energy. Victoria’s renewable energy supply is increasing steadily, through major projects and rooftop solar rollout, complemented by new electricity transmission and batteries. Victoria is on track to meet its 2025 target of 40 per cent of the state’s electricity generation being sourced from renewables, with a result of 36 per cent in 2022, up from around 33 per cent in 2021. New forms of energy, including offshore wind and hydrogen are being developed to provide for Victoria’s long-term energy needs.

At the same time, incentives, standards and better information are helping energy consumers to upgrade their equipment, appliances and buildings to be more efficient and reduce emissions. Improving energy efficiency cuts energy costs and improves the comfort of our homes and workplaces. To help improve energy affordability for energy consumers, DEECA also delivered the significant Power Saving Bonus payment program and is working closely with other jurisdictions on market reform and consumer protections.

DEECA provides policy advice to government on the delivery of reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services, as well as leading programs on renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. DEECA also plays a critical role in responding to and building resilience against events that impact Victoria’s energy system, from the changing energy demand, supply and prices, to bushfires, floods and extreme weather. We also work with market bodies, and national and state governments to design and implement reforms to ensure that governance and systems are fit-for purpose to support the energy transition. DEECA works actively to maximise the benefits of the energy transition, including for workforce development and jobs and to support Aboriginal self-determination.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| $250 Power Saving Bonus | The third round of the Power Saving Bonus program ran from 1 July 2022 to 23 March 2023 and received more than 1.84 million applications, totalling more than $460 million in payments to Victorian households. Building on this, the fourth round of the Power Saving Bonus program launched on 24 March 2023, has delivered around an additional 1.5 million payments to Victorian households as at 30 June 2023. The fourth round concluded on 31 August 2023. |
| Renewable Energy Zones | In February 2023, the Victorian Government announced new payments for landholders who host major new transmission infrastructure within Renewable Energy Zones (REZs), recognising their key role in the energy transition. These payments are separate to any compensation under existing arrangements for transmission easements under the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. Payments for a typical area of transmission easement will apply at a standard rate of $8,000 per year per kilometre for 25 years.  In June 2023, following community and stakeholder feedback, the Victorian Government announced its intention to introduce new legislation into Parliament in early 2024 to change the way future major electricity transmission infrastructure and Victoria’s REZs are planned and developed. These statewide reforms, known as the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF), will produce Victorian Transmission Plans to guide how, when and where development should occur across Victoria’s REZs to meet our energy needs as we transition away from coal-fired electricity sources. The VTIF aims to consider environmental, land-use, cultural, and social factors early in the process to inform the selection of locations for new transmission projects within the REZs. These reforms will ensure that the REZs are strategically developed and integrated with the transmission infrastructure, facilitating the expansion of renewable energy generation and the delivery of reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services in Victoria. |
| Victorian energy storage projects | Energy storage will play a vital role in Victoria’s transition to renewable energy. On 27 September 2022, the Victorian Government announced Victorian energy storage targets of at least 2.6 GW by 2030 and at least 6.3 GW by 2035. The Victorian Government continued to deliver several initiatives to support Victorian energy storage projects in 2022–23, including:   * the Energy Innovation Fund, which is supporting the development of a 100 MW and 200 MWh battery at Terang * the Renewable Energy Zones Development Fund, which will help bring forward a 125 MW and 250 MWh battery at Kerang * the Solar Homes program, which has helped more than 14,400 Victorian households install their own batteries * completing Victoria’s second VRET auction, which will bring forward 623 MW of new renewable generation capacity and deliver up to 365 MW and 600 MWh of new battery energy storage. |
| Neighbourhood Batteries | The Neighbourhood Battery Initiative was launched in February 2021 and is now in its third round. The initiative delivered feasibility studies, guidelines and processes to support communities to install their own neighbourhood batteries, as well as funding implementation projects. This third and final round of the initiative is funding the implementation of neighbourhood batteries and development of business cases to drive a pipeline of viable projects to support the Victorian Government’s 2022 commitment to rollout 100 Neighbourhood Batteries. |
| Major Transmission Projects | DEECA continued to support the delivery of nationally significant transmission projects that are needed to support the energy transition and maintain reliability as Victoria’s ageing brown coal generators retire. Key DEECA actions on major transmission in 2022–23 included:   * completing a strategic agreement with the Commonwealth Government that provides Victoria with access to low-cost concessional finance through the Commonwealth Government’s $20 billion Rewiring the Nation (RTN) Policy * signing a tri-partite agreement between the Commonwealth, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments to jointly own the Marinus Link project, which will support Victorian energy reliability by providing the state with access to Tasmania’s firm dispatchable capacity.   In 2022–23, DEECA also supported the earlier delivery of the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) by issuing two Ministerial Orders under the *National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005* to request that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) commences project early works and assess and implement alternative VNI West route options, identified in response to stakeholder consultation. VNI West will increase Victoria’s ability to export and import electricity from NSW by over 1.6 GW and enable upwards of 3.4 GW of new renewable generation in the Murray and Western Victoria River renewable energy zones (REZ). Project construction is expected to begin in 2025. |
| Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auctions | All five of the first Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET1) supported projects are either fully operational or generating energy at 100 per cent capacity as a part of their commissioning processes. These wind and solar projects exceeded the 650 MW renewable capacity target and are generating over 800 MW. The projects have supported more than 800 jobs during construction and delivered approximately $1 billion of economic investment in Victoria.  In October 2022, the Victorian Government announced the six successful projects in its second VRET auction (VRET2), which will bring forward 623 MW of new renewable generation capacity and deliver up to 365 MW and 600 MWh of new battery energy storage.  The VRET2 auction represents a major step towards meeting our commitment of sourcing 100 per cent renewable electricity for government operations by 2025. It is expected to support at least 920 direct jobs and attract $1.48 billion of investment in new Victorian renewable energy projects, with strong local content requirements supporting local supply chains during construction. |
| Gas Substitution Roadmap | Released in July 2022, the *Gas Substitution Roadmap* provides strategic directions and actions for a coordinated and equitable transition to net zero emissions. The Roadmap was informed by a series of technical investigations, analysis and significant industry and consumer consultation.  DEECA’s actions over 2022–23 included:   * successfully petitioned for an urgent rule change to maximise the use of available storage at the Dandenong Liquefied Natural Gas facility, which was delivered in December 2022 * played a key contributing role in the development of the first stage of the Commonwealth Reliability and Supply Adequacy Framework for the east coast gas market, providing the Australian Energy Market Operator * introduced new incentives in the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program, from 31 May 2023, for the replacement of inefficient gas water heaters and space heating with efficient electric alternatives, and added the Residential Efficiency Scorecard assessments to the VEU from 31 May 2023 * removed the incentives for gas appliances from the VEU program from 30 June 2023 * supported the Department of Transport and Planning to implement changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions to remove barriers to all-electric developments​ * informally advocated to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) against disincentives to electrification, which resulted in the AER decision to cap the permanent gas disconnection fee at $220 * actively engaged in the National Construction Code update, led by the Australian Building Codes Board, to strengthen energy performance standards for new residential buildings. This process resulted in an increase in minimum thermal efficiency requirements of new homes from 6 to 7 stars and a new ‘Whole of Home’ energy budget to come into effect in Victoria in May 2024. |
| Gas Substitution Roadmap (continued) | * provided written support for:   + the installation of an extra compressor at the Winchelsea compressor station on the Southwest Pipeline in advance of the 2023 winter to help mitigate peak day supply risks.   + APA Group’s Western Outer Ring Main (WORM) to improve the reliability of Victoria’s gas transmission system and better support timely refill of the existing Iona Underground Gas Storage facility in western Victoria.   An Update to the Roadmap will be released in late 2023, including announcements of policy directions to decarbonise Victoria’s fossil gas sector by at least 2045 (focused on actions related to residential and commercial buildings). |
| Supporting development of the renewable hydrogen sector | In March 2022, the Victorian Government committed $10 million in grant funding to co-deliver the Hume Hydrogen Highway initiative with the NSW Government, which will deliver a renewable hydrogen refuelling network for freight vehicles between Melbourne and Sydney. The refuelling network is expected to be operational by 2025. In the third quarter of 2023, the Victorian and NSW governments expect to announce the successful industry consortium that will deliver the network.  In 2022–23 eight projects were completed under the Renewable Hydrogen Business Ready Fund. Five capital works projects for hydrogen pilots, trials and demonstrations are being delivered under the Renewable Hydrogen Commercialisation Pathways Fund.  On 24 June 2023, the Victorian Government committed $12.3 million in grant funding to support the $53.1 million Hydrogen Park Murray Valley Gas Blending project in Wodonga, Victoria. This project is supported by a $36 million grant from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and developed by the Australian Gas Infrastructure Group. It will deploy a 10 MW hydrogen electrolyser to produce and blend hydrogen gas into the distribution network at up to 10 per cent by volume, supplying 40,000 connections and cutting approximately 4,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent each year. Hydrogen produced from this 10 MW electrolyser will also support the emerging hydrogen transport refuelling network in the region. |
| Expanding the Victorian Energy Upgrades program | Energy-efficient products installed by the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program continue to help households drive down energy consumption and their energy bills. During 2022–23, more than 463,000 households and 22,000 businesses participated in the program.  Reforms to strengthen consumer protections, compliance and enforcement occurred, including the passage of the *Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment Act 2022*, in August 2022, which will expand the Essential Services Commission’s VEU Code of Conduct.  Another major reform to the program in 2022–23 included the review and setting of program fees. This will allow the Essential Services Commission to be resourced to provide strong oversight and enforcement of energy upgrades installed in Victorian homes and businesses, to ensure they meet standards and achieve energy savings.  Supporting the *Gas Substitution Roadmap*, new activities were introduced into the VEU program to incentivise the electrification of gas space heaters and gas hot water systems while removing incentives for gas alternatives, and also introducing home energy rating assessments. These activities will lower bills for energy consumers, reduce emissions and accelerate the transition from gas. |
| Accelerating the adoption of zero emission vehicles | The first 35 public electric vehicle (EV) chargers funded under the Destination Charging Across Victoria program were completed in May 2023.  Projects to install 120 chargers at 57 council sites and 58 chargers at 24 businesses fleet sites across Victoria are also progressing.  DEECA and the Department of Transport and Planning advocated for national reforms to accelerate adoption of ZEVs, including seeking ambitious standards for vehicle emissions through the Fuel Efficiency Standards consultation and National Construction Code 2022 reforms to encourage greater installation of EV chargers in new apartment buildings. DEECA is supporting delivery of the National EV Strategy (NEVS), released April 2023, through membership of NEVS working groups and contributing to delivery of NEVS actions.  Through the Zero Emissions Vehicle program, which ended on 30 June 2023, more than 10,000 subsidies were provided to Victorians to take up an electric vehicle – supporting Victoria reaching a record 8 per cent of passenger vehicle sales being electric. |
| Aboriginal Energy Programs | The Traditional Owner Renewable Energy program has invested in nine Registered Aboriginal Parties to help realise their renewable energy priorities and interests. The program has funded projects, including the installation of renewable energy technologies such as solar and battery storage and the development of renewable energy policies, strategies and feasibility studies. Two projects were completed during 2022–23 by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.  The First Peoples’ Adoption of Renewable Energy grants program launched in March 2023. This program is providing funding to build greater capacity and capability in Traditional Owner Corporations and their communities to engage with the renewable energy sector in an empowered and self-determined way. |
| New Energy Jobs Fund | Round six of the New Energy Jobs Fund was launched in July 2022 and provided $1.15 million to 15 projects. The projects are a range of renewable energy and energy efficiency feasibility studies, business cases and implementation-ready capital works projects that will continue to support Victoria’s renewable energy transition. |
| Solar Homes Program | During 2022–23, more than 46,000 rebates were provided to households to install solar panels, battery storage systems and energy efficient hot water systems. A total of 23,611 interest-free loans were provided to households to support uptake of roof top solar. |
| Establishment of the State Electricity Commission | During 2022–23, the Victorian Government progressed the re-establishment of the State Electricity Commission (SEC).  In December 2022, the Victorian Government declared the SEC as a reorganising body under the *State Owned Enterprises Act 1992*, appointed an interim CEO for the SEC and established a SEC Expert Advisory Panel.  It also announced that the SEC will invest $1 billion towards delivering 4.5 GW of power through renewable energy projects – the equivalent replacement capacity of coal-fired power station Loy Yang A, which is set to close in 2035 – and establish an SEC Centre of Training Excellence.  In April 2023, the Victorian Government released the SEC Pioneer Investment Mandate and a market search for the SEC’s first investment/s in renewable energy generation and storage in Victoria commenced in May 2023.  In June 2023, the SEC held an Energy Jobs and Skills Forum attended by industry, education and training leaders and experts to discuss and plan how to attract, train and retain a new generation of renewable energy workers.  Throughout the year, the SEC began a conversation with Traditional Owners about potential partnership models. It also engaged with stakeholders across the sector, including representatives from industry and educational providers. |

**Indicator: Relative share of Victorian energy sourced from renewables**



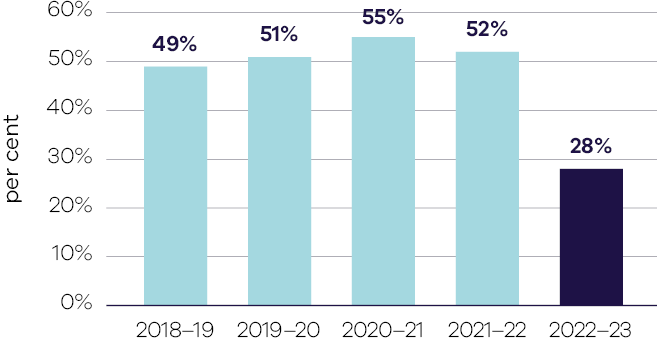
**Per cent**

* 2018–19: 21.8
* 2019–20: 24.3
* 2020–21: 29.3
* 2021–22: 34.1

2022–23: 37.8

In 2022–23, the share of renewable energy in Victoria’s electricity generation reached 37.8 per cent, up from 34.1 per cent in 2021–22. This reflects increased output from new wind and solar projects, continued growth in rooftop solar PV and reduced coal output.

**Indicator: Percentage of surveyed users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report that they plan to switch offers after using the website**



**Per cent**

* 2018–19: 49
* 2019–20: 51
* 2020–21: 55
* 2021–22: 52

2022–23: 28

Of the 252,020 Victorian Energy Compare users who completed the online survey during 2022–23, 28 per cent reported they plan to change offers based on the information provided. This result reflects volatile energy prices in the retail market, reducing the percentage of surveyed users who plan to switch after visiting the Victorian Energy Compare website compared to the previous year.

Overall, more than 82 per cent reported they had a positive experience, up from 78 per cent in 2021–22 and 66 per cent reported they understand usage and energy costs better, up from 59 per cent in 2021–22. These significantly higher results follow new and improved communication activities undertaken by the department to better inform users about energy-related programs and projects.

**Indicator: Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program**

A graph with numbers and a bar

Description automatically generated

**MW**

* 2018–19: 209.5
* 2019–20: 519.4
* 2020–21: 940.2
* 2021–22: 1246.4

2022–23: 1520.7

The total cumulative electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program as at 30 June 2023 was 1,520.7 Megawatts (MW), with the annual result for 2022–23 totalling 273.4 MW. This output represents the generating capacity from all solar PV systems installed under the Solar PV rebates for owner occupier households and rental properties program.

The lower increase rate in electricity generating capacity between 2021–22 to 2022–23 reflects lower than anticipated uptake of the solar PV rebate. This was due to a number of factors such as constraints around solar PV supply, system costs and industry staffing. The demand for solar PV had been softening in Victoria, which mirrors a trend that has been observed nationally. However, a gradual increase in consumer interest in solar PV was observed over the course of 2022–23.

**Indicator: Solar systems installed under the Solar Homes program**

A graph with numbers and a bar

Description automatically generated

* 2018–19: 35,896
* 2019–20: 86,317
* 2020–21: 150,929
* 2021–22: 200,853

2022–23: 246,960

Note: the restatement of prior year data is due to retrospective changes made to the final number of solar systems installed, such as when applications were extended across financial years, cancelled or expired.

This objective indicator reports on the cumulative number of systems installed under the Solar Homes program. It reflects progress towards providing 778,500 rebates for either solar panel energy systems, energy efficient hot water systems or battery storage for homes over 10 years.

The cumulative total number of installed systems under the Solar Homes program as at 30 June 2023 was 246,960, with the annual result for 2022–23 totalling 46,107 systems. The decrease in system installations between 2021–22 and 2022–23 was due to a number of factors including constraints around solar PV supply, system costs and industry staffing. The demand for solar PV had been softening in Victoria, which mirrors a trend that has been observed nationally. However, a gradual increase in consumer interest in solar PV was observed over the course of 2022–23.

**Energy**

This output advocates for the provision of reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services through statebased energy programs, including renewable energy development, energy efficiency and affordability improvements, and facilitation of new investment.

**Quantity**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (each representing one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions avoided) surrendered by energy retailers to meet their liabilities under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target | million certificates | 13.2 | 13.2 | 0 | 1 |
| Annual Melbourne tram network demand offset by solar generated large-scale generation certificates | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Share of Victoria’s electricity generation from renewable sources | per cent | 38 | 38 | 0 | 1 |
| Renewable Energy Certificates procured under the Renewable Certificate Purchasing initiative sufficient to meet Renewable Energy Target liability associated with annual electricity demand of participating government sites | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Total renewable electricity generation capacity from the Victorian Renewable Energy Target 2017 Auction projects | MW | 808 | 650 | 24 | 1 |

Performance is above target as some VRET1 projects were able to leverage additional capacity beyond that supported by the VRET 2017 Auction.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| New Energy Jobs Fund projects completed | number | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Government-supported events that engage business and supply chains regarding the energy sector | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Microgrids established | number | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Vulnerable Victorian energy consumers reached through consumer support programs | number | 100 000 | 50 000 | 100 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the delivery of two additional rounds of the Power Saving Bonus program.

**Quality**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relative reduction in statewide powerline-related bushfire risk | per cent | 47.5 | 48.1 | (1) | 2 |
| Users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report a better understanding of their usage costs after using the website | per cent | 66 | 65 | 2 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delivery of key Australian Energy Market Commission funding milestones, in line with funding agreements and agreed project deliverables | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |

**Cost**

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total output cost | $ million | 1135.5 | 485.7 | 134 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding for the $250 Power Saving Bonus initiative, and higher than anticipated expenditure associated with the initial recognition for contract for difference (CFDs) related to Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) initiative.

**Solar Victoria**

This output will, over 10 years, provide up to 775 800 households with either solar panel energy systems, solar hot water systems, or battery storage for homes with existing solar energy systems, as Victoria transitions to a lower emissions future, reducing fossil fuel usage and air pollution, and allowing independence from conventional energy supplies.

The program also includes solar photovoltaic panels rebates for small businesses and provides financial subsidies to vulnerable and low-income households to upgrade heating and install high-efficiency reverse-cycle air conditioners. Solar Victoria will also deliver the Victorian Government’s Zero Emissions Vehicle Subsidy, enabling residents and businesses to transition to cleaner, greener, and more affordable transport.

Through this output, Solar Victoria supports investment in household energy technology innovation to find new and improved ways to meet future energy demand.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for Solar PV rebates for owner-occupied and rental households approved | number | 38 043 | 64 000 | (41) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to constraints around solar PV supply, system costs, industry staffing and reduced consumer demand.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for home battery rebates approved | number | 5 520 | 5 200 | 6 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to high levels of consumer interest in batteries. Customer surveys indicate this is driven by a desire to reduce grid dependence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for solar hot water rebates approved | number | 5 363 | 6 000 | (11) | 3 |

Performance is below target reflecting demand for solar hot water units, however the 2022–23 result is seven times higher than the previous year due to the removal of the ‘one rebate rule’ limitation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for Solar PV rebates for small businesses approved | number | 1 474 | 5 000 | (71) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to residual COVID-19 impacts on small businesses and continuing low confidence about business conditions within the target cohort of small business customers. This impacted on willingness to make upfront co-payments.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for Home Heating and Cooling Upgrade rebates for reverse cycle air conditioning units to replace inefficient heating systems approved | number | 8 960 | 6 000 | 49 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the carry-over of rebates from 2021–22 into 2022–23.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for Zero Emissions Vehicle subsidies approved | number | 5 701 | 8 600 | (34) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to supply delays and a decline in the number of eligible models in the program, as vehicle price increases occurred across the sector.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Rebated installations audited by the Solar Homes Audit program to be conducted in accordance with the Solar Homes Assurance Framework plan | per cent | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Solar Homes program customers who rate the overall performance of Solar Victoria as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ in post-approval surveys | per cent | 86 | 75 | 15 | 1 |

Performance is above target reflecting Solar Victoria’s efforts to improve the customer experience, in particular enhancements to the document verification processes and bringing the Hot Water rebate stream onto the Solar Homes portal.

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Average number of weeks for Solar Victoria to process completed eligibility applications | weeks | 1.46 | 2 | 27 | 1 |

Performance is above target, reflecting targeted resourcing efforts to reduce the backlog of applications and enhancements to the document verification processes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Rebate payments for Solar retailers processed within five business days | per cent | 61 | 80 | (24) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to an increase in payment requests received. This is partly related to the expansion of the Solar Homes program, which changed to allow customers to obtain both a Solar PV and Solar Hot Water rebate. Additionally, a contingent of contact centre staff were redeployed to assist the flood emergency response in October and November 2022. The reallocation of staff to other work led to a temporary spike in processing times.

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 164.2 | 204.7 | (20) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to the final level of rebates for solar energy products being lower than the budgeted amount.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Productive and effective land management

* 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
* 14 Life Below Water
* 15 Life on Land

16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

### Progress towards achieving this objective

**Context**

Victoria’s public land, including its parks, forests, coasts, alpine resorts and Crown land reserves, has significant economic, environmental, cultural and recreational value. DEECA manages public land to both protect these values and optimise its use by all Victorians.

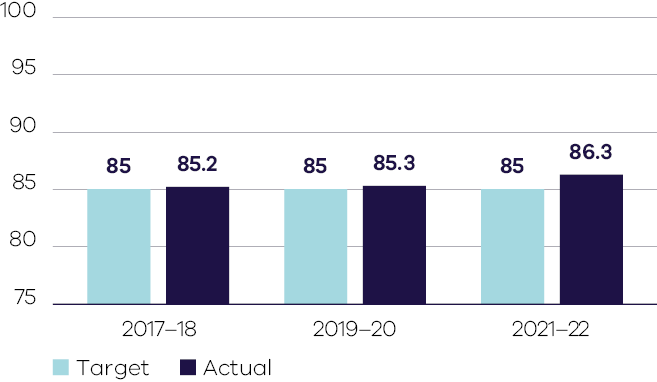
In partnering with other public land managers, including Traditional Owners, statutory agencies and committees of management, we ensure that our public land and water assets are used in a sustainable manner and that their natural and built assets continue to be maintained and improved.

We partner and work closely with Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties to ensure their connection to Country, recognise existing rights under agreements and incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and culture into the management of land and natural values.

We ensure that all Victorians and visitors to the state have access to safe and appropriate infrastructure, and that development, particularly along Victoria’s coastline, is appropriate and takes full account of community, environmental, and economic values as well as Traditional Owner values and aspirations.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| Suburban Parks Program | DEECA acquired 391 hectares of land in 2022–23 to deliver the ‘Three New Parks’ projects and this land is progressively being transferred to Parks Victoria for clean-up and management.  At Sandbelt Parklands, 84 hectares of former landfill has been acquired, and an environmental consultant has been appointed to manage the ex-landfill sites. For the Co-Managed Parks stream, Parkland Plans for biik wurrdha Jacksons Creek and Cardinia Creek were completed; and Parkland Plans for marram baba Merri Creek and Quarry Hills are nearing completion. At Seaford Wetlands, the Signage and Facilities Upgrade Plan was approved in April 2023 following public consultation. The Wallan Wallan Regional Parks Feasibility Study and Frankston-to-Mornington Parklands Future Directions Plan were completed in October 2022.  Under the Local Parks stream, DEECA funded 29 new pocket parks, 14 new off-leash dog parks and 41 park revitalisation projects. Twenty of the 29 pocket parks are complete, with the remaining nine parks to be completed during 2023–24. Thirteen of the 14 dog parks are complete with the remaining project nearing completion. Thirty-six of the 41 parks revitalisation projects are complete; and five of the seven trails delivered as part of the focus on delivering trails in the Northern Metropolitan Region are also now fully complete, with the remaining two trails to be completed in 2023–24. |
| Deliver contaminated public land projects | During 2022–23, work to address contamination on Crown land included completion of an options analysis and a community engagement plan to address legacy contamination at seven Bendigo arsenic sands sites (including the California Gully and Marong Road precincts); completion of a Remediation Action Plan and engagement of a contractor to undertake remediation of the Sebastopol shooting range, with works commencing in July 2023; and completion of a tender process and engagement of a suitable contractor to undertake remediation of the Lysterfield shooting range, which commenced in June 2023.  The program has been extended until 30 September 2024 with all items and funding to be completed and acquitted by this date. Due to the remediation of two high-risk sites formerly occupied by Geelong and Winchelsea gun clubs being completed under budget in 2021–22, six new projects were included in the program in January 2023. These additional projects comprised three asbestos removal sites at Geelong, Brimbank and Porepunkah, two remediation sites at Altona and Smiths Gully and a site contamination assessment at Rainbow Gully. All works have commenced and are due for completion by September 2023. |
| Liwik Barring Landscape Conservation Area | The Yellingbo (Liwik Barring) Landscape Conservation Area 10-year Plan articulates management directions to enhance its scenic beauty, biodiversity, cultural heritage and community enjoyment. Crown land boundary surveys that are required to reserve new areas of Crown land as part of Liwik Barring in the following areas have been completed: Little Yarra River, Gladysdale; Britannia Creek, Wesburn; Woori Yallock Creek, Macclesfield; Menzies Creek, Emerald and McCrae Creek, Yellingbo.  Survey plans are being developed to inform a Bill that will reserve all of these areas as part of Liwik Barring in 2024. This will be the second phase of reservations, with the first phase completed in 2020.  During 2022–23, more than 40 site visits were conducted to discuss changes to the management of Crown land with adjacent landholders. The site visits addressed construction of boundary fences, weed management, revegetation and off stream watering systems.  In October 2022, DEECA contracted the Narrap Team to undertake extensive weed management work throughout Liwik Barring. The Narrap Team have now conducted weed management work across a number of waterways including Britannia Creek, Little Yarra River, Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River. |
| Regional Forest Agreements | DEECA progressed commitments made in the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) in 2022–23 for improving the long-term sustainable management and conservation of forests. Key achievements during 2022–23 include:   * a third RFA annual meeting was held in March 2023 between DEECA and the Commonwealth Government, to verify Victorian delivery of RFA commitments and discuss the effective operation of the agreements * completion of the Victorian Government’s review of the Victorian ‘Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR)’ Reserve System * completion of the review of legislation and regulatory instruments to identify improvements to strengthen protections for listed species and communities * delivery of risk assessments and corresponding protections for species and communities with updated or new listings under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999 or the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* * progressed a comprehensive review of the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014. |
| Great Ocean Road Management Reform | Amendments to the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020* (GOREP Act) commenced on 1 September 2022, making the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) the dedicated parks manager for the Great Ocean Road coast and parks. The amendments include a schedule of Crown land for management transfer to the Authority by 1 November 2025 and the establishment of the Great Ocean Road Coastal and Parks Trust Account.  Methods, templates, the approach and schedule for the transfer of land management responsibility to the Authority for each of the 700+ parcels of public land (and more than 2,500 assets on that land) were agreed in principle in June 2023 with the Authority, DEECA, Parks Victoria and four councils. As at 30 June 2023, management responsibility for 31 parcels has been transferred to the Authority, with a further 34 parcels investigated, assessed and removed from scope.  Technical studies for the Great Ocean Road strategic framework plan progressed, with a draft plan expected to be finalised by December 2023 for consultation with Traditional Owners and responsible entities ahead of public consultation and submission process. |
| Office of the Conservation Regulator regulatory functions in relation to timber harvesting, land use, and fire prevention | The Conservation Regulator undertook significant work to tackle key regulatory risks impacting land management such as illegal campfires, illegal possession of wildlife, illegal commercial timber harvesting in state forests, illegal removal of firewood and illegal vehicle use on public land.  Targeted operations were launched and continued during 2022–23 for education, enforcement and intelligence purposes. These included Operation River Gum, which addressed illegal firewood removal from vulnerable ecosystems along the Murray, Ovens, Goulburn and Loddon river corridors, and Operation Save our Hoodies to protect endangered Hooded Plovers while nesting on Victorian beaches from August to March.  There were significant prosecutions in 2022–23, covering offences such as the illegal removal of mature eucalyptus trees, bulldozing trees on public land, the illegal collection of firewood, destroying wildlife habitat and driving off-road in restricted areas.  The Conservation Regulator conducted 54 proactive inspections of timber harvesting coupes and more than 460 proactive patrols on public land across the state during 2022–23. |
| Building Works Program | The Solar on Public Buildings program installed solar panels at 324 sites across Victoria (against a target of 300). This will save committees of management an estimated $300,000 per year.  The Improving Public Visitor and Recreation Sites program continued to deliver improvements to walking tracks and campgrounds. During 2022–23, improvements were made at sites such as Forrest Mountain Bike Trails, Wycheproof wetlands and walking track, Buckland Valley, Firth Park campground and Coastal Link Trails – Fairhaven to Grey River. Visitor experiences at the Kyabram Fauna Park were improved through the program’s delivery of extensive upgrades to the park’s visitor entrance, education and conservation centre and reptile house.  The Building Works program also facilitated the development of 17 dog parks under the Local Parks program (of which six were completed in 2021–22 and the remaining in 2022–2023, which completed the project). |
| VicCoasts 2022–23 | Under the VicCoasts program, $1 million in grants were awarded to 12 successful coastal land managers to support technical, engagement and strategic planning activities aligned to the *Victoria’s Resilient Coast* framework by 30 June 2023. Six Traditional Owner groups were supported to develop self-determined marine and coastal projects through the continuation of the Sea Country project grants program in 2022–23. Through the Coastal Public Access and Risk Grants program, in February 2023, 16 grants totalling $1.17 million were awarded to Victorian coastal Crown land managers for the reduction of coastal risk and public access improvements.  Coastal protection works were completed at Eastern View in December 2022 with repairs completed at Portarlington in January 2023, Rhyll and Torquay in March 2023 and Dutton Way in June 2023. Risk treatment plans were implemented at high-risk sites across Victoria, completing detailed engineering inspections and coastal processes studies to determine appropriate response options in line with a coastal adaptation pathways approach. Development and implementation of the coastal asset class management plan continued in 2022–23 to ensure compliance with Victoria’s Asset Management Accountability Framework and alignment to ISO 55000 risk requirements. |
| Implement the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy | Implementation in 2022–23, the first year of the five-year Marine and Coastal Strategy, included delivery of grants to support Traditional Owner-led projects, coastal hazard adaptation and coastal and marine management plans. In May 2023, Victoria’s Resilient Coast framework and guidelines were made under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* to guide strategic coastal hazard adaptation planning. Progress continues on implementing the Marine Spatial Planning framework, including commencing the first planning process. Ongoing work continues on the development of Marine and Coastal Act regulations, which are anticipated to be finalised in late 2023, and reviewing sea level rise benchmarks in early 2024. |
| Coastcare Victoria | Coastcare Victoria engaged 7,918 participants during 2022–23 through supporting volunteers, capacity building training, community grants and Summer by the Sea. More than $582,000 was awarded to 67 community-led projects from Portland to Gippsland Lakes through two rounds of the 2022–23 Coastcare Victoria Community Grants Program in August 2022 and June 2023. The new Coastcare Victoria Schools Kit was launched in September 2022 to engage young people in caring for marine and coastal environments. Coastcare Victoria has partnered with the Department of Education to implement the kit through primary and secondary schools. |
| Creating new parks in central west Victoria | The legislative process to establish the new parks in central west Victoria requires detailed surveying and mapping to prepare park plans for inclusion in legislation. The Victorian Government has committed $4 million over four years for this work, which the Surveyor-General Victoria commenced in mid-2022. The work program for the central west parks includes prioritising the mapping and surveying of the approximately 44,700-hectare Wombat-Lerderderg National Park. Legislation to create the parks will be developed as soon as practicable. Ongoing engagement with relevant Traditional Owner groups commenced in late 2022. |
| Zoos Victoria ‘Kids Free’ policy | The ‘Kids Free’ policy provided 361,302 children aged under 16 free access to the Zoos Victoria’s four sites on weekends, school and public holidays during 2022–23, including Kyabram Fauna Park, which opened in October 2022. Total visitation to all zoo properties was 2.56 million in 2022–23, an increase from 1.64 million visitors in 2021–22. |
| Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy | In August 2021, the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy was launched. Co-designed by Traditional Owners, it identifies a framework and pathways for Traditional Owners to lead the planning and management of Country in line with their cultural obligations to care for Country. During 2022–23 Traditional Owners received $800,000 in grant funding to implement their Nation’s cultural landscape approach. The Cultural Landscapes Co Governance Group commenced work to develop an evaluation framework for the strategy in partnership with DEECA and Parks Victoria. |
| Provide ongoing support for the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum | During 2022–23, DEECA continued delivery and support for the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum (SCfCPF), with two SCfCPF’s being held on Country and in person over 1.5 days. The inaugural on Country SCfCPF was held in person during October 2022 and was co-chaired and hosted by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. The second on Country and in person SCfCPF was co-chaired and hosted by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation in April 2023. |
| Regional Caring for Country Partnership Forums | Regional Caring for Country Partnership forums were delivered to support five Traditional Owner groups in progressing self-determination during 2022–23:   * First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation * Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation * Taungurung Land and Waters Council * Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation * Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.   DEECA continued to support Traditional Owner groups in the preparation and delivery of the forums and coordinate DEECA and portfolio partner representation as requested. Priorities discussed at the forums include sustainable funding models, formal recognition and cultural fire. While not all Traditional Owner groups hold regional forums, DEECA actively engages at place to enable partnership building opportunities. |
| Supporting Traditional Owner Land Management Boards | Ongoing support to the three Traditional Owner Land Management Boards who oversee joint management continues. DEECA provided oversight with a focus on advice and administration in public sector governance including appointments, annual reports and financial management compliance. During 2022–23, DEECA met regularly with the chairs and executive officers of each board.  In addition, DEECA participated in several joint management workshops on Country and continued to provide in-kind administrative support to the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board. |
| Supporting the resolution of Native Title and agreement-making with Traditional Owners under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 | DEECA supported the state in the successful Eastern Maar Native Title consent determination. On 28 March 2023, the Federal Court recognised the Eastern Maar people as Native Title holders for an area of their Traditional Country in South-West Victoria. This is only the fifth time in Victoria that Traditional Owners have been successful in their application for Native Title recognition. This Native Title decision recognises the Eastern Maar people’s deep and ongoing connection to their Country and is an important step towards progressing their self-determination.  The department supported the state in the successful negotiation of the Wotjobaluk Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA), where the Victorian Government and the Barengi Gadjin Land Council took another step towards Aboriginal self-determination by signing an RSA with the state that commenced in December 2022. The land council, acting on behalf of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples (Wotjobaluk Peoples), have been negotiating the RSA with the Victorian Government for several years. This agreement recognises the Wotjobaluk peoples’ ongoing connection to their Country. There is approximately 10,540 square kilometres of public land included in the agreement area, which spans from Ararat north to Ouyen, and then across to the South Australian border. This is only the fourth such agreement in place, after the Gunaikurnai (2010), Dja Dja Wurrung (2013) and Taungurung (2018) Peoples RSAs. |
| Victoria’s Great Outdoors | As at 30 June 2023, the Victorian Great Outdoors program has delivered the following over the past four years:   * $12 million in reduced camping fees in state and national parks * 31 new campgrounds and 50 upgraded campgrounds and 29 kilometres of walking trails * 54 of the 63 Camping and Caravan Grants awarded under the program have been completed * 75 Volunteering Innovation Fund grants awarded across four funding rounds, with 18 projects complete and 57 projects underway * 2021–22 grants have 21 projects completed and acquitted with 11 in the process of submitting final reports for acquittal. 2022–23 grants have two projects completed and 25 underway, all for completion by June 2023 * finalised technical designs for the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park and commenced land acquisition negotiations * commissioned a Feasibility Study for the Sea to Summit multi-day experience * 10 Seasonal Rangers employed, six in parks and four in state forests, to educate and engage visitors and help maintain popular recreation sites. |

**Indicator: Level of park visitor satisfaction across the Parks Victoria estate**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Target | Actual |
| 2017–18 | 85 | 85.2 |
| 2019–20 | 85 | 85.3 |
| 2021–22 | 85 | 86.3 |

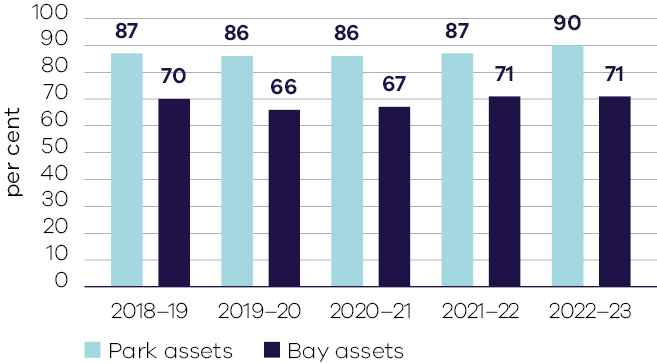
Results for this measure are captured every two years and will next be provided in 2023–24.

This new indicator for 2022–23 reports on the perception of the quality of visitor experience, measured as visitor satisfaction. Visitor satisfaction is defined as the quality of the service and met or unmet expectations.

The most recent biennial visitor satisfaction survey, conducted in 2021–22, indicated that the Parks Victoria estate received an average satisfaction rating of 86.3, indexed out of 100. The actual is calculated as the average of responses to the satisfaction question where fully satisfied = 100, very satisfied = 80, satisfied = 60, dissatisfied = 40, very dissatisfied = 20 and completely dissatisfied = 0.

In 2022–23, satisfaction increased for parks where improvement works were completed (at Point Cook Coastal Park, Cardinia Reservoir Park and Lysterfield Lake Park) under the $21 million Urban Parks Active Wellbeing program. This program is providing more opportunities for Victorians to connect with nature within an urban setting and supporting the health and wellbeing of local communities through new and upgraded visitor facilities such as barbecues, picnic tables and shelters, toilets, pathways and playgrounds. Further works under the program at another 18 of Melbourne’s most popular parks are anticipated to increase overall park visitor satisfaction in future years.

**Indicator: Bay and park assets rated in average to excellent condition**

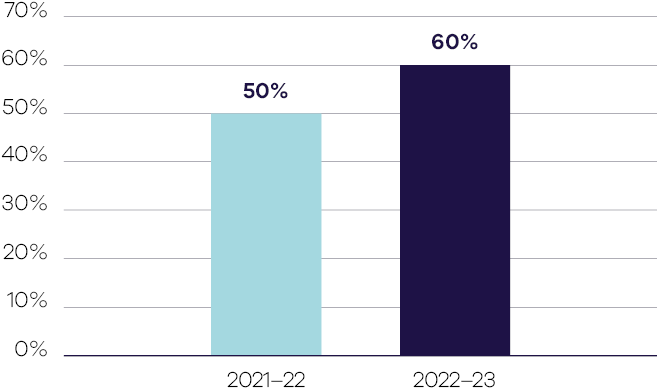


|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Park assets (Per Cent) | Bay assets (Per Cent) |
| 2018–19 | 87 | 70 |
| 2019–20 | 86 | 66 |
| 2020–21 | 86 | 67 |
| 2021–22 | 87 | 71 |
| 2022–23 | 90 | 71 |

Parks Victoria manages one of the most diverse park and waterway networks in the world. The network contains natural and cultural resources that provide a wide range of benefits to the environment, the community and the economy. Each year, Parks Victoria measures the condition of bay and park assets to inform asset investment and maintenance.

In 2022–23, 90 per cent of park assets (against a target of 88 per cent) and 71 per cent of bay assets (against a target of 80 per cent) were rated in average to excellent condition. The lower than targeted result for bay assets is due to ongoing deterioration through ageing and storm impacts. Maintenance works have been completed at Portsea, Sorrento and Gem piers and capital upgrades have been completed at Tooradin and Portarlington. Capital upgrades and maintenance works planned and underway, funded by the Department of Transport and Planning, [Better Piers and Waterside Facilities and the Local Ports Critical Maintenance program](https://dtp.vic.gov.au/ports-and-freight/about-victorias-local-ports), will help to improve overall bay asset condition in the medium term.

**Indicator: Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA’s progress in enabling self-determination**



* 2021–22: 50%

2022–23: 60%

In 2022–23, an overall improvement in the positive level of satisfaction of Traditional Owner Corporations with the department’s progress in enabling self-determination was reported reaching 60 per cent, up from 50 per cent.

Progress over the reporting period included transformation of DEECA’s service delivery and systems to remove barriers to Aboriginal self-determination, including the transfer of power and resources to Traditional Owners. Examples of DEECA’s continuing progress towards self-determination include:

* an increase of 10,540 square kilometres in land recognised under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 since 2020–21
* an increase of cultural burns on public land from four burns in 2018–19, to 15 in 2021–22 and 20 in 2022–23

a significant increase in formal partnership agreements between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies from 66 in 2019 to 236 in 2022.

In addition, DEECA continued to drive the protection and promotion of Aboriginal cultural heritage through many on-Country projects throughout the state, such as the establishment of the ongoing Protection Declaration for Ghow Swamp, which came into effect on 6 October 2022. The Declaration specifies the measures to be taken to protect Ghow Swamp Aboriginal Place, which has been an immensely significant place to Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years.

**Management of Public Land and Forests**

This output provides for the improved stewardship of Victoria’s forests, coasts and Crown land reserves. Through this output, the Department manages the natural, built and historic assets on public land responsibly, and incorporates management of public land in partnership with statutory agencies, committees of management and local government.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Crown land leases directly managed by the Department | number | 645 | 678 | (4.9) | 2 |
| Crown land licenses directly managed by the Department | number | 45 000 | 45 000 | 0 | 1 |
| Native Title and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 negotiations the Department supports with data and information services | number | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Native Title and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 agreements being implemented by the Department | number | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Participants in Coastcare activities | number | 7 918 | 10 000 | (21) | 3 |

Performance is below target reflecting external demand for the program. Actions to increase participant numbers through the year included volunteer support activities and maintaining online videos to ensure maximum viewership.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and Cranbourne | number (million) | 2.0 | 2.2–2.4 | (9) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to reduced international tourism rates, which continued to be impacted by COVID-19. In addition, wetter than average weather conditions in 2022–23 impacted on visitation rates, particularly to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. The visitation target for the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne was met.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Specimens curated in the State Botanical Collection | number | 15 182 | 30 000 | (49) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the redirection of staff to respond to flooding in the herbarium facility following heavy rain events in late 2022, and the commencement of essential building works under the ‘Safeguarding Victoria’s critical seed and botanical collection’ asset initiative.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Visitors to Zoos Victoria at Melbourne, Werribee and Healesville | number (million) | 2.56 | 2.85 | (10) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the combined impacts of cost-of-living pressures, COVID-19 and other illnesses, and reduced international tourism. In addition, the availability and cost of bus transportation and higher than average illnesses among students and teachers affected the number of school excursions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Contaminated Crown land sites assessed/prepared for remediation | number | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Off-leash dog parks completed | number | 31 | 31 | 0 | 1 |
| Suburban pocket parks completed | number | 20 | 29 | (31) | 3 |

Performance is below the target due to some projects experiencing delays relating to the time taken to remediate contaminated land before construction, complex infrastructure requiring re-location, statutory planning/building approvals (including heritage and road closure), and in some cases re-scheduling construction to allow for adjoining traders to operate over the summer period.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Publicly elected Committees of Management that have a current statutory appointment | per cent | 89 | 90 | (1) | 2 |
| Recreational facilities in state forests maintained | per cent | 76 | 75 | 1 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Rent reviews of Department managed Crown land leases undertaken within specified time frames | per cent | 96 | 95 | 1 | 1 |
| Investigations of alleged non-compliance with the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 and other relevant laws are completed within the statute of limitations of two years | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 418.5 | 336.0 | 25 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding for supporting the portfolio entities impacted by COVID-19, and initiatives including expanding Werribee Open Range Zoo, three new parks linked to Suburban Parks, and VicCoasts: Building a safer, healthier and more resilient marine and coastal environment for the community.

**Parks Victoria**

This output provides for the improved stewardship of Victoria’s parks. Through this output, Parks Victoria manages the development and protection of natural, cultural and community assets for safe enjoyment and sustainable use by all Victorians. Parks Victoria works to ensure the State’s park assets are managed efficiently and effectively.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Area treated to minimise the impact of pest plants, pest animals and over abundant native animals in parks managed by Parks Victoria | hectares (000) | 2 110 | 1 600 | 32 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the funding of new projects and the extension of existing projects that were due to finish in 2021–22.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Visits to national, state, urban and other terrestrial parks | number (million) | 91 | 82 | 11 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to ongoing post-pandemic trends in increased visitation from Victorian and interstate visitors.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Visits to piers and jetties | number (million) | 36 | 37 | (3) | 2 |
| Total area of estate managed by Parks Victoria | hectares (000) | 4 120 | 4 120 | 0 | 1 |

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Significant built bay assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition | per cent | 71 | 80 | (11) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the decline of maritime assets from age and storm impacts. Maintenance works at Portsea, Sorrento and Gem piers, and the completion of capital upgrades to Portarlington have resulted in the stabilisation of the overall condition of assets.

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Significant built park assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition | per cent | 90 | 88 | 2 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 163.7 | 216.5 | (24) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to a reallocation of funding from output to asset for acquisition of land, less than anticipated expenditure associated with less revenue collected from the Werribee Mansion, and the funding profile of Securing the Benefits Of Parks For All Victorians – Shrine To The Sea project initiative.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Safe and sustainable water resources

* 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
* 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
* 13 Climate Action

14 Life Below Water

### Progress towards achieving this objective

Context

DEECA works to ensure that Victoria has safe, sustainable and productive water resources to meet urban, rural, environmental and cultural needs, now and in future. The department partners with water corporations, catchment management authorities, government agencies, industry, Traditional Owners and the community to balance the economic, environmental and social values of water. This helps to deliver healthy waterways and aquifers, secure water supplies across Victoria and ensure sustainable irrigation and agriculture, along with greener and more liveable cities and towns.

The Victorian Government is investing $693.9 million over a four-year period to deliver *Water for Victoria*, our strategic plan for managing our water resources and to support a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and thriving communities.

Keeping water affordable for everyone is vital. Our challenge, and our opportunity, is to do more with less water and to reduce our reliance on traditional water sources. In September 2022, two key policy documents were released that will ensure management of Victoria’s water resources continues to take account of community perspectives:

* The *Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy* sets out our plan for how we could double the region’s water supplies over the next 50 years, improving water security in the face of population growth and a changing climate, while protecting our iconic waterways

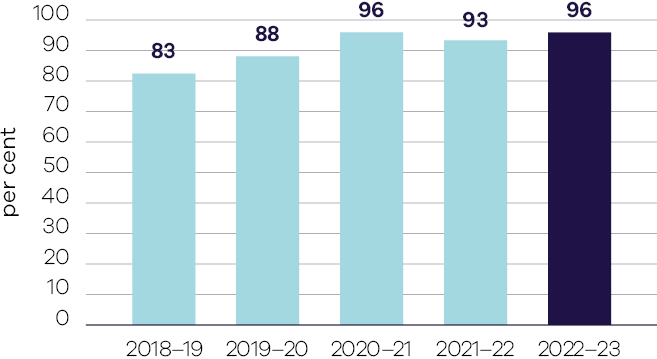
The *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap* is an important step towards self-determination in water access and management for Traditional Owners, and a deliverable from *Water for Victoria*.

Responding to extreme events is part of managing Victoria’s water resources under a variable and changing climate. In October 2022 there was significant flooding across large areas of the state, as Australia faced the ninth wettest year on record nationally and the fourth wettest for the Murray-Darling Basin. In partnership with the water sector, DEECA played a significant role in responding to the immediate flood emergency, supporting the longer-term recovery effort and enhancing Victoria’s preparedness for future floods.

The table below outlines the actions we are taking to create a modern and efficient, future-focused and affordable water system.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy | The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS) launched in September 2022, to secure the region’s long-term water supplies to protect jobs, farms, ecosystems, communities and the cultural values of Traditional Owners in the region.  The Strategy and the actions contained within it aim to meets the current and emerging water challenges for the Central and Gippsland region over the next 50 years, during which time the region’s population is expected to have grown to over 10 million and water availability is expected to continue to decrease due to climate change.  Actions during 2022–23 for the CGRSWS include:   * collaborated with water corporations to progress development of the first Water Grid Plan to be published later in 2023 * commenced options analysis of pathway(s) to progress water recovery for the environment and Traditional Owners through regionally significant augmentations * developed the detailed South Central reform work program and received water corporation buy-in * progressed opportunities to recover water * worked in partnerships with Wadawurrung, Gunaikurnai, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owner group representatives to develop funding agreements under the CGRSWS and developed a Cultural Benefits Framework through the partnerships identified priority place-based integrated water management projects to co-invest in, to increase the use of rainwater, stormwater and recycled water * developed WaterSmart, a non-residential water efficiency program, which focuses on on-ground water efficiency related assistance for businesses and councils, and a water efficiency behaviour change research and development project * encouraged more schools to join Schools Water Efficiency program or similar program. |
| *Water is Life* – Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap | *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap* was launched at the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in September 2022. *Water is Life* was developed with Traditional Owners, and charts a pathway to genuine, meaningful outcomes for and in partnership with Traditional Owners.  *Water is Life* proposes a series of actions the Victorian Government will take in partnership with the water sector, existing water users and Traditional Owners to increase Traditional Owner access to water and management of water landscapes. The *Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy* also commits to a range of specific actions to return water entitlements to Traditional Owners in the Central and Gippsland regions.  DEECA is working with Traditional Owners to progress actions consistent with these policies, including supporting existing water entitlement application processes with Traditional Owners and identifying further opportunities to return water under current frameworks. |
| Aboriginal Water Program and the Water, Country and Community Funding Program | The Water, Country and Community Program provided $18 million to Traditional Owner water-related priorities, including self-determined water projects and funding for 24 Aboriginal Water Officer positions to 2024. The Program was expanded with a stage 2 grant round, supporting Traditional Owners not previously funded with grants of up to $200,000 to lead projects, research or employ an Aboriginal Water officer (or equivalent) between June 2022 and June 2024.  In 2022–23, three hybrid Aboriginal Water Officer Network meetings were held, bringing together Aboriginal Water Officers from across Victoria for robust discussions, support and collaboration. |
| Contributing to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement on behalf of Victoria | DEECA and the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) co-led an interjurisdictional approach for consideration of Traditional Owner water as part of future Murray-Darling Basin Plan projects.  DEECA supports the Murray-Darling Inspector General Water Compliance and is an active member of its Regulatory Leaders Forum and associated working groups, to develop consistent compliance and enforcement frameworks and performance measures across the Basin. DEECA participated in the continuing review of Schedule D of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement through the Trade Working Group. This review is looking at opportunities to refine and simplify the operation of interstate trade. |
| Improving Victoria’s resilience to flooding | Twelve of Victoria’s highest priority flood projects secured $3.3 million funding in September 2022 through the Risk and Resilience Grants program to build Victorian communities’ resilience to flooding. Projects funded include flood studies, mitigation infrastructure and upgrading flood warning and preparedness arrangements. The third round of submissions for the Risk and Resilience Grants program were invited in June 2023 to fund flood projects prioritised by communities through their regional floodplain management strategies.  The 2022–23 financial year is the first year of the Victorian Government’s $10 million commitment to fast-track development of flood studies for around 32 towns. This will result in up to six new flood studies funded each year of the initiative. |
| Investment in locally prioritised flood prevention infrastructure | Following the October 2022 floods, the Victorian Government committed $5 million over two years to fast-track scoping and development of business cases for future flood mitigation activities. This investment follows several years of local and state government investment in planning and design phases.  A further $5 million was allocated to flood mitigation infrastructure. This includes funds to northern CMAs and local councils and VICSES to strategically assess all levees and update municipal flood emergency plans and FloodZoom. |
| Implementation of regional floodplain management strategies | The Victorian and Commonwealth Government co-funded Risk and Resilience Grants program for 2022–23 provided funding towards the next tranche of regional floodplain management strategy priority projects.  The regional strategies are approaching five years of implementation. Catchment Management Authorities are leading a mid-term review with implementation committees to review progress and update the region’s priority actions. |
| Restoring waterways and catchments impacted by bushfires and improving resilience climate change | As at 30 June 2023, CMAs have achieved their targets of 2,320 hectares of weed control and 121 kilometres of riparian fencing as required under the relevant recovery programs. East Gippsland CMA in partnership with Aboriginal Natural Resource Management crews (from Moogji Aboriginal Council and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation) completed 53 hectares of weed control on the Tambo, Buchan, Snowy and Combienbar rivers in areas impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires. This long-term commitment to these areas has improved environmental recovery at a very low cost. |
| Repairing and replacing essential water infrastructure assets to assist East Gippsland Water and North East Victoria recover from the impact of bushfires | The East Gippsland bushfire recovery project – including the Buchan Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Tank, the Mallacoota clear water tank, VHF network upgrades and SCADA upgrades – achieved practical completion by 30 June 2023. North East Water’s water treatment plant energy resilience project was completed in February 2023. |
| Safety improvements to high-risk small dams | In 2022–23, funding was provided to three councils to remediate three dams and reduce safety risks: Central Goldfield Shire Council to remediate Goldfields dam; Frankston City Council to remediate Baxter Park dam; and Latrobe City Council to remediate Traralgon Reserve large dam.  All three funding recipients have completed site investigations, concept and final design and project planning approvals activities and will move to construction stage in August 2023. |
| Improving the health of Victoria’s regional waterways and catchments | Key outcomes in 2022–23 included:   * delivering partnership projects to improve the environmental condition at Victoria’s internationally recognised Ramsar wetland sites, including support of an acoustic monitoring program for Australasian Bittern at the Barmah Forest Ramsar Site, which supports approximately 30 per cent of the national Australasian Bittern population, making it the most significant site in Australia for conservation of this species * completed approximately 7,000 hectares of waterway vegetation improvement works across priority sites |
| Improving the health of Victoria’s regional waterways and catchments (continued) | * continued delivery of Flagship Waterway projects including: * executing 12 new contracts with landholders and Landcare network partners in the Corangamite CMA region for frontage protection projects that will cover 140 hectares and 22.4 kilometres of the Moorabool River, with all sites contributing to the protection of drinking water supply and platypus populations * willow removal works in the Upper Mitta Mitta River and subsequent revegetation of affected sites with endemic threatened species to achieve great conservation and river health outcomes * delivery of popular citizen science programs including Waterwatch, EstuaryWatch and River Detectives, with volunteers contributing 8,700 days of monitoring effort for the year; and a community celebration held in March 2023 to mark the 30-year anniversary of the Waterwatch program * construction of erosion control structures and fish habitat structures at key sites in priority waterways * continuation of major long-term monitoring programs in targeted rivers and wetlands, including key involvement in the Great Australian Platypus Search, which involved citizen scientists collecting eDNA samples from more than 1,500 selected sampling sites on waterways across Victoria. |
| Water for the environment | During 2022–23, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder worked with CMAs and Melbourne Water to manage its water holdings to meet environmental objectives at 89 river reaches and 65 wetlands. This resulted in 75 per cent of environmental watering actions completed at planned sites from a target of 90 per cent. Wet conditions during late winter and spring 2022 meant that many sites that were included in the Seasonal Watering Plan 2022–23 were watered through natural flooding. As a result, deliveries of environmental water were either not possible due to operational conditions or were unnecessary as watering objectives had already been met. 2022–23 also saw completion of the Buchan River fishway in the East Gippsland region, the Tea Garden Creek fishway on the Ovens River in the North East region and the Catfish Billabong regulator in the Mallee region. |
| Restoring waterways and catchments | During 2022–23, CMAs continued delivery of eight new regional Flagship Waterway projects across regional Victoria and completed works at priority Ramsar sites to address key threats, including the removal of 81 foxes at Bittern Coastal wetlands, the Yaringa Foreshore, Blind Bight and Tooradin to reduce their predatory impacts on shorebirds and waterbirds in these protected areas.  CMAs also delivered significant projects in the Gippsland Lakes component of the program, including the Greening Australia ‘Lower Avon Wetland Refugia project’. This project is enhancing priority wetlands in areas adjacent to the Perry and Avon rivers to support the Growling Grass Frog. On-ground works at 13 ponds have enhanced refuge areas to support known populations and breeding. In addition, the renewal of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan (GLRSMP) commenced early in 2023. |
| Improving access to recreational opportunities on and around water-based natural spaces and water storages | During 2022–23:   * works progressed on a new fishing access pontoon and new access walking track at Trawool Reservoir, which is expected to be completed by November 2023 * the Recreational Values program funded $400,000 towards the Merri River connections project in Warrnambool to deliver an all-abilities kayak launch and created connected walking paths with all abilities access along the waterway * $68,500 was provided for works on Goulburn-Murray Water’s Waranga Basin Embankment Recreation Area project to install new BBQs and shelter to improve visitor experience at Waranga Basin * $50,000 was provided to Barwon Water to deliver interpretive signage on the Barwon River, creating connection to Wadawurrung Country. This was completed in November 2022. * Funding of $400,000 to Melbourne Water delivered improved community access and recreational use of the Lower Werribee River. |
| Urban Water Strategies | Urban Water Strategies (UWS) identify the best mix of actions to provide water and sewerage services in Victoria’s towns and cities now and into the future and are renewed every five years. The Greater Melbourne Urban Water System Strategy was launched on 19 April 2023, with progress of key actions for all UWSs reported through the latest Annual Water Outlooks. |
| Integrated Water Management | Development of Integrated Water Management (IWM) governance and planning frameworks are underway to inform policy reform to enable mainstreaming of IWM. Regional IWM forums continued to deliver activities aimed at further maturing IWM in regional Victoria, and four Regional IWM Officers are now embedded in host organisations to progress priorities of six regional IWM forums. Metro IWM Forums are finalising the Catchment Scale IWM Action Plans to identify a strategic suite of actions to achieve catchment performance targets.  Allocation of $14.59 million in funding as part of the IWM Grant Program (2021–24) was completed in October 2022. A total of 50 IWM projects were awarded funding as part of this competitive grant program including 29 regional projects, nine metropolitan Melbourne projects and 12 Traditional Owner led projects. An additional $31.7 million was allocated to 18 recycled water and stormwater projects in the Central Gippsland region of Victoria. These projects will help to secure Victoria’s water supply and deliver a range of other community and environmental benefits including flood mitigation, improvement of waterway health, greening of our urban environments, naturalisation of our creeks and drought protection for important recreational spaces. |
| Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yulluk) | The *Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yulluk)* action plans continue to drive increased protection for the urban waterways while balancing Traditional Owner and community vision and values.  In 2023, annual reports on the first year of implementation of the Action Plans were delivered. Highlights included:   * the Corangamite and the Port Philip and Western Ports Catchment Strategies recognised the Waterways of the West and Barwon regions as living and integrated natural entities, and Traditional Owners as their voice * stronger planning controls being released to help protect waterways and the liveability of Victoria’s suburbs * a Pollution Prevention Taskforce was established to tackle waterway pollution in Melbourne’s West * collaboration drove the development of a Geelong Stormwater Management Framework, including understanding roles and responsibilities * community waterway engagement was strengthened with the launch of a Waterways of the West Culturally and Linguistically Diverse engagement toolkit for practitioners. |
| Yarra River Strategic Plan (Burndap Birarrung burndap umarkoo) | The Birrarung Council, the independent ‘voice’ of the Birrarung submitted its first annual report on the implementation of the *Yarra Strategic Plan (Burndap Birarrung burndap umarkoo)* (YSP) in February 2023.  The Council’s report highlights a strong start to the implementation of the YSP, with priority projects on target for a 2023–24 delivery. A snapshot of projects delivered or underway includes:   * installation of floating wetlands in the inner city * the watering of Annulus Billabong * a Birrarung Rangers Project being led by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation * the reconnection of wetlands and billabongs in the rural floodplain at Yering in the Yarra Valley * development of an integrated water management plan for the Yarra Catchment.   The next stage of the YSP is being mapped out through the 2023–2025 Implementation Plan. The plan coordinates the actions of all responsible public entities over the next three years, including a focus on partnerships with Traditional Owners. |
| Stormwater and recycled water as alternative sources of water | In 2022–23, DECCA worked with stakeholders to address barriers to using more recycled water and stormwater including:   * supporting the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to update guidelines for recycled water for irrigation use and to increase the state of knowledge on emerging contaminants in recycled water through a field sampling project * supporting the EPA to investigate and begin developing guidance on the permissioning framework to preserve recycled water for the environment * undertaking a gap analysis on recycled water communications in consultation with water corporations, government agencies (EPA, Department of Health) and VicWater. * delivering ongoing capacity building and training activities to support planning assessors and the development industry to comply with Victoria’s stormwater planning requirements set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions * developing an informative integrated water management video * progressing the development of a Stormwater Offsets Framework for Local Government. |
| Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP) | The Schools Water Efficiency Program continues to monitor water use and provides education on water use to more than 50 per cent of Victoria’s primary and secondary schools. As at 30 June 2023, there were 1,385 registered schools. Since commencement of the program in 2012, SWEP has saved more than 10 GL of water and over $33 million in water and wastewater charges. |
| Behavioural change campaigns | In regional Victoria, water corporations used the *Target Your Water Use* campaign to promote water efficiency to their customers. In 2022–23, the Melbourne Target 150 program, which encourages average use of 150 litres per person per day or less, reduced from 155 litres per day as an action arising from the Central and Gippsland Regional Sustainable Water Strategy. |
| Community Rebate Program and Community Housing Retrofit Pilot Programs | During 2022–23, the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit Programs assisted 1,487 vulnerable and hardship households and 267 non-for-profit housing organisation properties in saving more than 84 ML of water. |
| Rural water infrastructure projects | Rural water infrastructure projects across the state are being implemented to improve water security, boost productivity/efficiency, provide significant regional community benefit and in some cases, recover water for the environment and Traditional Owners. Recycled water is also being used to supplement irrigation. Victoria has taken on an ambitious program to restore the health of the Victorian River Murray floodplains through the construction of infrastructure to get environmental water to where it is needed most.  During 2022–23, the following rural water infrastructure projects were progressed:   * Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project – construction of infrastructure to deliver environmental water to where it is needed most * Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) Water Efficiency Project – modernisation and decommissioning of approximately 250 kilometres of channels, upgrading or rationalising more than 1,000 outlets and generating 15.9 GL long-term average annual yield of water recovery * Western Irrigation Network Project – construction of a pipeline network and two storages to connect existing recycled water plants to irrigation districts west of Melbourne |
| Rural water infrastructure projects (continued) | * East Grampians Water Supply Project – construction of approximately 1,600 kilometres of pipeline in the East Grampians region * Lower Murray Water Sunraysia Water Efficiency Project – upgrading approximately 27 kilometres of outdated irrigation channel network, replacing or decommissioning up to 700 stock and domestic outlets and delivering up to 2.5 GL of water savings * Macalister Irrigation District Phase 2 Project – replacement of open channel systems with new pipeline and complete modernisation works, including the upgrade and automation of outlets * Werribee Irrigation District Modernisation Project Stages 4 and 5 – replacement of a channel-based irrigation network to a modern, automated pipeline * Recycled Water on the Bellarine Project – upgrades to the Portarlington Water Reclamation Plant * Victorian Connections Package – comprises nine projects including the construction of pipelines for the delivery of recycled water for irrigation and research, infrastructure for the support of regional communities during emergency and drought conditions and the upgrade of existing infrastructure to deliver secure, affordable and reliable water for rural and regional Victoria * Commonwealth-funded Lindenow Valley Water Security Scheme – assisting irrigators to construct major on-farm water infrastructure to improve security of supply enhancing their long-term drought resilience.   In 2022–23, funding was secured through the Commonwealth National Water Grid Fund for the following projects:   * Wannon Water Improving Water Quality (Enabling Climate Resilient and Healthy Regional Communities) Project – for the construction of new water treatment infrastructure to enhance water quality * Coliban Regional Rural Modernisation Project Detailed Business Case – to investigate the merits of modernising the 500 kilometres network of open channels and pipelines around Bendigo. |
| Integrated catchment management and stewardship | In 2022–23, CMAs:   * engaged key partners, Traditional Owners and the community to finalise all 10 Regional Catchment Strategies (RCSs) across Victoria * continued developing and delivering 17 on-ground capacity building catchment stewardship projects, including 17,754 hectares of changed land management practices, pest management, fencing and revegetation * worked with key stakeholders to develop landscape stewardship plans for more than 300,000 hectares across Victoria. These plans include proposed improvement of land and water management practices that will protect and enhance key wetlands and waterways into the future.   New grants were provided in the 2023 round of *Our Catchments, Our Communities* Leadership Grants across categories for Women, Aboriginal Leadership and Innovation. The recipients will use the grants for leadership development and capacity improvement in the sector.  The first agreement of its kind between DEECA and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) is in place for the feasibility of a Cultural Landscape Plan for the Corop Wetlands Complex in Central Victoria. The two-year project will focus on the integrated management of the landscape with TLaWC as the lead partner in a collaborative governance process between Victorian Government agencies, local government and key community stakeholders in the area.  The Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group (BULG) won the East Gippsland Shire’s 2023 Community Event of the Year award for the stewardship work along the lower Mitchell River working with East Gippsland CMA. A strong partnership was built with Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) in the delivery of this project. |
| Sustainable irrigation | CMAs and Agriculture Victoria continued to assist irrigators to use water wisely while protecting and enhancing the environment. The Sustainable Irrigation program continued to be delivered, including direct field officer support to irrigators, implementation of regional land and water management plans, review of Gippsland and South West irrigation development guidelines and irrigation drainage projects such as the Murray Valley Drainage Course Declaration. Targeted extension and incentive support for the GMW Water Efficiency Project and Macalister Irrigation District. Extension services including webinars and a weekly Water Availability newsletter (covering the Southern Murray-Darling Basin) provided via Agriculture Victoria helped irrigators in improving knowledge on elements of the water market, prevailing climatic conditions and associated water availability. |
| Monitoring the water entitlement framework | DEECA continued to work with water corporations to assist in revising their bulk entitlement metering programs, in line with the 2021 Guidelines for Bulk Entitlement Metering programs. This included progressing the streamlining of storage manager and resource manager appointments to simplify bulk water management arrangements, clarify roles and responsibilities and reduce red tape.  DEECA worked with Traditional Owners to explore immediate and long-term options to support the issuing of water entitlements to Traditional Owners.  The Statewide Licensing Committee was re-established during 2022–23 to provide a community of best practice and develop consistency across the state.  *Groundwater Management 2030*, a statement of priorities for groundwater management, was released and implementation has commenced, including commencing work to inform, improve and streamline effective licensing, trade rules and controls that support changing water uses, as well as initiation of a statewide review of groundwater caps.  The Take and Use Licensing review continued to be progressed, to streamline and strengthen licensing guidance to increase consistency, clarity and transparency in decision making and improve outcomes for water users and the environment.  DEECA continues to work with licensing authorities to support and provide guidance for the processing of Traditional Owner licence applications. |
| Ensuring water is shared equitably and transparently | The Goulburn to Murray trade review was completed in June 2022 and is now transitioning to implementation of the new permanent trade and operating rules, including monitoring and assessment by a Scientific Advisory Panel and Traditional Owners.  Legislative changes to the *Water Act 1989* passed parliament in May 2023 to ensure smooth transition to the Place of Take Approvals framework and sufficient time to consult with affected water users before these changes come into effect on 20 November 2023 Implementation of the new framework, which will better manage delivery shortfalls and support entitlement holders to manage their own delivery risks, continued, including making changes to the Victorian Water Register and developing and consulting on proposed new rules. |
| Ensuring water is shared equitably and transparently (continued) | The Victorian Shortfall Response Plan was published on the Victorian Water Register website in December 2022 to provide confidence and transparency in the process of managing shortfall events to Victorian water users and the community.  The names of companies who own more than 2 per cent of water were published in January 2022. Legislative and regulatory changes were progressed during 2022–23 to enable the reporting of individuals that hold more than 2 per cent of water in a system, and the names of those that have traded more than 20 trades in a water year.  In August 2022, together with Southern Rural Water (SRW), work commenced on the development of a market platform trial in the Macalister Irrigation District. The trial will support a greater understanding of the tools and resources required to improve water market transparency for water users in the southern Victorian water market. New market research has also commenced with SRW to gain an improved understanding of barriers to trade in the South-West Limestone Aquifer Groundwater, which will provide insights on whether market mechanisms could be an effective tool for water users in this area. DEECA worked with the Commonwealth and Basin Jurisdictions to support the development of a Water Market Reform Roadmap to deliver on the recommendations from the ACCC inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin water markets. |
| Supporting water compliance activities | Following extensive consultation led by DEECA, all rural water corporations have now been onboarded with Fines Victoria and equipped to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (Fines) to deter small volume unauthorised take. Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) and Lower Murray Water (LMW) introduced the fines in January 2021. The introduction has been supported by coordinated communications about fines to customers across all rural water corporations. A reduction in small volume water theft is being observed.  Social research conducted between July and December 2022 aimed to understand water user knowledge of unauthorised take and compliance and its importance, including how our existing messaging resonates with the community and their preferred communication channels. Results have supported the refinement of DEECA’s statewide communications approach on unauthorised take. |
| Supporting water compliance activities (continued) | In February 2023, DEECA finalised the newly established training, capability and appointment framework to support consistent and best-practice approaches for compliance and enforcement across Victoria’s rural water corporations and set minimum capability standards for authorised water officers. The Framework is supported by a newly established introductory compliance training module for water corporation staff.  DEECA continues to support water corporations to ensure targeted investment in modern metering and telemetry to address compliance and water resource risk, through the finalisation of a costs-benefit analysis framework in August 2022. |
| Delivery of essential water availability information | During 2022–23, water monitoring data was collected at 950 surface water gauges and 1,422 State observation groundwater bores. All data collected was published to [Water Measurement Information System](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/?_gl=1*fume7r*_ga*MTU0ODMzMDE5LjE2OTU2OTM3MTc.*_ga_HZW4F91CHC*MTY5NzA3NTEyOS42LjEuMTY5NzA3NTI2MS4xMC4wLjA.&_ga=2.88721821.744195561.1697075129-154833019.1695693717).  Engagement with the water sector took place throughout 2022–23 to support the application of the Guidelines for Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Availability in Victoria and the findings of the Victorian Water and Climate Initiative.  The annual Victorian Water Accounts (VWA) are a transparent resource that communicates annual water availability and use across the state. The 2021–22 VWA is expected to be published in October 2023. |
| Safeguarding Bendigo’s urban waterways | Funding was secured for the development of a solution to manage impacts of groundwater from mine voids beneath Bendigo, which will be implemented over the next three years. Interim management arrangements continue to operate, safeguarding Bendigo’s urban waterways. |
| Victorian Water Register Transform Project | DEECA progressed work to transition the Victorian Water Register to a new technology platform. The current functionality and operation of the existing Victorian Water Register continues to be maintained. Engagement with Victorian Water Register partner organisations and stakeholders continued while detailed design and build of the new Victorian Water Register has commenced. Activities to deliver the new Victorian Water Register including stakeholder engagement, development and system testing will continue until mid-2024. |
| Insights: Executive Leadership for Women in Water | The second Insight program was delivered as part of the Victorian Government’s commitment in *Water for Victoria* to improve gender diversity in the water sector executive teams and to develop programs to support women aspiring to executive roles. The cohort of 14 women across Victoria’s water sector graduated from the program on 27 April 2023. The program's aim is to achieve a critical mass of engagement, informed leaders – both men and women – who are committed to elevating the sector’s performance towards a sustainable future. |

**Indicator: Proportion of intended properties (or equivalent) in the Goulburn Murray, Macalister, Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigation districts connected to a modernised irrigation delivery system**



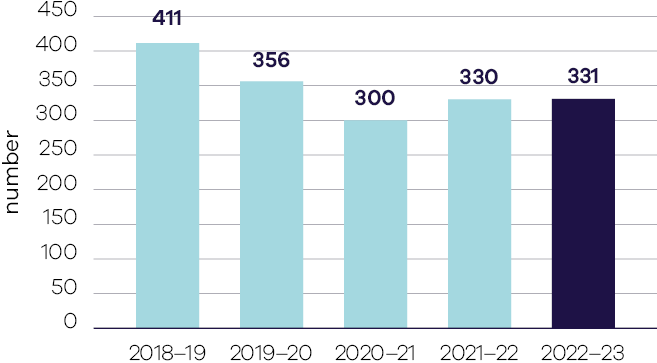
* 2018–19: 83%
* 2019–20: 88%
* 2020–21: 96%
* 2021–22: 93%

2022–23: 96%

In 2022–23, 95.9 per cent of intended properties were connected to a modernised irrigation delivery system. During the year, work continued to progress ongoing water infrastructure projects including the Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) Water Efficiency Project, Southern Rural Water’s Macalister Irrigation District Phase 2 Project and Werribee Irrigation District Project Stages 4 and 5. These projects will modernise channels or replace channel systems with new pipeline, in addition to upgrading, automating and rationalising outlets.

As more modernisation projects are funded in these irrigation districts, the baseline number of intended properties to be connected will increase. This will lead to a decrease in the proportion of intended properties connected to a modernised irrigation delivery system until new projects works are complete.

**Indicator: Number of river reaches/wetlands with maintained or improved environmental condition**



* 2018–19: 411%
* 2019–20: 356%
* 2020–21: 300%
* 2021–22: 330%

2022–23: 331%

In 2022–23, on-ground works and watering programs were undertaken at 331 river reaches and wetlands to maintain or improve their environmental condition. This included 7,000 hectares of waterway vegetation works such as tree planting, weed control and fencing alongside waterways, and the completion of 75 per cent of planned environmental watering actions. Delivery agencies maintained strong performance in 2022–23 despite challenges from the major October 2022 flood emergency, which contributed to some delays in project delivery as sites were inaccessible or unsuitable for works or watering programs. The long-term yearly average delivery (over the last five years) is 346 sites.

**Effective Water Management and Supply**

This output develops policies, provides strategic advice and oversees regulatory systems and institutional arrangements to effectively manage Victoria’s water resources. Through this output, the Department delivers on-ground environmental programs to improve the health of waterways; water industry reform, governance and performance oversight; integrated water management; sustainable irrigation programs; and makes water resource information accessible to enable informed decision making.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Area of waterway vegetation works undertaken to improve the health and resilience of waterways | hectares | 7 000 | 9 000 | (22) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the impact of the October 2022 Victorian floods. Flooding and widespread long-term wet conditions leading into spring 2022 made many project sites inaccessible and/or unsuitable for works for several months, plus the redirection of resources and contractors for works towards flood recovery also significantly delayed planned project delivery timeframes and outcomes. These delays were unrecoverable in the final months of the year.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Cumulative water savings (permanent reduction in irrigation distribution system delivery losses) realised through water recovery projects | megalitres | 900 683 | 910 028 | (1) | 2 |
| Climate and hydrology research activities underway that focus specifically on Victoria | number | 11 | 7 | 57 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the addition of new research activities that were added to the research program to address the needs of water sector stakeholders. The additional research activities build on the findings and data from the existing research activities and fall within the overarching scope of the existing funding agreements.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Long-term water monitoring site parameters maintained | number | 1 495 | 1 495 | 0 | 1 |
| Interactions with Water Markets reporting and transparency information, including visits to the Water Register webpage and other digital information, per month | number | 9 493 | 2 500 | 280 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the inclusion of mobile user access to the application programming interface.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Schools signed up to Schools Water Efficiency program (SWEP) | number | 1 385 | 1 550 | (11) | 3 |

Performance is below target as school registrations continued to be affected by residual COVID-19 impacts on the education sector, reducing engagement opportunities and the number of schools recruited to SWEP.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Place-based plans and actions underway for healthier communities and environments that encompass multiple values (Aboriginal, social, environmental and economic) | number | 8 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| Households or community housing assisted in the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit program | number | 1 754 | 1 100 | 59 | 1 |

Performance is above target as the actual cost for repairs or appliance replacements required as a result of water efficiency audits on each property were significantly less than the maximum cost allowed per rebate. This resulted in more customers being able to be serviced within the program budget.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Area of active stewardship to improve catchment health and resilience through broadacre management | hectares | 17 754 | 19 500 | (9) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to flooding and widespread long-term wet conditions leading into spring 2022, rendering project sites in some areas inaccessible and/or unsuitable for works.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| New flood studies underway to ensure communities understand flood risk and to inform investment in flood warning and mitigation measures | number | 21 | 12 | 75 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to new studies funded in 2022–23 that fully met the Risk and Resilience Grants criteria, bringing the total number of studies currently underway to 21.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Environmental watering actions achieved at planned sites | per cent | 75.1 | 90 | (17) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the October 2022 flood event and generally wet conditions during 2022, which resulted in natural fills and flooding in some areas. Environmental water deliveries were either not possible due to operational conditions or were not necessary because they were achieved with natural flows and/or spill releases.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Compliance with the salinity management actions agreed in the Murray Darling Basin Agreement | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Victorian Water Register system availability per annum | per cent | 95.8 | 95.8 | 0 | 1 |
| Waterway and catchment health priority projects delivered involving community and sector partners | per cent | 95 | 95 | 0 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Waterway licenses and permits processed within statutory timeframes | per cent | 91 | 90 | 1 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 351.9 | 332.8 | 6 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional Commonwealth contributions for the Off-farm Efficiency program, and the Implementing Water Reform in The Murray-Darling Basin initiative.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment

* 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
* 13 Climate Action

15 Life on Land

### Progress towards achieving this objective

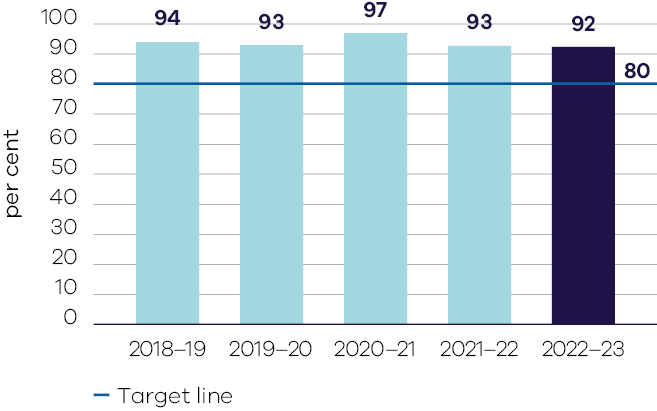
**Context**

DEECA is one of several Victorian Government departments and agencies with responsibilities for emergency management. DEECA’s responsibilities include: the management of bushfires on public land, emergency animal diseases, dam safety, whale and dolphin strandings or entanglements, as well as managing the impacts of emergencies on the environment and energy network infrastructure.

DEECA’s integrated approach to reducing the risk of bushfires in protecting people, property and the environment, is guided by *Safer Together – A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria*. This approach involves land and fire agencies working in partnership with local communities using world-leading science to manage bushfire risks and protect the things that communities value the most. Our integrated approach to bushfire planning and management also helps to make communities safer and more resilient to the impacts of climate change before, during and after bushfires.

| Key initiative | 2022–23 progress summary |
| --- | --- |
| Bushfire, storm and flood recovery | Since 2019, DEECA has been planning and delivering continuous, overlapping recovery programs following devastating bushfires, storms, floods, and energy emergencies. In October 2022, Victoria experienced one of the worst flood disasters on record with flooding significantly affecting communities across most of the state and in particular northern Victoria. The flooding impacted more than 4,865 kilometres of public land roads and approximately 210,553 hectares of public land. It also resulted in high numbers of injured and displaced wildlife, damage to critical water assets and impacts to communities and primary producers from residual water in the landscape.  Initiatives undertaken by DEECA and delivery partners for the flood recovery program in 2022–23 include:   * the full reopening of 49 parks and partial reopening of 31 parks by Parks Victoria (eight parks remain fully closed) * completion of works to mitigate critical and immediate risks to aquatic threatened species, including collection of 100 individuals of brood stock of endangered fish, which will ensure that these species can recover from the floods * damage assessments of over 83 per cent of impacted volunteer committees of management sites and 63 per cent of direct state managed reserves * 129 applications approved for volunteer committees of management to enable community-led recovery activities on impacted Crown reserves including public halls and local reserves * repair of 788 kilometres of flood-affected public roads, providing access to public land including restoration of emergency fire access * re-opening of all strategic fire access roads in the Hume region * 143 visitor sites have been made safe and reopened, with further asset repairs progressing to reopen priority sites |
| Bushfire, storm and flood recovery (continued) | * completion of 53 agreements Wildlife Flood Response Grants supporting the welfare, treatment, rehabilitation and release of injured wildlife * activities to assess and stabilise priority Aboriginal heritage sites and providing support to 14 Traditional Owner Groups with flood recovery funding.   Importantly, DEECA is committed to building back better and considering climate adaptation in its recovery approach to ensure infrastructure, communities and the environment are resilient to future emergency events. One example of this work in 2022–23 is the rebuild of the Lower Snowy Campground in Gippsland, which was impacted by both the 2019–20 bushfires and October 2022 floods. This campground has now been rebuilt to withstand impacts of both fires and floods, resulting in a more resilient campground for the community. This work included stabilisation of riverbanks, rebuilding and relocating infrastructure to more protected locations, and repairing and improving access roads. |
| Evidence-based fuel management | DEECA continued to improve the way it uses data and evidence to better understand and manage bushfire risk. A range of improvements were made during 2022–23 including implementing enhanced methods and modelling to better reflect weather conditions in simulated ignitions, incorporating more data on house loss and asset location, and improving understanding of the likelihood of ignition events. These projects help DEECA and other agencies to better understand where to prioritise fuel management activities.  Due to the wet conditions experienced during 2022–23, delivery of fuel management activities focused on areas where life and property protection could be best achieved. Through this targeted approach, DEECA reduced bushfire risk in high bushfire risk areas, such as the Otway and Midlands districts. |
| Fuel Management Program | As at 30 June 2023, the statewide bushfire residual risk figure is estimated to be at 65 per cent, in line with the target of equal to or less than 70 per cent. The final result will be updated and published in the 2022–23 Victoria’s Bushfire Risk Management Report, after incorporating the latest fuel management works for 2022–23.  Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) continued its focus on the delivery of risk reducing non-burn fuel treatments, such as slashing and mulching in districts where fuel loads are generally unsuitable for planned burning due to moisture levels. During 2022–23, FFMVic delivered 234 burns totalling 75,868 hectares, conducted 16,762 hectares of non-burn fuel treatments (including 630.85 hectares of storm debris area that was mechanically treated), supported the delivery of 20 Traditional Owner burns and carried out 76 (from a total of160) identified priority burns.  Although planned burning site preparation and burn opportunities were limited by the La Niña weather pattern, significant flooding and the persistence of wet conditions throughout spring and summer, the statewide bushfire risk remained well below the target of equal to or less than 70 per cent. |
| Ecological burning | Ecological burning is undertaken to promote beneficial outcomes in vegetation that requires fire for regeneration. The Joint Fuel Management Program 2022–23 to 2024–25 identifies 175 ecological burns covering a total of 66,949 hectares. Over 2022–23, 28 ecological burns were delivered, covering 11,802 hectares, which includes ecological burns in Grampians and Wilson’s Promontory National Park, the western suburbs of Melbourne and western plains grasslands, as well as the Otway coast and Otway Ranges. |
| Investing in and applying bushfire science and modelling to bushfire risk planning | Development of updated metrics continued for modelling the effects of fire on ecosystem resilience and risk to life and property, through the Fire Ecology Program and Risk 2.0 project. These metrics will support fire managers to better target actions to reduce bushfire risk and reduce the impacts of bushfire on people, communities, and the environment. Additional research was undertaken to enhance the statewide bushfire risk modelling system to better estimate future wildfire risk across Victoria under a range of climate scenarios and determine the cost-effectiveness of various management strategies for mitigating these wildfire risks. Other research activities included investigating strategies to address the impacts of landscape megafires on ecosystems and expanding data and models within the Fire Analysis Module for Ecological values. |
| Leading and supporting the response to fire and other emergencies | Following the October 2022 floods and heavy rainfall through to the end of December 2022, FFMVic contributed more than 15,000 shifts in support of Vic SES and the impacted Victorian communities.  During 2022–23, FFMVic crews responded to approximately 50 non-fire emergency events, including cetacean (whale and dolphin) events, potential dam failures, search and rescue assist and Blue Green Algae events. Additionally, FFMVic crews were deployed to assist Western Australia respond to and recover from tropical cyclones and to Canada to provide arduous firefighters and key incident management staff to support fire management operations.  During the 2022–23 Bushfire season FFMVic crews responded to 838 fires, impacting 4,299 hectares of land, one of the lowest total areas impacted over the last 30 years. Of these fires, more than half (444) were unattended campfires impacting approximately seven hectares of land. |
| Emergency management preparedness | The multi-agency Safer Together Community Based Bushfire Management (CBBM) initiative facilitates partnership and collaborative action within community and between community and agencies in high-risk localities. In 2022–23, the CBBM program grew to include 25 communities, of which at least 80 per cent were rated as high functioning in line with annual program evaluation processes. In recognition of its success, the CBBM initiative won the Victorian Government category at the 2022 Resilient Australia Awards and the Resilient Australia National Award in December 2022. |
| Modernising our radio communication to a contemporary digital environment | DEECA continued its work to manage and deliver the radio communications project. Information Systems were integrated into the regional mobile radio network in February 2023 to allow location and radio data to be received for operational management, interoperability, and reliability of the radio system during emergencies. |
| Supporting safe egress and access on the strategic fire access road network | In 2022–23, 10 strategic large crossings/bridges were replaced with high standard, robust structures that have a high resilience to impacts from fire and flood. A further 2,155 kilometres of road upgrades and improvements were delivered across Victoria’s strategic fire access road network. This included 345 kilometres of verge and roadside vegetation management to support safe egress and access for firefighters and other road users.  A two-year road condition assessment project for on-ground inspections of priority roads was developed and will be released in 2024. This will update and validate asset management data and contribute to the strategic management of the state’s roading network. |
| Supporting Traditional Owner-led cultural land and fire management practices | A total of 20 Traditional Owner cultural burns were carried out by Traditional Owners with support from FFMVic in 2022–23 (as of 30 June 2023) in line with the Joint Fuel Management Plan.  As part of the Cultural Fire Grants program, a competitive program intended to enhance core cultural fire funding, $6.3 million was awarded to 10 successful Traditional Owner groups. The program supports Aboriginal Victorians to care for Country and reinvigorate Traditional Owner-led cultural land and fire management practices. |
| Strengthening partnerships and cross-sector coordination to reduce bushfire risk | The Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) is continuing to work with fire and land management agencies to develop, continuously improve and coordinate the implementation of the end-to end framework for evidence-based bushfire risk management policy, practice, assurance and reporting on across all land tenures in Victoria.  In 2022–23, the OBRM continued a broad range of multi-year projects to strengthen the end-to-end framework for bushfire risk management, including projects to:   * adapt the legislative and regulatory framework to support an all-agencies, all-tenures approach to bushfire fuel management * provide input to developing the targets that guide the state’s fuel management program * strengthen bushfire management planning arrangements to ensure that the sector works effectively together to translate shared outcomes into an effective and efficient program of on-ground delivery * improve monitoring, evaluation and reporting to drive accountability and continuous improvement. |
| Partnering with and supporting the emergency management sector to build resilience | DEECA contributed to Emergency Management Victoria’s Coordinated Learning Review into the June 2021 storms. The review identified opportunities to improve emergency management operations, arrangements and community resilience.  DEECA also undertook reviews into the energy emergencies that occurred as a result of the June 2021 storms. Implementation of many of the recommendations from these reviews is underway and will support community resilience in future events.  Through the *Safer Together program*, DEECA partnered with the Country Fire Authority and local communities to share knowledge and increase the role of communities in the planning and conduct of bushfire management. |
| DEECA emergency recovery model | In 2022–23, DEECA established a new recovery model to ensure that the department was able to mobilise coordinated, fit for purpose emergency recovery programs rapidly to respond to the October 2022 flood event. This emergency model streamlines emergency stabilisation activities and enables compounding environment and public safety risks to be managed, bringing forward recovery outcomes. This model leveraged regional staff and networks to deliver fit for purpose emergency efforts to mitigate immediate recovery risks and support communities and the environment to recover, with DEECA’s regional recovery efforts receiving positive responses from partners including Traditional Owners, communities, local councils and volunteer groups that manage Crown reserves. |

**Indicator: Percentage of bushfires contained at first attack and/or under five hectares to suppress bushfires promptly, keep bushfires small and minimise loss**



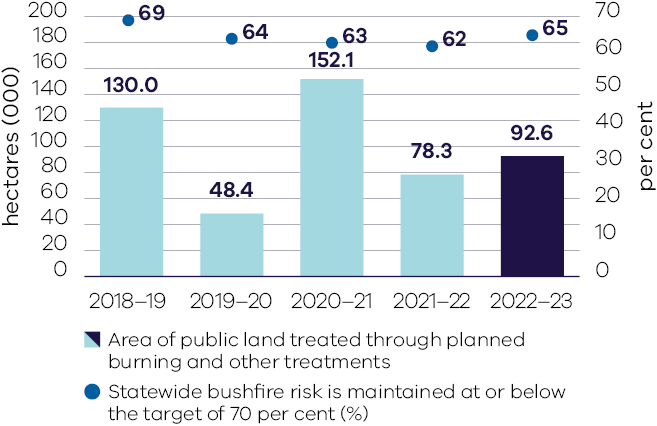
* 2018–19: 94%
* 2019–20: 93%
* 2020–21: 97%
* 2021–22: 93%
* 2022–23: 92%
* Target line: 80%

\* The result for 2021–22 has been revised to 92.7 per cent to correct a previous error in reporting.

During the 2022–23 bushfire season, 92.4 per cent of fires were contained at less than five hectares in size (against a target of 80 per cent) and 97.7 per cent of fires were contained at ‘First Attack’ or by 0800 hours the day after detection (against a target of 80 per cent). Performance was significantly above the target of 80 per cent due to the wet conditions experienced during spring and early summer 2022–23.

In 2022–23, Victoria experienced a third successive La Nina event. This, coupled with other seasonal factors such as a negative Indian Ocean Dipole, warmer ocean temperatures and a positive Southern Annular Mode led to relatively benign fire conditions. [The Bureau of Meteorology](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/annual/aus/#:~:text=Nationally-averaged%20rainfall%20was%2026%25%20above%20the%201961–1990%20average,2022%20the%20ninth-wettest%20year%20on%20record%20for%20Australia.) indicated that 2022 was the ninth wettest year on record for Australia.

**Indicator: Area treated through planned burning and other treatments to maintain the statewide bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Area of public land treated through planned burning and other treatments hectares (000) | Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target of 70 per cent (%) |
| 2018–19 | 130.0 | 69 |
| 2019–20 | 48.4 | 64 |
| 2020–21 | 152.1 | 63 |
| 2021–22 | 78.3 | 62 |
| 2022–23 | 92.6 | 65 |

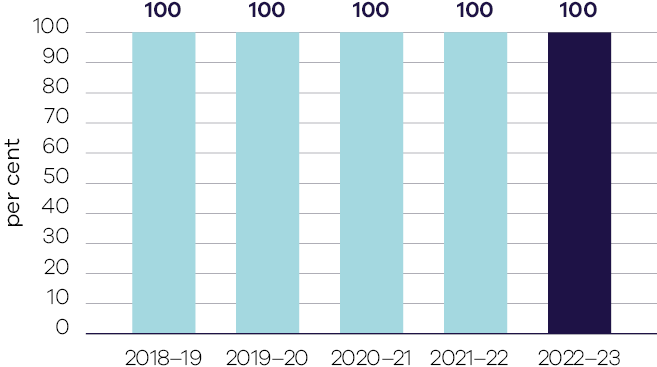
During 2022–23, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) undertook planned burning and other bushfire risk-reduction activities totalling 92,630 hectares. This comprised delivering 234 burns covering 75,868 hectares and undertaking non-burn fuel treatments covering 16,762 hectares, including 631 hectares of storm debris area that was mechanically treated. FFMVic also supported the delivery of 20 Traditional Owner burns and carried out 76 (out of 160) identified priority burns.

Weather conditions in 2022–23 were dominated by above average rainfall and generally cooler than average daily maximum temperatures transitioning to drier conditions by late autumn. Planned burning site preparation and burn opportunities were limited by significant flooding and the persistence of wet conditions throughout spring and summer. Autumn weather was characterised by dynamic and difficult weather systems.

The provisional statewide bushfire residual risk for 2022–23 at 65 per cent (as at 30 June 2023) is below the State’s equal to or less than 70 per cent target. Victoria’s bushfire residual risk is updated annually via Victoria’s Bushfire Risk Management Report published by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management.

The performance result for this measure has exceeded the target. [The Regional Bushfire Management Strategies](https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/strategic-bushfire-management-planning) and [Joint Fuel Management program](https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/bushfire-fuel-and-risk-management/joint-fuel-management-program) have enabled DEECA to target bushfire risk reduction activities in those areas with the highest risk in locations such as the Surf Coast, Otway Ranges, Macedon and around central and north-eastern Victoria.

**Indicator: Percentage of agreed departmental emergency management obligations met on time and to standard**



* 2018–19: 100%
* 2019–20: 100%
* 2020–21: 100%
* 2021–22: 100%

2022–23: 100%

100 per cent of the department’s emergency management obligations as a control agency for fire were met on time and to standard, meeting its accountabilities under the State Emergency Management Plan.

**Indicator: The economic impact of fire prevention and preparedness investment**

As part of the [Safer Together](https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/) initiative, DEECA invested in the uplift of existing bushfire risk models and data. This involved partnering with research institutions to support the development of new modelling capabilities.

DEECA’s investment in bushfire prevention and preparedness activities addresses significant social, environmental and economic costs associated with response and recovery. Key activities delivered during 2022–23 included:

* delivering a targeted program of fuel treatment, including planned burning, mechanical fuel treatment and creating and upgrading strategic fuel breaks
* employing additional firefighters for fuel management and first attack
* improving bushfire risk modelling, smoke modelling, fire ecology capability and risk communication products to share bushfire risk knowledge, data and information with Victorians living in or visiting high bushfire risk areas
* delivering the Safer Together – Local Government Partnerships Grants program, which awarded $1.82 million in grants over three years to support local councils to develop and extend bushfire risk reduction programs with local communities

supporting communities to better understand and mitigate their bushfire risk through dedicated community-based bushfire officers and project officers across the state.

**Fire and Emergency Management**

This output plans and delivers integrated bushfire management. Through this output, the Department works with land and fire managers to plan and deliver bushfire management across public and private land; involves local communities in decision-making, drawing on local values and insights to promote resilience; invests in science and partnerships to build knowledge of the relationship between fire and the environment to better manage risk; monitors and assesses the impact and effectiveness of fire management operations; ensures its workforce is effectively trained and prepared; and maintains a strategic road network to facilitate fire and emergency related activities and provide access for the community, timber and tourism industries.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Strategic fuel breaks built or upgraded | km | 187 | 152 | 23 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to additional works being carried out to manage the risk of certain breaks not proceeding/stopped due to planning and regulatory issues. The higher result is also due to leveraging the opportunity to complete further additional works within existing projects.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Strategic fire access roads improved | km | 2 155 | 2 000 | 8 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the proactive statewide response in reprioritising works to locations not impacted by the flood and storm events over spring 2022. The additional road improvement works resulted in better access on roads across the public estate for field staff and emergency responders, as well as community road users.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Bridges or crossings on the strategic fire access road network replaced or upgraded | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Personnel with accreditation in a fire and emergency management role | number | 2 747 | 2 450 | 12 | 1 |

Performance is above target largely due to a proactive approach to ensure staff progressed to accreditation as soon as practicable after completing training and demonstrating their ability to perform the role. Other factors include strong engagement in training programs.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| State forests roads (Category 1) and bridges (on Category 1 roads) with documented inspections and/or maintenance programs to meet regulatory obligations | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target | per cent | 65 (estimate) | 70 | 7 | 1 |

The final result will be published in the Fuel Management Report 2022–23. The favourable result of 65 per cent is due to the completion of bushfire risk reduction activities in areas most at risk and the wetter than average La Niña weather conditions. Bushfire risk remained low despite the wet weather and flood events causing delays and reductions in planned burn preparations and delivery.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Stakeholder and community forums on bushfire management and planned burning held | number | 13 | 12 | 8 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to one additional engagement forum being delivered to better partner with impacted stakeholders on reducing the potential for smoke taint arising from planned burning activity.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Fires contained at less than five hectares to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact | per cent | 92.4 | 80 | 16 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to mild and wetter than average weather conditions, mainly driven by the third successive year of La Niña. In addition to tropical moisture in some areas of the state and cooler weather conditions, contract extensions for seasonal workers and additional Forest Fire Operations Officers allowed for increased patrols and preparedness works.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Personnel accredited to serve in a senior capacity (level 2 or 3) in a fire and emergency management role | number | 379 | 340 | 11 | 1 |

Performance is above target largely due to a proactive approach to ensure staff progressed to accreditation as soon as practicable after completing training and demonstrating their ability to perform the role. Other factors include strong user engagement in the program and the proactive identification and recruitment of candidates for senior roles.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Proportion of Community-Based Bushfire Management partnerships rated as high functioning | per cent | 80 | 80 | 0 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Assessment of model of cover completed to assess resource requirements and availability | date | Dec 2022 | Dec 2022 | 0 | 1 |
| 100 per cent of burns identified in the Joint Fuel Management program prepared for delivery | date | Sep 2022 | Sep 2022 | 0 | 1 |
| Fires contained at first attack to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact | per cent | 97.7 | 80 | 22 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to mild and wetter than average weather conditions, mainly driven by the third successive year of La Niña. In addition to tropical moisture in some areas of the state and cooler weather conditions, contract extensions for seasonal workers and additional Forest Fire Operations Officers allowed for increased patrols and preparedness works.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Readiness and response plans completed prior to the upcoming fire season | date | Oct 2022 | Oct 2022 | 0 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 617.2 | 411.1 | 50 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding to support emergency response and recovery activities for Victorian flood and other emergency events, and the transfer of funding from the ‘Management of Public Land and Forests’ output for Enhanced Communications During Emergencies Creating a Safer Victoria initiative.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

## Productive and sustainably used natural resources

* 2 Zero Hunger
* 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
* 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
* 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
* 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
* 13 Climate Action

15 Life on Land

### Progress towards achieving this objective

**Context**

This objective supports a more productive, globally competitive, sustainable and jobs-rich agriculture, food and fibre, and resources sectors. The department delivers the objective in collaboration with partners, local communities and industry to deliver outcomes that provide benefits to all Victorians.

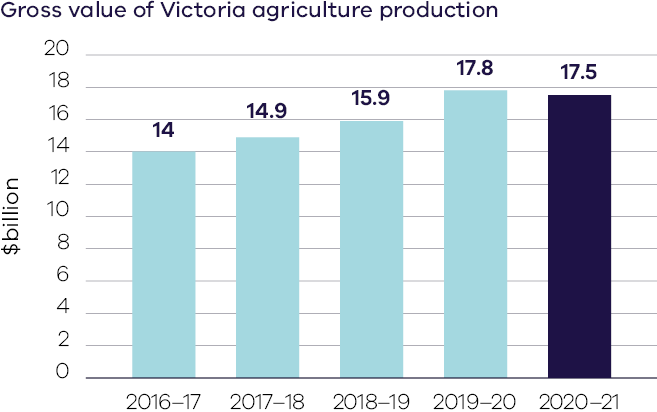
The Resources output contributes to this objective by aiming to achieve a growing and sustainable earth resources sector through effective policy, programs and regulation.

The Agriculture output contributes to increasing the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of food and fibre industries and creates the conditions to grow the natural resources economy. This includes protecting and enhancing market access and management of biosecurity risks, increasing the use of new technologies, improving farm practices and supply chain efficiency, building the resilience of the sector to manage risks and emergencies, and assisting the transition of the native timber sector while expanding investment in plantations.

| Key Initiative | 2022–23 Progress Summary |
| --- | --- |
| Agriculture Flood and Storm recovery | Following storms and flooding in northern Victorian in late 2022 and early 2023, over 12,000 agricultural properties were impacted with almost 500,000 hectares of farm area affected, more than 15,500 livestock deaths, over 12,000 km of fencing damaged and approximately 53,850 tonnes of hay or silage destroyed. The impacts to broadacre cropping and horticulture farm businesses were significant with more than 200,000 hectares of field crops damaged or destroyed. In response, the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments co-funded a suite of financial support programs valued at over $300 million to support farm businesses and their communities to clean up and recover. Agriculture Victoria supported farmers to recover by delivering technical information and advice on issues including pasture recovery, fencing, stock water and dam management, soil erosion, feed budgeting, horticulture recovery, pest management and animal health advice. |
| Animal Welfare | Development of the new Animal Care and Protection Bill continued to progress including research, policy development and targeted stakeholder engagement, with a series of workshops undertaken with critical stakeholders to further explore and test the development of the draft Bill. A Plan for the new laws was released in September 2022 for stakeholder and public comment, generating more than 900 responses. These responses are informing the development of draft legislation, planned for release for further public comment in late 2023. |
| Agriculture Strategy | The Agriculture Strategy continued to support the growth of the Victorian agriculture sector with a 10-year transformational strategy to help the sector recover from COVID-19 and bolster the economy:   * under the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan, farmers continued to visit demonstrations in 2022–23 on various technologies including agrivoltaics, wind turbines and pumped hydro and learn more about the costs and benefits of technology for renewable energy and energy efficiency * the Pathways to Export Program continued to assist established, small-scale, and first-time food and fibre exporters to enter new markets and maintain their presence in existing markets, with highlights including the inaugural Vic House Expo held in April 2023 showcasing a diverse range of more than 50 Victorian brands to over 325 international buyers |
|  | * the AgTech Regional Innovation Network (AgRIN) continued to support a vibrant, globally competitive Victorian AgTech industry including: * facilitating the trial and validation of new almond drying technology at the Mildura SmartFarm in collaboration with AgTech start-up Harveston. * delivering pre-accelerator programs in partnership with LaunchVic to enhance the skills of aspiring AgTech entrepreneurs and grow the pipeline of Victorian AgTech start-ups * creating a new partnership with LaunchVic to provide funding for early-stage start-ups grants, the creation of an AgTech Angel Investor Network to invest back into the sector * delivery of support for research and commercialisation of key Agriculture Victoria AgTech research projects continued, including the Monash automated fruit picking project. |
| Food to Market program | The Food to Market program successfully invested in peak bodies, agri-food businesses, and supply chain partners to value-add to food grown and processed in Victoria. In 2022–23, the program supported job creation and delivered productivity improvements to help businesses capitalise on new opportunities and build resilience across the agrifood supply chain. |
| Food safety | The department continued to deliver on commitments made in the Agriculture Strategy. A revised Statement of Expectations was provided to regulators to encourage initiatives to reduce regulatory burden, drive innovation, support small business and collaborate with other regulatory areas such as animal welfare and animal disease preparedness. Other emerging priorities included preparing for the introduction of new national standards for the horticulture industry which will come into effect in early 2025 and new production techniques such as cell-based foods. The department and portfolio regulators continue to work closely with the Department of Health to implement effective and efficient food safety regulation. |
| Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund (AIJF) | This program invests in initiatives that support market access, productivity, innovation, skills, and network capability. Components delivered during 2022–23 included:   * release of the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan to help farmers reduce their energy costs and be more energy efficient and productive * the Victoria’s On-Farm Internet of Things (IoT) Trial finalising all remaining grants to participants, delivering an IoT network infrastructure across five local government areas, and developing a farm mobile app prototype to demonstrate the potential of shared data * the Enabling the Digital Agriculture Revolution program finalised key project deliverables, including the Digital Agriculture Investment Scheme which provided more than 360 grants to assist farm businesses. |
| Agricultural College Modernisation program | The Agricultural College Modernisation program aims to improve facilities and teaching at agricultural colleges and training providers across the state. In 2022–23, the third year of this four-year program, key components of the program include:   * Skillinvest Ltd is constructing student accommodation for at least 41 students at Longerenong College with a $6.5 million grant through the program, due to be completed by December 2023 * the University of Melbourne is constructing new student accommodation at the Dookie Campus with a $11 million grant through the program, with construction due to be completed in the first quarter of 2023–24 * the Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund ($30 million) is supporting Victoria’s TAFEs and other agriculture education and training providers to develop students’ skills, ensuring they have the training required for a future in agriculture * the $5.5 million Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund is facilitating delivery of 38 projects to support students transition into agricultural careers * the $15 million Agriculture TAFE and Training Fund, is supporting 13 projects to ensure TAFEs and training providers can deliver high-quality, modern and flexible training. |
| Farm Business Resilience program | The Farm Business Resilience program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth’s Future Drought Fund and a $4.5 million grant through the program to deliver on-farm training with a focus on business management and farm planning. As at 30 June 2023, the program has delivered training, workshops and awareness activities to more than 850 participants, and completed 323 Farm Business Plans. |
| Transforming Traceability | Transforming Traceability is a three-year, $11.7 million program (2021–24), in combination with $3.1 million from the Food to Market program, which seeks to modernise and strengthen agricultural traceability systems to enhance Victoria’s reputation for high-quality food and fibre products, driving growth in both local and export market access. Highlights in 2022–23 include:   * conducting an isotope and elemental analysis for citrus to authenticate provenance for Australian fruit which was completed on 30 June 2023 * completion of a digital citrus traceability pilot with a major exporter to Asia Pacific regions (the final report was completed on 30 June 2023) with final post-evaluation to follow * created a National Citrus Map, completed 30 June 2022, to help deliver traceability in the Australian citrus industry * completion of a National Plant Property Identification Pilot on 30 August 2022 * completion of the Horse Traceability Report on 26 October 2022 * launching the Traceability Hub and Quickstart Guide on 16 December 2022 * executing a vendor contract on 26 April 2023 for the Biosecurity Portal to support certification and connectivity for biosecurity functions. |
| Victoria’s Fruit Fly Strategy | Victoria’s Fruit Fly Strategy grants are in their second year of delivery in 2022–23, with a focus on reducing 159 fruit fly hot spot areas by developing targeted strategies, including direct work to educate landholders and promotion of host tree removals in those locations. Work has also been undertaken to reach landholders that previously were not contactable to improve management in problem areas.  The final grant round opened in April 2023 and applications closed in mid-May 2023. Funding will support delivery against gaps that have previously been unaddressed in the program or to complete work that can have a lasting benefit to the region. It will also support regional organisations to play a role by transitioning resources and supporting local organisations to embed area-wide management program elements into their work. The end of this grant round completes the transition of Queensland fruit fly management to community and industry stakeholders under the strategy. |
| Strengthening Victoria’s Biosecurity System | The Strengthening Victoria’s Biosecurity System Program received $27.8 million over four years to 2022–2023, to implement change to strengthen Victoria’s biosecurity system. The program was successful in:   * providing leadership and clarity, and facilitating consensus on the future direction for biosecurity in Victoria through the Cabinet-endorsed Biosecurity Statement * engaging extensively with a broad range of stakeholders, including Traditional Owners to ensure impact of biosecurity on cultural integrity of Country is included in the Biosecurity Statement * promotion of the Biosecurity Statement at the 2022 Melbourne Royal Show to educate visitors about the value of biosecurity and the importance of individual action * development of the Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria to bring the vision of Victoria’s Biosecurity Statement to life by defining our future direction and priorities, due for release in October 2023 * establishing collective and inter-governmental governance mechanisms, fostering collaboration to support a more collective approach to managing biosecurity risks and reform over 2022–23 * launching the first public consultations in September 2022 on improvements to Victoria’s biosecurity legislation with the release of a Discussion Paper that set out key topics for potential reform |
| Strengthening Victoria’s Biosecurity System (continued) | * setting a Regulatory Approach and Framework to reduce biosecurity risks and harms more effectively through regulatory programs * developing an enhanced biosecurity information platform, an inaugural Biosecurity and Agriculture Services Technology Strategy underpinned by a new organisational structure to strengthen technology capability and delivery. |
| Biosecurity related legislation | Changes introduced by the *Agriculture Legislation Amendment Act 2022* to 11 Acts, improving their efficiency, operation, administration and enforcement, came into effect in stages during 2022–23. Changes included modernising authorised officer powers, strengthening controls for noxious weeds and pest animals, improving farm debt mediation, enhancing animal disease control measures and bolstering plant biosecurity. Work continued during the year to strengthen plant and livestock legislation as part of preparedness work for an emergency response, seeking to ensure a holistic and effective exotic pest and disease legislative framework to protect Victoria’s valuable agricultural and horticultural sectors. |
| Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness program | Agriculture Victoria continued to provide leadership to the whole of Victorian Government EAD Preparedness Program to ensure an effective response can be mounted to an EAD outbreak, including foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD). This is essential given the increasing risk of an incursion and the significant response required to limit the economic and social harm an incursion could pose to Victoria’s agriculture sector and broader community.  In 2022–23, the Victorian Government provided $33 million to build its capacity and capability for an effective response to an EAD outbreak. An EAD Preparedness Taskforce was established in August 2022 to bring together departments and agencies to develop an EAD State Response Plan and undertake other activities to rapidly progress EAD Preparedness. Upon the publication of the State EAD Response Plan in October 2022, the Taskforce transitioned into an Inter Departmental Committee (IDC) to oversee whole of Victorian Government preparedness for an EAD incursion. |
| Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness program (continued) | The EAD Preparedness Program continued to address urgent and identified policy, planning, human resourcing and infrastructure needs to support the delivery of an effective response to an EAD event outbreak across four priority project streams:   * industry preparedness and support, and WoVG coordination * communications and industry engagement * improving and building key response systems and tools * training and skills for responders and industry.   The Program also commenced updates to the Victorian Government Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan, the Biosecurity Sub-plan, and the State Emergency Management Plan to align with new emergency management arrangements, ensuring these plans can be effectively operationalised in the event of an outbreak. |
| Supporting responsible pet ownership and companion animal welfare | On 1 October 2022, reforms introduced under the *Domestic Animals Amendment (Reuniting Pets and Other Matters) Act 2022* came into effect, enabling vets and registered animal shelters to directly reunite lost dogs and cats with their owners. Animal Welfare Victoria provided detailed guidance material to all impacted stakeholders to facilitate smooth implementation of these reforms. The Responsible Pet Ownership education program boosted work to identify and train dogs suitable for school visits to replace those retired and withdrawn during the two-year interruption due to COVID-19. The program completed 1,418 visits to schools and pre-schools, reaching 55,083 children.  Animal Welfare Victoria commenced delivery the Animal Care and Protection initiative. This includes $690,000 funding for grants, as well as planning, procurement and consultation activities to support delivery of the cat management, pet census and rehoming pet reforms projects. Animal Welfare Victoria also delivered more than $2.5 million in funding through the Animal Welfare Fund Grants program. These funds were awarded to support the rehoming of cats and dogs; low-cost desexing programs for cats and dogs owned by vulnerable Victorians; and not-for-profit equine rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming organisations.  The Commercial Dog Breeder scheme commenced in October 2022, following delays due to COVID-19. As at 30 June 2023, 16 commercial dog breeder applications have been approved. |
| Protecting Our Pets | Animal Welfare Victoria continued to deliver the Pet Exchange Register to improve traceability of dogs and cats in Victoria and to undertake enforcement activities under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, including regulating larger, dog breeding establishments. The Pet Exchange Register issued more than 95,500 source numbers to people microchipping and/or selling or giving away a puppy, kitten, dog or cat. |
| Agriculture and Veterinary Chemicals regulation | Important work continued in regulating the use of chemicals to ensure adequate controls are in place to protect trade, the health and welfare of animals, chemical users, the general public and the environment. Course resources for *Minimising Risks in the Use of 1080 and PAPP Bait Products for Vertebrate Pest Control* were updated and distributed to Registered Training Organisations and work commenced on reaccrediting the course (expiring in June 2024) through the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority. |
| Animal activism legislation | On 31 August 2022, a new framework under the *Livestock Management Act 2010 and Livestock Management Regulations 2017* commenced for livestock producers to voluntarily adopt, which provides additional protections beyond trespass for persons entering their properties without permission. Participating properties are required to have a Biosecurity Management Plan and specific signage to alert people that non-compliance with biosecurity measures is an offence. |
| Agriculture Sector Emission Reduction Pledge | The Pledge program is a $20 million investment in emissions reduction activities. Achievements in 2022–23 include:   * the On-Farm Emissions Action Plan Pilot was launched in May 2022 to support up to 250 farmers to measure, assess and reduce emissions * ongoing research to investigate the potential of feed additives to mitigate enteric methane emissions from dairy cows in the Victorian context are underway, with initial findings from the Asparagposis trials published in March 2023 * production of a spatial viewer prototype that integrates land use information, industry information and climate change projections * continued promotion of the first Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Statement, a collective government and industry vision to act on climate change (launched in September 2022). |
| Small-Scale and Craft Program | A $10.2 million program delivering on the Taking Our Local Produce to the World initiative has been delivered over four years through to 30 June 2023. The program awarded more than $8 million across five rounds of grants to small-scale and craft producers and delivered workshops throughout the program to support development of business knowledge and skills. |
| Innovation in agriculture | Agriculture Victoria continued to deliver world class research and innovation programs with industry partners. In 2022–23 Agriculture Victoria:   * with the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) agreed a mission-driven strategic research and innovation partnership, with a $30 million five-year investment in the Australian Grains Genebank to accelerate cereal, oilseed and pulse crop improvements and a $10 million five-year investment in biosecurity aligned to the GRDC National Grains Diagnostic and Surveillance Initiative (NGDSI) to improve Australia’s biosecurity preparedness for the grains industry * with Dairy Australia negotiated the Victorian Dairy Innovation Agreement (VDIA), a five-year strategic research and innovation partnership through DairyBio, a $55 million investment and DairyFeedbase, a $51 million five-year investment, for a productive, sustainable and climate change ready dairy industry * partnered with Commonwealth and commercial partners, investing $5 million over two years to develop novel feed additives to assist with methane mitigation in dairy herds * in partnership with the Timorese Government, and funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, established a five-year Animal Health Support Program to build veterinary capability in Timor-Leste for the detection of priority infectious diseases to safeguard Australia from exotic animal diseases * are re-mapping land use cover in Victoria for the first time since 2017 to support whole of government services including biosecurity and emergency response, fire and water management, modelling of carbon emissions and strategic land use planning * continued to accelerate digital agriculture technology application, demonstration, and skill development with industry partners through SmartFarms and Innovation Precincts at regional locations and delivery of the ‘Get into AgSTEM’ education program promoting careers in agriculture and STEM to secondary students. |
| Gippsland Plantations Investment program | The $120 million Gippsland Plantations Investment program is part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to grow more plantations and is the single largest investment in plantation establishment in the state’s history. Hancock Victorian Plantations was awarded the grant (post a competitive market process) in September 2022 and will plant an extra 16 million trees in a new estate under the program. In addition to planting production trees, the program will remove approximately 7.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the next 25 years contributing to the state’s emission reduction targets. |
| Forestry Transition | Support programs underway to assist Victoria’s native timber industry transition are being fast-tracked, scaled up and enhanced to align with the cessation of commercial harvesting by 1 January 2024. Substantial progress has been made in implementing the Forestry Transition program through increased engagement with businesses, communities and other stakeholders connected to the native forest timber industry. Program highlights include:   * the implementation of a worker support package that provides impacted forestry workers case management, support payments and free training, with 633 workers registered to receive support as at 30 June 2023 * twenty-three applications received following the release of Round 2 of the Forestry Business Transition Voucher scheme, 22 expressions of interest and six applications for round 2 of the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund and three applications for the $22 million Community Development Fund * continuation of long-term programs to support local economies to diversify into new and expanding industries. Applications from the Wellington Shire Council to support a manufacturing cluster development and from the Orbost Chamber of Commerce to resource economic development planning and business case development for the seeds industry were approved * the release of the Opt-out Scheme for sawmills with five grant agreements completed and four currently in progress, as at 30 June 2023 * the Victorian Forestry Plan Advisory Committee met eight times to advise the Minister for Agriculture on the design and implementation of Forestry Transition programs, particularly the worker support program and support packages for affected businesses. |
| Promoting new resources opportunities | The Geological Survey of Victoria (GSV) delivered critical initiatives to assist the sustainable development of Victoria’s resources potential throughout 2022–23 including:   * delivering new information on the Melbourne geological zone at the Victoria Gold Mining and Exploration Forum 2023 in March 2023. * delivering a presentation on Tin and Tungsten critical minerals at the Melbourne Mining Club’s first ever Victorian Critical Minerals Showcase held in May 2023. * presenting at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention during 5–8 March 2023, the largest annual mining event in the world with a focus on critical minerals. * delivering the Northwest Victoria Critical Minerals Industry RoundTable at Horsham in March 2023, highlighting the critical minerals initiative work program. * managing an exhibition and delivering presentations at the May 2023 Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association conference, featuring Victoria’s underground hydrogen storage potential. * promoting opportunities for resources exploration and development in Victoria at the International Mining and Resources Conference held in Sydney during 2–4 November 2022. |
| Improving Earth Resources Regulation | The Risk-based Licensing Lifecycle project was completed in December 2022. The project aims to optimise the regulatory licensing model, based on a full lifecycle approach from initial licence grant through to commercial discovery. Implementation of the new operational policy, operating model and assessment framework is expected to be completed in 2023–24, and will result in faster processing of licence applications, address licensing backlog issues and reduce administrative burden. |
| Declared Mines | DEECA progressed the drafting of Ministerial guidelines to support industry’s implementation of the Declared Mine Regulations, which came into effect on 30 September 2022. The new Regulations cover the state’s ‘declared mines’, which are the large coal-mining sites, and will result in better management of declared mine risks and a more accurate assessment of potential long-term liability. Mine operators will have three years to develop and submit their declared mine rehabilitation plans. |
| Hazelwood mine closure | Site visits were undertaken during 2022–23 to ensure stability management controls are in place and to monitor the progress of the maintenance and broader rehabilitation works of the mine. This included review of the emergency flood mitigation diversion constructed to protect the Yallourn Mine as part of June 2021 flood response. The Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process considering the proposed final rehabilitated landform progressed, with the draft Scoping Requirements for the EES released for public exhibition from 19 April 2023 to 10 May 2023. The submissions will be used by the Victorian Government to inform the final Scoping Requirements. |
| Mine remediation activities | Progressed mine remediation works for the following former mines:   * **Benambra** – completed monthly environmental monitoring of the area surrounding the mine and regular surveillance of the tailings storage facility, carried out site maintenance works conducted investigations to inform the final rehabilitation plans. * **Kralcopic Bendigo mines** – controls are being maintained at the sites to manage the potential public health and environmental risks; at the Kangaroo Flat site, a major project was progressed to cover the final tailings dam with mullock rock material, aiming to further minimise dust emissions from the site. * **Red Robin** – commenced the engagement of an assessor to undertake a detailed site investigation and the engagement of an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) appointed auditor to oversee the investigations. |
| Securing the supply of extractive resources | Delivery of actions continued during 2022–23 as part of the Extractives Resources Strategy to improve the long-term planning and protection of extractive resources in Victoria including:   * the Strategic Extractive Resource Areas (SERA) program completed the development of the SERA selection metrics and a multi-criteria decision analysis matrix to assist in the selection of future SERAs; six SERAs were selected and will be rolled out over two tranches in 2023. * successful completion of a trial for a Quarry Approvals Co-ordinator to assist quarries with approvals roadblocks and address short-term challenges by bringing additional supply to market, with the Quarry Approvals Co-ordinator facilitating an estimated 40.5 million tonnes of additional shovel-ready extractive resources. * securing four Quarry Transformation Grants projects in October 2022 to help stimulate smart thinking about repurposing former quarry sites in ways that are innovative. |
| Code of Practice for the extractive industry | *A draft Code of Practice for Common Risk Management Techniques for Quarries* was completed in June 2023. This code will support the reduction of regulatory overlaps and provide a clearer pathway for industry operators to advance their projects. The Code is anticipated to come into effect in the first half of 2023–24. |
| Trailing Liability Scheme | The online public consultation phase on the proposed Trailing Liabilities Scheme closed on 28 February 2023 following the release of the consultation paper on 24 January 2023. DEECA is progressing the assessment of the submissions as part of developing the proposed trailing liabilities legislation. The trailing liability scheme is intended to create a last-resort option that would allow the Victorian Government to ‘call back’ a former title holder or other related party, to complete rehabilitation where a current title holder fails or is unable to do so. |
| Community engagement | The Geological Survey of Victoria (GSV) started a new engagement campaign in 2022–23, focused on the emerging critical minerals (mineral sands) province in north-west Victoria. Regional councils, catchment management authorities, water corporations, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders have been engaged to understand local concerns, aspirations and opportunities. A North-West Mineral Sands Roundtable involving project proponents, government agencies and regional stakeholders was held in March 2023 in Horsham to support discussions on how best to support north-west Victoria benefiting from the growing global demand for critical minerals.  The GSV also progressed an engagement program with ten local government authorities, Parks Victoria, the Conservation Regulator and Regional Roads Victoria in preparation for a ground gravity survey covering 13,000 spare kilometres in north-east Victoria. The Shepparton Numurkah Regional Ground Gravity Survey will take roadside measurements to improve the geological understanding of the region and how it has evolved over millions of years. The engagement program has been instrumental in understanding the local environments in which the survey will take place, including any flood-affected roads, biological concerns, and regulatory approvals. |

**Indicator: Value of Victorian agriculture production**

Gross Value of agriculture production



**$ billion**

* 2016–17: 14
* 2017–18: 14.9
* 2018–19: 15.9
* 2019–20: 17.8

2020–21: 17.5

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

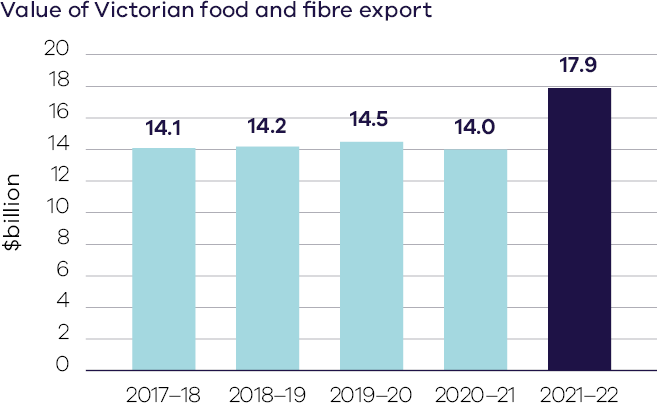
Data on the gross value of Victorian agriculture during 2021–22 is not yet available, due to delays arising from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) agriculture statistics modernisation program. Preliminary indications are that the gross value in 2021–22 will likely prove similar to 2020–21 levels. More broadly, agriculture has remained one of the strongest performers in the Victorian economy in recent years. Victoria’s gross value of agricultural production grew in four of the last five years from $14 billion in 2016–17 to $17.5 billion in 2020–21. This is an increase of 25 per cent. The principal cause of the decline in gross value during 2020–21 (from $17.8 billion to $17.5 billion) was reduced animal slaughter, associated with restocking following drought and COVID-19-related staff shortages at abattoirs.

The high level of production during recent years has been sustained despite challenges including supply chain disruptions arising from COVID-19 and sustained high input prices. Recent years’ positive performance reflects favourable seasonal conditions, generally strong commodity prices, the resilience of Victoria’s farming and logistics systems, strategic investment by the Victorian Government and the ingenuity of Victorian farmers. Commodity prices have been supported by the diversification of Victoria’s international markets. Farmers are adapting to new conditions and circumstances through the adoption of new technology, such as crop and price forecasting, robotics, crop and soil monitoring, intelligent spraying and trough and tank sensors.

During late 2022 and early 2023, large areas of Victoria experienced highest-on-record rainfall, plus flooding, waterlogging and isolated hail. This caused major losses and extreme hardship for some producers, with impacts likely to extend beyond 2022–23. Despite this, Victorian agriculture may yet experience above average production at a statewide scale during 2022–23 for most sectors, due to elevated production outside of flooded or waterlogged areas.

**Indicator: Value of Victorian food and fibre exports**

Food and Fibre exports from Victoria



**$ billion**

* 2017–18: 14.1
* 2018–19: 14.2
* 2019–20: 14.5
* 2020–21: 14.0

2021–22: 17.9

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

Victorian food and fibre exports performed strongly in 2021–22, reaching a record high, valued at $17.9 billion, a 29 per cent increase on the previous year. Victorian exports represent 26 per cent of the national total, continuing Victoria’s lead as the nation’s largest food and fibre exporter by value.

Victoria remains on track to meet the Victorian Government’s target of increasing the state’s food and fibre exports to $20 billion by 2030. By value, grains ($4.4 billion), meat ($4.3 billion), dairy ($2.5 billion) and animal fibre ($1.9 billion) were Victoria’s most valuable export products in 2021–22. Victoria’s top six food and fibre exports grew in export value during 2021–22, most notably: grains (up 73 per cent), animal fibre (up 36 per cent), meat (up 31 per cent) and dairy (up 23 per cent).

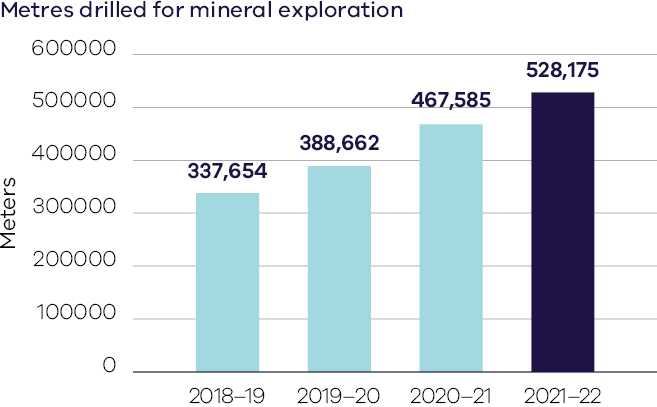
By market, China ($4.4 billion), the United States ($1.5 billion), Japan ($1.5 billion) and New Zealand ($951 million) were our most valuable export destinations in 2021–22. The value of Victoria’s food and fibre exports increased for most of Victoria’s markets, notably to the United States (up 37 per cent to $1.5 billion), United Arab Emirates (up 66 per cent to $506 million) and Bangladesh (up 206 per cent to $342 million).

Diversification of both products and international markets is an increasingly important factor shaping the resilience and profitability of Victoria’s food and fibre exports. Comparing 2018–19 to 2021–22, the value of Victorian food and fibre exports into markets outside of the top five has grown from 39 per cent to 48 per cent.

The 29 per cent growth in export value compared to the previous reporting year of 2020–21, achieved by food and fibre producers, is a testament to their resilience and the ongoing global demand for their premium products.

While the economic impact of COVID-19, including disruptions to markets and supply chains, has continued to resonate worldwide, Victoria’s global standing as a provider of high-quality food and fibre products continues to shield the sector from the worst of the economic fallout.

**Indicator: Metres drilled for minerals exploration**



**Meters**

* 2018–19: 337,654
* 2019–20: 388,662
* 2020–21: 467,585

2021–22: 528,175

Source: Geological Survey of Victoria, (GSV) audited reports for mineral exploration.

The level of metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria during 2021–22 was 528,175 metres. This represents an increase of 60,590 metres or 13 per cent compared to 2020–21. This is mainly due to increased mineral exploration associated with exploration licences (greenfield sites) that represented 44.6 per cent of the total metres drilled (235,767 metres). Metres drilled for mining licences (existing operations) was 221,293 (41.9 per cent) and for retention licences 71,115 (13.5 per cent).

Metres drilled for mineral exploration on mining licences reflects existing operating sites investing in exploration with the aim of replacing the resource that has been mined to deliver future production opportunities.

The level of metres drilled for minerals exploration has increased by 190,521 metres since 2018–19 a rise of 56.4 per cent. This highlights the strong interest by industry in exploring for resources opportunities in Victoria. Further exploration associated with the Stavely minerals initiative in western Victoria and the North central Victorian goldfields ground release will support further exploration investment in Victoria. This is demonstrated through the record level of mineral exploration investment in the State during 2021–22 totalling $222.3 million compared to $184.9 million during 2020–21 ([source: ABS](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/mining/mineral-and-petroleum-exploration-australia/latest-release)). This reflects a 20.2 per cent increase or $37.4 million.

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

**Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives**

A graph of numbers and a bar

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Ounces:**

* 2017–18: 364,225
* 2018–19: 567,501
* 2019–20: 790,054
* 2020–21: 722,239

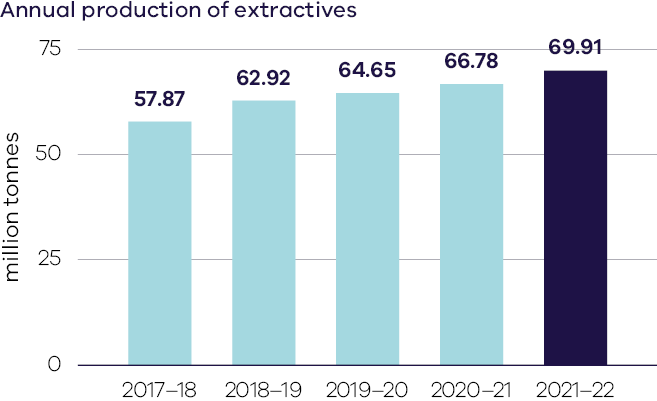
2021–22: 627,011

Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2021–22 Statistical Report](https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/908273/Earth-Resources-Regulation-Statistical-Report-2021-2022.pdf)

Note: the restatement of prior year data in some cases is due to the receipt of late submissions from licence holders.

Gold production in Victoria remains at a high level with 627,011 ounces produced in 2021–22. This represents a reduction of 13.2 per cent from 2020–21. This was mainly driven by planned lower production from the Fosterville gold mine (the largest gold producer in Victoria) as lower grade zones were targeted as part of the long-term operating plan.

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.



**Million tonnes:**

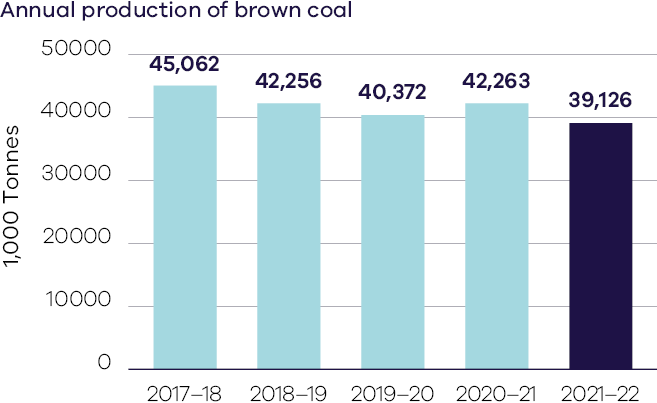
* 2017–18: 57.87
* 2018–19: 62.92
* 2019–20: 64.65
* 2020–21: 66.78
* 2021–22: 69.91

Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2021–22 Statistical Report](https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/908273/Earth-Resources-Regulation-Statistical-Report-2021-2022.pdf)

Note: the restatement of prior year data in some cases is due to the receipt of late submissions from licence holders.

During 2021–22 extractives production increased to 69.9 million tonnes (an increase of 4.7 per cent from 2020–21). Victoria’s Big Build continued to drive new investment in critical infrastructure covering major construction and transport initiatives. This continued to increase the demand for extractives material (sand, stone, and gravel) that is projected to grow to in excess of 100 million tonnes by 2050.

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.



**1,000 tonnes:**

* 2017–18: 45,062
* 2018–19: 42,256
* 2019–20: 40,372
* 2020–21: 42,263
* 2021–22: 39,126

Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2021–22 Statistical Report](https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/908273/Earth-Resources-Regulation-Statistical-Report-2021-2022.pdf)

Note: the restatement of prior year data in some cases is due to the receipt of late submissions from licence holders.

Brown coal production decreased by 7.4 per cent during 2021–22 to 39.1 million tonnes. Brown coal production will decrease in the future reflecting the impact of increasing renewable energy sources for electricity generation, as part of the transition of the economy to net zero by 2045 and the planned closure of coal fired power stations.

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2021–22 Statistical Report](https://earthresources.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/908273/Earth-Resources-Regulation-Statistical-Report-2021-2022.pdf)

Note: the restatement of prior year data in some cases is due to the receipt of late submissions from licence holders.

Antimony is produced from Australia’s only antimony mine at Costerfield in central Victoria. Production decreased to 2,896 tonnes in 2021–22 from 3,551 tonnes in 2020–21. The lower level of production was mainly due to technical operating issues including the commissioning of new equipment.

Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

**Output – Agriculture**

This output delivers services to the agriculture, food and fibre sectors to enhance productivity, connect the sector with international markets, create jobs, support growth and maintain effective biosecurity. It delivers effective, and efficient regulation, compliance, emergency management, biosecurity research and development, and diagnostic services to protect and enhance market access by addressing trade barriers and managing the risks of pests, diseases and chemical use. The department undertakes research and development to develop new technologies and practices and provides services to enhance their adoption to increase farm productivity and supply chain efficiencies. It provides policy advice and support to industries and businesses to innovate, manage economic and climatic volatility, natural disasters and biosecurity emergencies, and meet consumer and community expectations for food quality, food safety and animal welfare and environmental standards.

The output also creates the conditions to grow the natural resources economy by ensuring resources are sustainably allocated and used for both recreational and commercial purposes.

**Agriculture Industry Development and Regulation**

This sub-output supports a more productive, competitive, sustainable and jobs-rich food and fibre sector by delivering policy advice, regulation and support to meet consumer and community expectations for agriculture industry development, pets and animal welfare, regulatory policies and frameworks.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Farms and related small businesses facing significant adjustment pressures supported to make better-informed decisions by the Rural Financial Counselling Service | number | 2 371 | 1 700 | 39 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to the flood and storm events over October 2022 to January 2023, which created financial stress and increased the number of farmers requesting assistance from the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Inspections or audits of scientific establishments undertaken to provide assurance of compliance with relevant industry standards for animal welfare | number | 25 | 25 | 0 | 1 |
| Number of small scale local and craft producers attending workshops / mentoring programs | number | 60 | 50 | 20 | 1 |

Performance is above target as delivery of online workshops allowed for increased participation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Strategies developed to maintain and / or grow export opportunities, pathways and capability and overcome identified trade barriers | number | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Visits of the Responsible Pet Ownership program to Victorian kindergartens and primary schools | number | 1 418 | 3 100 | (54) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the Responsible Pet Ownership program losing almost half of its visiting dogs and educators since 2020–21 due to COVID-19 impacts. The program has since resumed with recruitment and training of educators underway, which will continue into 2023–24.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Young farmer scholarships awarded | number | 13 | 12 | 8 | 1 |

Performance is above target as 13 scholarships were able to be awarded within the allocated annual budget. Where applications are received for less than the maximum scholarship allowable, additional scholarships are able to be awarded.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Grant recipients who met or exceeded agreed milestones | per cent | 77 | 75 | 3 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Performance and grant agreements acquitted within timeframes specified in the funding agreement | per cent | 88 | 90 | (2) | 2 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 148.2 | 166.8 | (11) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to the recashflow of funding from 2022–23 across the forward estimates to better align to project deliverables.

**Agriculture Research**

This sub-output supports more productive, competitive, sustainable and jobs-rich food and fibre sectors by delivering research and innovation to develop innovative new technologies and farming systems that increase food and fibre productivity and product quality.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Applications for intellectual property protection | number | 16 | 16 | 0 | 1 |
| Commercial technology licence agreements finalised | number | 16 | 16 | 0 | 1 |
| Genetic improvement of dairy cows achieved through breeding contributing to increased milk production and dairy productivity | per cent | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Key bioscience platform technologies established | number | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Postgraduate-level/PhD students in training | number | 65 | 65 | 0 | 1 |
| Value of co-investment from external (non-state) funding sources attracted to the Department’s research projects that support productive agriculture | $ million | 45.9 | 41 | 12 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to increased investment from external funders, primarily in grains research following consecutive years of high value crop production.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Satisfaction rating of industry investors in agriculture productivity research and development | number | 9.2 | 7 | 31 | 1 |

Performance is above target indicating the delivery of high impact research to industry.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Scientific and technical publications subjected to independent peer review in international and national journals that promote productive agriculture | number | 263 | 260 | 1 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Provision of technical advice, diagnostic identification tests on pests and diseases including suspected exotics within agreed timeframes | per cent | 82.25 | 85 | (3) | 2 |
| Research project milestones and reports completed on time | per cent | 93.5 | 90 | 4 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 110.1 | 118.7 | (7) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to the rephase of payments for multi-disciplinary research collaborations with industry.

**Biosecurity and Agriculture Services**

This sub-output delivers biosecurity, agriculture and emergency management services and regulatory programs which support the food and fibre sector to achieve sustainable growth while managing risks and minimising adverse impacts to the economy, environment and public health and safety.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Animal pest, disease and residue control programs maintained to ensure Victorian agricultural produce complies with food safety and biosecurity standards required to access markets | number | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Client interactions with land health services | number | 1 678 | 1 700 | (1) | 2 |
| Clients engaged with agriculture productivity services | number | 4 739 | 3 910 | 21 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to significant sector participation in webinars and events related to foot and mouth disease and lumpy skin disease in the first half of the year. These webinars and events were essential given the increasing risk of a disease incursion.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Improved agricultural services, programs and products developed | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Known state prohibited weed sites monitored and treated in line with the relevant weed action plan | per cent | 96 | 95 | 1 | 1 |
| New or amended Interstate Certificate Assurance (ICA) or other market access accreditations developed to restore or enable trade | number | 11 | 2 | 450 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to new pest detections and changes to import conditions of other jurisdictions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Plant pest, disease and residue control programs maintained to ensure Victorian agricultural produce complies with food safety and biosecurity standards required to access markets | number | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Properties inspected for invasive plant and animal priority species | number | 1 905 | 2 700 | (29) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the redirection of resources to higher priority activities, including prolonged emergency responses for Varroa Mite (commencing October 2022) and the Victorian floods (October-November 2022) that involved a significant number of compliance staff.

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Client satisfaction rating of agricultural services | number | 8.5 | 8 | 6 | 1 |

Performance is above target due to a greater emphasis on the design of client focused agricultural services.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| National biosecurity, agriculture/veterinary chemical use and animal welfare programs implemented in accordance with agreed plans | per cent | 100 | 96 | 4 | 1 |
| Preparedness activities implemented, in line with agreed plans, to ensure response readiness for emergency animal and plant pest, disease and natural disaster incidents | per cent | 90 | 90 | 0 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Animal health certificates issued within specified timeframes to support international market access | per cent | 98 | 95 | 3 | 1 |
| Initial action taken to respond to reported emergency animal and plant pest, disease and natural disaster incidents complies with national agreements and obligations | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Plant health certificates issued within specified timeframes at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market to support domestic market access | per cent | 98 | 95 | 3 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 130.5 | 118.5 | 10 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding provided for Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness.

**Sustainably manage forest resources**

This sub-output creates the conditions to ensure the natural resources economy, including forestry and game resources, are sustainably allocated and used for both recreational and commercial purposes.

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Key statutory obligations relevant to VicForests complied with (tabling annual reports, audits, corporate plan and board appointments) | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Facilitate the delivery of the Victorian Forestry Plan in line with key project milestones | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 179.0 | 100.1 | 79 | 3 |

The higher than budgeted output cost is primarily due to additional funding for the timber industry and worker transition support services. This was offset by the less than anticipated expenditure associated with contractual delays for the Timber Plantation Establishment initiative.

**Output – Resources**

**Quantity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Community and stakeholder engagement information forums | number | 55 | 55 | 0 | 1 |

**Quality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Exploration and mining licences which are active | per cent | 88 | 82.5 | 7 | 1 |

Performance is above target reflecting increased exploration activity across the state, which resulted in a higher number of active licences.

**Timeliness**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Extractive Industries Work Authority work plans processed within regulatory timeframes | per cent | 85.1 | 95 | (10) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the limited availability of extractive sector specialists to complete required work plan assessments. Performance has also been impacted due to the continuing high demand for extractive resources in Victoria to supply construction materials for major public infrastructure and housing.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Facilitate the delivery of resources projects in line with grant agreements and project milestones | per cent | 80 | 100 | (20) | 3 |

Performance is below target primarily due to delays in two programs: the TARGET exploration grants program and the extractives work program. The TARGET exploration grants program was impacted by delays in processing drill hole data and subsequent finalisation of milestone reports by grant recipients. Variance in the extractives work program was due to scheduling issues for Precinct Structure Plans and scope changes impacting the release of the Demand and Supply Study 2022–2030.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Industry geoscience data packages released for minerals and petroleum sectors consistent with agreed timelines | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Mineral licence applications and work plans processed within regulatory timeframes | per cent | 66.4 | 95 | (30) | 3 |

Performance is below target due to the processing of historical backlog applications that had already exceeded statutory timeframes and the ongoing higher volume of activity in the minerals sector. Projects are underway to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of minerals licensing under the Regulation Reform Incentive Fund.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Regulatory audits completed within agreed timelines | per cent | 100 | 98 | 2 | 1 |

**Cost**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2022–23 actual | 2022–23 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Total output cost | $ million | 47.9 | 69.4 | (31) | 1 |

The lower than budgeted output cost is primarily due to the transfer of the CarbonNet Project to the Department of Jobs, Skills, Infrastructure and Regions (DJSIR) as a result of Machinery of Government (MoG) changes effective from 1 January 2023.

Note:

1 Performance target achieved or exceeded

2 Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent variance

3 Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent variance.

# Our People

* 5 Gender Equality
* 10 Reduced Inequalities

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

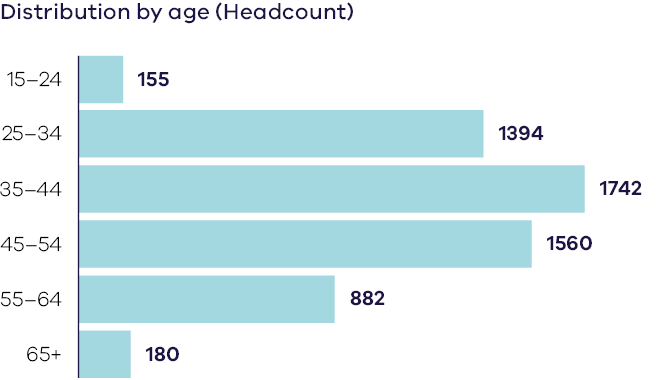
At DEECA, our aspiration is to have a workforce that reflects the communities that we serve and live in. We are committed to fostering a culture where our employees are provided with opportunities to develop, are valued for their contribution, and can work flexibly and safely to deliver great value and services to Victorian communities and stakeholders.

**Note on Machinery of Government changes**

This is the first annual report for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), which commenced operations on 1 January 2023 after Machinery of Government changes were implemented by the Victorian Government. The impact of these changes and, in some instances, prior Machinery of Government changes in 2022 affecting the former DELWP, does not always allow comparable trend data to be presented. Readers are alerted to comparability issues in the notes and analysis in each section.

On 30 June 2023, DEECA employed 5,632 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, with a total headcount of 5,913.

**Figure 1. Staff distribution by age**



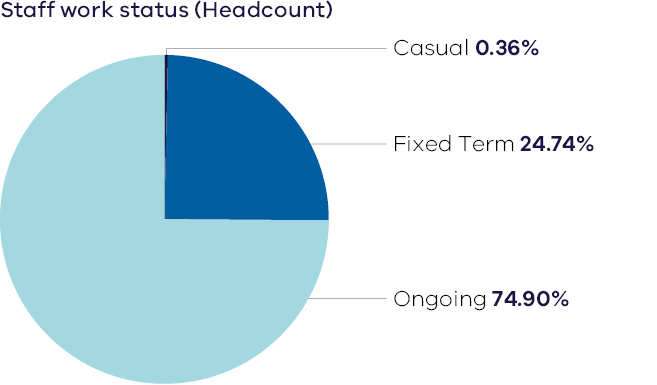
**Distribution by age (headcount):**

* 15–24: 155
* 25–34: 1394
* 35–44: 1742
* 45–54: 1560
* 55–64: 882

65+: 180

The largest age cohort is staff between 35–44 years of age, accounting for 29.5 per cent of total staff. The next largest is the 45–54 year age cohort, accounting for 26.4 per cent of staff.

**Figure 1.1 Staff distribution by work status**



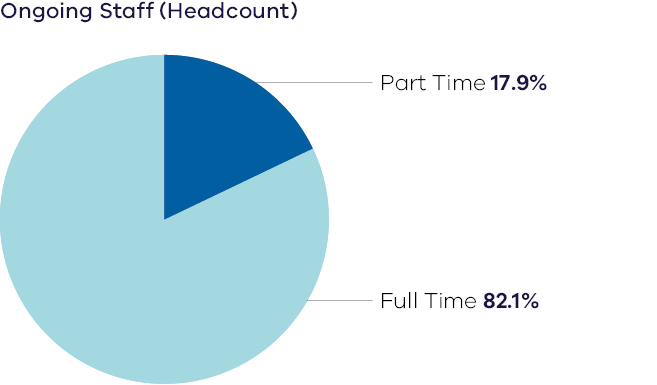
**Staff work status (headcount)**

* Casual: 0.36%
* Fixed term 24.74%

Ongoing 74.90%

There were 4,429 staff in ongoing roles, representing 74.9 per cent of all staff.

**Figure 1.2 Ongoing Staff distribution by working arrangement**



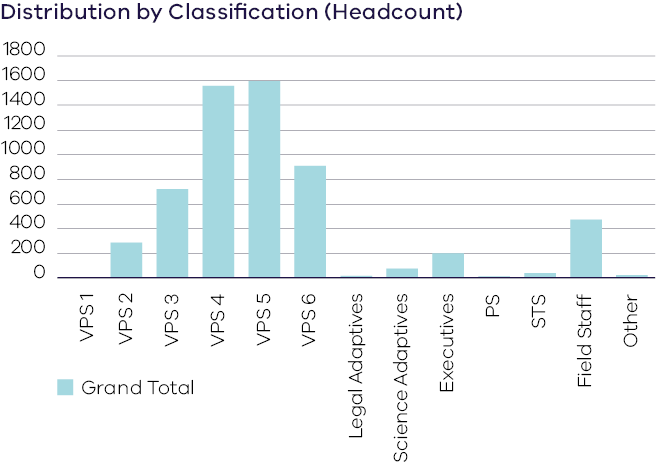
**Ongoing staff (headcount)**

* Part time: 17.9%

Full time: 82.1%

Reflecting the availability of flexible working arrangements, 793 (17.9 per cent) of 4,429 ongoing staff utilise part-time working arrangements.

**Figure 2. Staff distribution by classification**

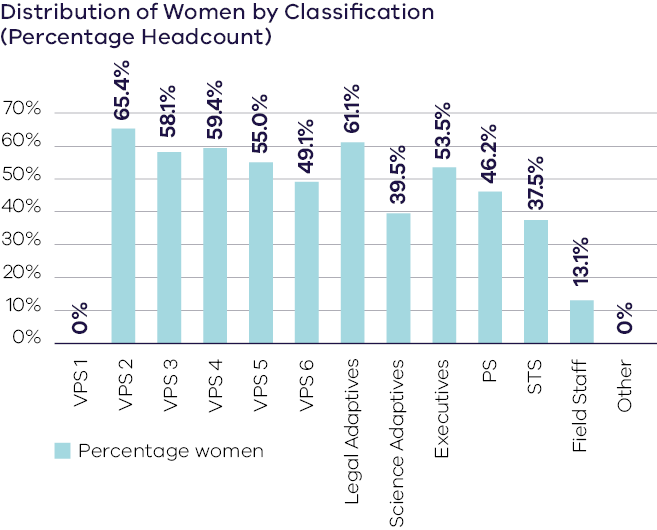


**Distribution by Classification (headcount):**

* VPS 1: 0
* VPS 2: 289
* VPS 3: 719
* VPS 4: 1,558
* VPS 5: 1,597
* VPS 6: 908
* Legal Adoptives: 18
* Science Adoptives: 76
* Executives: 202
* PS: 13
* STS: 40
* Field Staff: 493

Other: 40

**Figure 2.1 Distribution of women by classification**



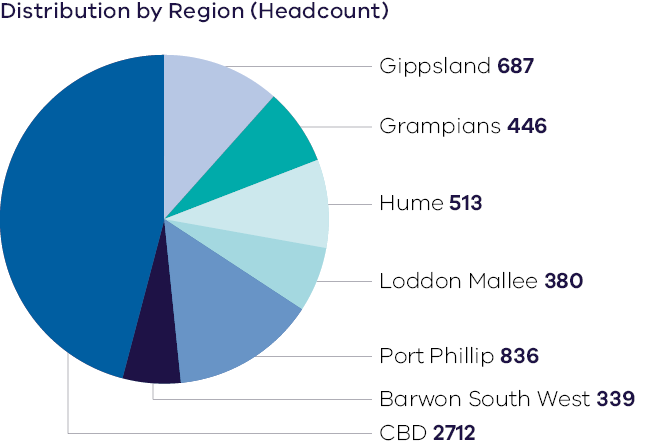
**Distribution of Women by Classification (percentage headcount:**

* VPS 1: 0%
* VPS 2: 65.4%
* VPS 3: 58.1%
* VPS 4: 59.4%
* VPS 5: 55.0%
* VPS 6: 59.1%
* Legal Adoptives: 61.1%
* Science Adoptives: 39.5%
* Executives: 53.5%
* PS: 46.2%
* STS: 37.5%
* Field Staff: 13.1%

Other: 0%

In the two classifications with the largest number of staff, VPS Grade 4 and VPS Grade 5, the representation of women is: 59.4 per cent of 1,558 VPS Grade 4 staff; and 55.0 per cent of 1,597 VPS Grade 5 staff.

**Figure 3. Staff Distribution by region**



**Distribution by region (headcount)**

* Gippsland: 687
* Grampians: 446
* Hume: 513
* Loddon Mallee: 380
* Port Phillip: 836
* Barwon South West: 339

CBD: 2712

DEECA is geographically dispersed across 87 locations within Victoria, with 46 per cent of staff usually based in the Melbourne central business district (CBD) and 14 per cent in the Port Phillip region (which covers the Greater Melbourne area), and the remaining 40 per cent in regional Victoria. The largest regional staff population is in Gippsland where 12 per cent of staff are based. In 2022–23, most office-based staff worked under hybrid working arrangements.

Additional information on DEECA’s workforce profile is available at Appendix 2.

## Our culture and values

### VPS values

Following Machinery of Government changes, DEECA was established as a new department on 1 January 2023. This brought together various groups from two former departments that had different sets of organisational values. To provide clarity for DEECA staff about what is expected of them as a VPS employee, the DEECA Executive Board agreed in March 2023 to adopt the established public sector values.

How we work and interact with each other, and with our ministers, stakeholders and the community is critically important to achieve the best outcomes possible for the Victorian community. We are guided by the Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct and values:

* responsiveness
* integrity
* impartiality
* accountability
* respect
* leadership

human rights.

These values speak to the way we work as individuals and team members, from project firefighters to senior executives. Our values articulate clear expectations for the attitudes and behaviours required to successfully deliver for our community.

**People Matter Survey**

The 2022 People Matter Survey took place between 6 June and 15 July 2022. DEECA had a response rate of 72 per cent, with 3,962 of staff completing the survey, which was an increase of 7 per cent participation within the former DELWP. The results of the survey provided valuable insights into what our people are experiencing in the workplace and where we need to continue to focus our efforts.

In the 2022 People Matter Survey, DEECA’s employee satisfaction reached 72 per cent, 5 per cent higher than the previous year. While there was a slight decline in engagement levels of three index points, DEECA continued to have scores that were amongst the highest in its comparator group. Overall, our people were feeling enriched by their current jobs (86 per cent) and had a high sense of accomplishment (89 per cent).

Positively, 91 per cent of people reported that they consider DEECA to be supportive of flexible working. Some of these flexible ways of working include part-time work, compressed hours and hybrid working, which balances remote working and working in the office together.

Work-related stress was 3 per cent lower in the 2022 People Matter Survey compared to the previous year, with 25 per cent of people saying they had high to severe stress. A total of 89 per cent of people who completed the survey said they had experienced some form of stress ranging from mild to severe stress. Of that 89 per cent, 50 per cent said it was from workload and 47 per cent said it was from time pressure. DEECA continues to implement a series of interventions with the aim of addressing these stress and workload issues across the department.

In 2022, 9 per cent of people who completed the survey (347 people) reported they had experienced bullying in the last 12 months. This is a decrease from the 2021 result of 10 per cent. There were slight increases of 1 per cent in the rates for both discrimination (5 per cent) and violence and aggression (5 per cent). Addressing bullying and other negative work behaviours has been, and continues to be, a key focus area for the department.

**Capability development**

With DEECA now a hybrid workplace, we have refreshed the content of our training courses to reflect this new way of working. Training has focused on building leadership capability, developing core business skills, leading flexible and dispersed teams, and supporting a safe and inclusive workplace.

During 2022–23, we delivered 283 virtual instructor-led training and 18 face to face instructor led sessions to 3,560 participants. An additional 3,285 people completed a total of 17,010 DEECA eLearning courses.

In April 2023, our senior leaders reviewed the department’s mandatory training suite to ensure that it remains relevant, and continues to meet our individual and collective compliance obligations. As an initial step to meet this commitment, we developed a fit for purpose mandatory training suite for a cohort of colleagues from Parks Victoria in preparation for their transition into the department from 1 July 2023, with the aim of making sure that they have a tailored, positive and learner-centric experience as they become part of DEECA.

**Workplace Relations and Investigations**

The Workplace Relations and Investigations Team provides advice and support in relation to a range of industrial and employee relations matters. This includes interpretation of the department’s enterprise agreements, undertaking complex case management, in particular conducting initial assessments and behavioural investigations into reports of inappropriate behaviour. The team also provides advice and support to the department’s portfolio agencies on the Victorian Government’s Enterprise Bargaining process, wages and general industrial relations policies. The role of Child Safety Officer, which is responsible for monitoring departmental compliance with Victoria’s Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme, is also within the team’s responsibilities. The team undertakes assessments and makes recommendations with respect to disclosable outcomes arising out of employment screening processes such as police checks and misconduct declarations.

**Enterprise Bargaining**

The department has constructive working relationships with both the Community and Public Sector Union and the Australian Workers’ Union. During 2022–23, the department recorded nil time lost through industrial disputes.

## Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing

DEECA is committed to creating and maintaining a physically and mentally safe workplace. We have systems in place to manage all hazards and we continue to improve our safety and wellbeing culture by reviewing and revising our systems of work, regularly re-assessing and managing our risks, and creating an environment and culture where our people feel safe and empowered to recognise, raise and address issues.

The department’s approach includes the following features:

* a strong consultative structure that facilitates direct engagement with elected health and safety representatives, as well as management representatives, on local matters being raised by our people
* strong leadership, culture and commitment from senior executives throughout the consultative structure (for example, Regional Directors or Deputy Chief Fire Officers chairing or co-chairing Regional Safety and Wellbeing Consultative Committees, and Deputy Secretary level chairing of the Metro Safety and Wellbeing Consultative Committee and Departmental Safety and Wellbeing Consultative Committee)
* engagement across DEECA through consultative committees that support the safety and wellbeing management system through collaboration on local safety and wellbeing action plans aimed at enhancing the department’s safety and wellbeing performance
* a Safety and Wellbeing Assurance Committee that oversees safety and wellbeing initiatives, investment and strategic risks, with senior executive representatives from across DEECA, to ensure safety and wellbeing outcomes are being met
* a safety and wellbeing management system based on policies, procedures, supporting guidance and services that our people use to address, promote, and protect safety, health, and wellbeing

a focus on continuous improvement through activities such as internal audits, independent reviews, investigations, safety advisor led assurance activities, workplace inspections and managers undertaking job safety observations of field operations.

**Initiatives to support our people’s safety and wellbeing**

During 2022–23, the department implemented several initiatives aimed at improving the physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and other workplace participants.

Highlights from our health, safety and wellbeing initiatives for the year include:

* active participation in safety and wellbeing programs within the public sector through involvement in the VPS Interdepartmental Occupational Health and Safety Committee and Subcommittee, and Australasian Fire Authorities Council Workplace Health and Safety Working Group
* delivering a voucher-based influenza (flu) vaccination program, allowing employees to choose a vaccination time and location that suited them, resulting in 1,290 employees (at a rate of 22.9 per 100 FTE ) redeeming a voucher with a further 185 vaccination reimbursements claimed
* continued delivery of a virtual Safety and Wellbeing noticeboard to support staff working flexibly to access safety and wellbeing advice while working remotely as well as at DEECA sites
* continuing to destigmatise mental health and wellbeing by supporting national wellbeing initiatives and delivering mental health and wellbeing literacy training for 1,010 of our employees in 2022–23
* conducting 90 site and field safety assurance reviews across Victoria (at a rate of 1.6 reviews per 100 FTE). This was a reduction of 103 reviews from 2021–22 as a result of the prolonged effects of COVIDSafe settings and numerous staff vacancies. These reviews resulted in 252 corrective actions (an increase of 116 corrective actions) and safety improvements that focused on the greatest risk areas across the department
* continued promotion and refinement of the new Working Alone or in Isolation Policy, Guideline and web-based application (JourneyMate) to provide direction and supporting tools to assess risks associated with working alone or in isolation, and ensure escalation and emergency response assistance are provided in a timely manner
* development of a *Family Days* program to enhance the support for the mental health of our emergency workers, including guidance material to host an event, a wellbeing support guide for families, and videos highlighting the importance of mental health and early intervention
* a focus on fitness support for our emergency workers, including establishing approved fitness activities, pathways for approval and improved methods to support emergency workers who have a change in their medical classification

finalisation of a long-term action plan to address learnings and outcomes from the WorkWell project, a two-year mental health project focusing on forest firefighters. The department partnered with the Australian Workers Union, who led the project.

**Support and response during the COVID-19 pandemic**

In 2022–23, DEECA continued to take a holistic approach to the health, safety and wellbeing of our people in relation to COVID-19, through the implementation of a new COVID-19 vaccination policy. Initiatives included, but were not limited to:

* reviewing and finalising a revised DEECA COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements Policy following an updated independent risk assessment and consultation with staff, and in line with the Australian Technical Advisory Group’s Immunisation guidance
* updating our COVIDSafe Plan to remain contemporary with changing public health arrangements and health advice
* continuation of a dedicated COVID-19 Response Program Lead to provide leadership and manage the department’s response to COVID-19 cases within the workplace throughout 2022–23, with plans to phase out this dedicated role from 2023–24 onwards
* refining online and virtual health and wellbeing offerings in response to COVIDSafe settings, ensuring a contemporary and valuable set of resources are available to staff

facilitating the transition of all COVID-19 functions into business-as-usual practices from 2023–24 onwards to continue supporting staff, while also ensuring that resources are prioritised where they are needed most.

As DEECA staff transitioned back into the workplace, our safety and wellbeing guidance was routinely updated. This included:

* providing our people with an opportunity to tell us how they were experiencing the workplace via a dedicated COVID-19 transition email inbox
* conducting regular Secretary-led All Staff Forums to re-iterate the latest COVID-19 information and provide engagement for staff
* facilitating ongoing quarterly virtual Health and Safety Representative (HSR) briefings
* re-assessing our need for Designated First Aiders and Wardens and ensuring they were appropriately trained (and recruited where required) to support a return to the workplace

reviewing and adapting our safety and wellbeing workplace induction to accommodate remote working, and a requirement for our people to refresh their safety and wellbeing knowledge and be re-inducted into their workplace as part of their transition.

**Wellbeing Services**

During 2022–23, there was a total of 832 new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referrals, providing 1,780 hours of support throughout the year. Overall, the annual utilisation rate for the department was 14.6 per cent, more than double the average rate (6.6 per cent) recorded across the government and public administration sector. Promotion of the EAP focused on proactive and early support.

Provision of specialist, targeted and tailored supports continued through the EAP provider, such as Yarning Circles being made available to staff who identify as Aboriginal or Indigenous, participating in and impacted by the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

During 2022–23, DEECA also used Regional EAP Coordinators (RECs) to provide early intervention support to staff involved in the Parks Victoria – DEECA Fire Management Integration. This involved localised and targeted supports and was complemented by a simultaneous expansion to the Senior Leader Support program, a centralised coaching program focused on uplifting the confidence and capability of senior leaders in responding and adapting to workplace stressors.

In addition, RECs were used to provide targeted support in response to emerging issues; including wellbeing support for the flood response, and to employees following safety incidents ensuring that appropriate support was prioritised.

During 2022–23, the department implemented best practice recommendations to uplift and enhance the Peer Support Program, which was further expanded following Machinery of Government changes to incorporate Agriculture Victoria's existing Peer Support program. The program now features 91 newly trained DEECA Peers and five Agriculture Victoria Peers who are actively engaged in providing local support to staff on a range of work and personal needs.

The Reach Out program continued to provide an internal, confidential source of support with 147 new referrals throughout the year. Referrals to the Reach Out program related to work-related needs (65), personal needs impacting work or performance (41), flood response (17), COVID-19 (8), and following safety related or significant incidents (16).

Through the six trained Family Violence Contact Officers, the department directly supported 26 staff, enabling access to 158 special leave days to support people in managing the actions and distress associated with family and domestic violence.

**Incident Management**

The number of health and safety incidents reported across the department fell from 2,318 in 2021–22 to 1,723 in 2022–23, representing a decrease of 595 or 25.7 per cent. This translates to a change from 44.7 incidents per 100 FTE to 40.4 per 100 FTE respectively. As displayed below in Figure 1, overall incidents remained consistent throughout the first half of the financial year, with no notable spike throughout the fire response period (November 2022 to March 2023) compared to significant spikes in previous years. Incidents tracked very similarly to 2021–22 with the number of reports peaking in February – March period and remaining low throughout the remainder of the year.

Excluding COVID-19 related incident reports, the data shows a slight decrease from 686 incident reports in 2021–22 to 655 in 2022–23.

Continuing the trend observed in previous years, vehicle related incidents remained elevated, being the second highest report after COVID-19 related incident reports. There were 125 vehicle incidents in 2022–23 (2.93 incidents per 100 FTE), two more than the previous year (123 incidents in total, at 2.37 incidents per 100 FTE).

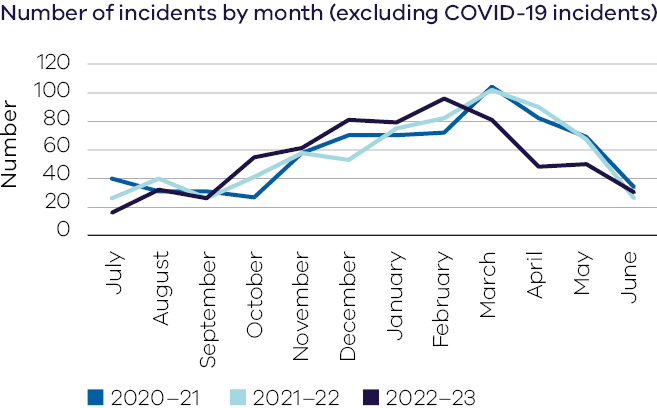
There were also 70 notifiable incidents that occurred across the department. Notifiable incidents are those that require the Victorian WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe), who is the Occupational Health and Safety Regulator in Victoria, to be notified. These notifiable incidents included:

* 29 relating to a person needing immediate medical treatment for one of the WorkSafe identified injuries
* 15 relating to the collapse, overturning, failure, or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant, including six vehicle-related incidents
* 13 resulting from an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of any substance
* 12 resulting from the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing

1 notification relating to an implosion, explosion or fire

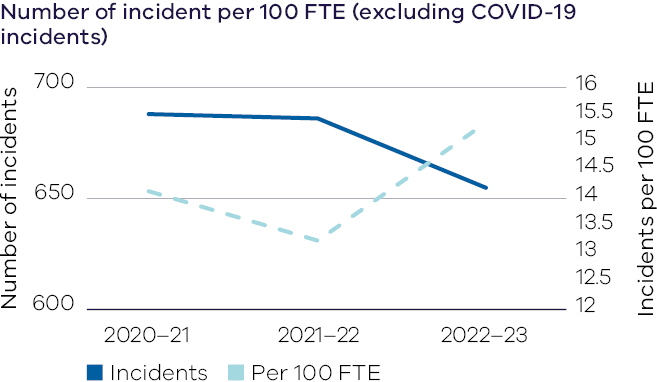
In 2022–23, the number of non-COVID-19 related incidents notified to WorkSafe Victoria increased from 31 to 70. This is attributed to the department’s more proactive approach to incident reporting to WorkSafe Victoria, and to legislative changes resulting in the broadening of the definition of a notifiable incident.

**Figure 1. Number of health and safety reported incidents by month (excluding COVID-19 incidents)**



|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
| 2020–21 | 40 | 31 | 31 | 27 | 58 | 70 | 70 | 72 | 104 | 82 | 69 | 34 |
| 2021–22 | 26 | 40 | 26 | 41 | 58 | 53 | 75 | 82 | 102 | 90 | 67 | 26 |
| 2022–23 | 16 | 32 | 26 | 55 | 61 | 81 | 79 | 96 | 81 | 48 | 50 | 30 |

**Figure 2. Number of health and safety reported Incidents and Rate per 100 FTE (excluding COVID-19 incidents)**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Incidents | FTE |
| 2020–21 | 688 | 14.13369 |
| 2021–22 | 686 | 13.23098 |
| 2022–23 | 655 | 15.37054 |

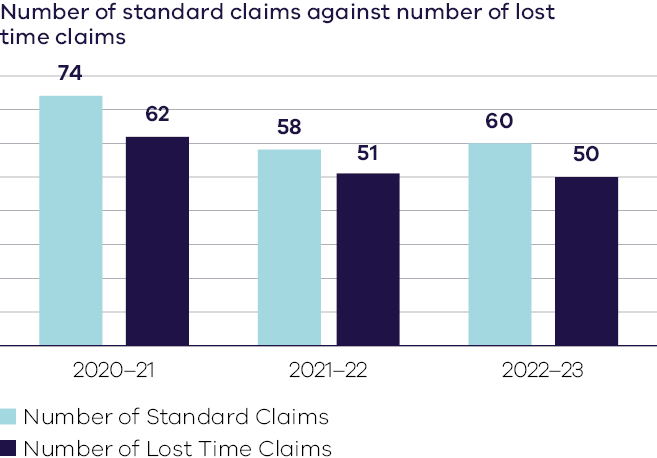
**WorkCover claims**

A total of 60 standard claims were lodged with DEECA’s WorkCover insurer in 2022–23, with 50 (83 per cent) of claims involving lost time. This is a slight decrease compared to the 58 standard claims accepted in 2021–22[[1]](#footnote-1), however claim rates remain relatively consistent and there was a considerable decrease in claims costs in the 2022–23 financial year. This is attributed to the proactive early intervention engagement undertaken by the Injury Management team to support employees to return to work early into their recovery.

Almost half of the 2022–23 financial year claimants have had a full or partial return to work with the remainder of claimants having no capacity to return, as at 30 June 2023. The injuries sustained all occurred during the planned burning and bushfire season. The majority of these injuries were physical (slips, trips, falls) (84.7 per cent), with a small proportion of claims for mental injury (15.3 per cent).

On behalf of Forest Fire Management Victoria, the department also received 11 claims under the Presumptive Rights legislation. DEECA continues to support the implementation of the presumptive rights legislation, including the expansion of the legislation to include three additional female-specific cancers: cervical, uterine and ovarian cancers, as announced by the Victorian Government in June 2023.

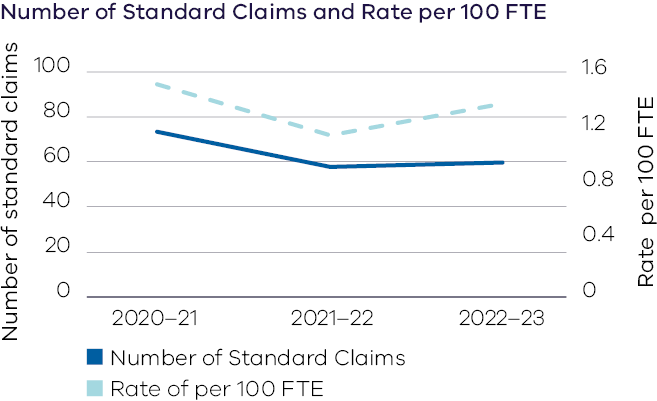
**Figure 3. Number of standard Workcover claims against number of lost time claims1**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of Standard Claims | Number of Lost Time Claims |
| 2020–21 | 74 | 62 |
| 2021–22 | 58 | 51 |
| 2022–23 | 60 | 50 |

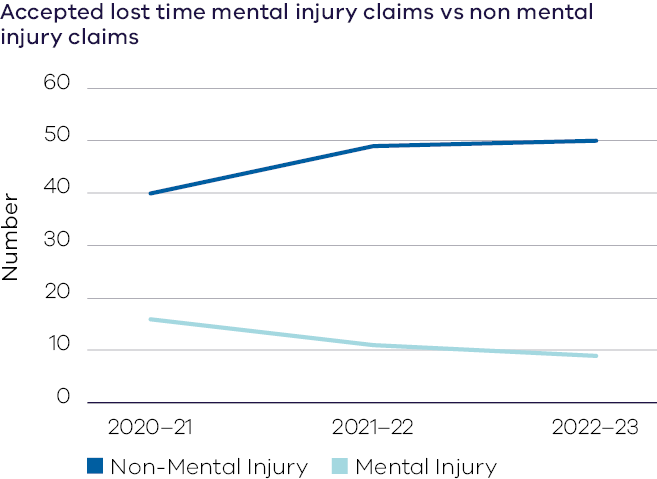
Number of lost time claims are a subset of total standard claims.

**Figure 4. Number of Standard Workcover Claims and Rate per 100 FTE**



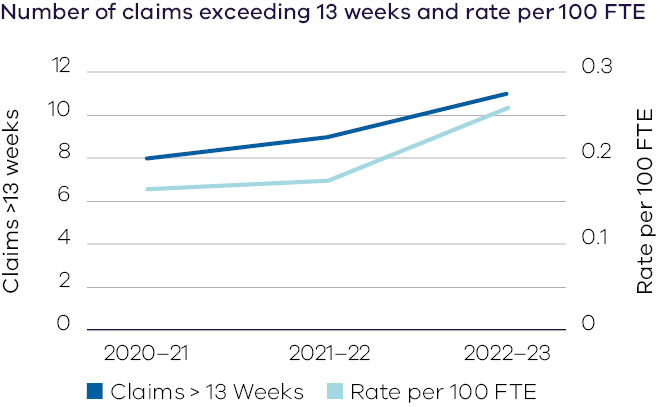
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rate per 100 FTE | Number of Standard Claims |
| 2020–21 | 1.520 | 74 |
| 2021–22 | 1.157 | 58 |
| 2022–23 | 1.384 | 60 |

**Figure 5. Accepted Lost Time Mental Injury Claims vs. Non-Mental Injury Workcover Claims**



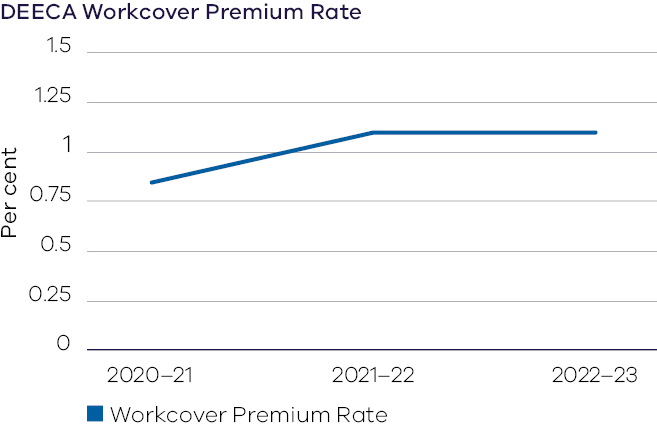
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mental Injury | Non-Mental Injury |
| 2020–21 | 16 | 40 |
| 2021–22 | 11 | 49 |
| 2022–23 | 9 | 50 |

**Figure 6. Number of Workcover Claims Exceeding 13 Weeks and Rate per 100 FTE**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Claims > 13 Weeks | Rate per 100 FTE |
| 2020–21 | 8 | 0.164345 |
| 2021–22 | 9 | 0.173584 |
| 2022–23 | 11 | 0.258131 |

**Figure 7. DEECA Workcover premium rate**



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | WorkCover Premium Rate |
| 2020–21 | 0.844 |
| 2021–22 | 1.0975 |
| 2022–23 | 1.1 |

### Upcoming Psychological Health Regulations

The proposed Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Psychological Health) Regulations are expected to be introduced in the first half of 2023–24. The proposed regulations aim to strengthen the occupational health and safety framework by recognising that psychological hazards in the workplace are equally as harmful as physical hazards. The introduction of the Regulations will require significant effort from DEECA to identify and control hazards, and review reporting requirements, including the introduction of Prevention Plans for high-risk psychological hazards. Planning for the introduction of the Regulations has already commenced and DEECA is developing a psychological health framework to support a holistic, department-wide approach to psychological health that will better support staff and ensure compliance with the new regulations.

### Further information

Additional information on the department’s performance against key Occupational Health and Safety performance indicators is provided at Appendix 3.

## Diversity and inclusion

Through targeted initiatives and programs, action plans and celebration of significant days on the diversity and inclusion calendar, DEECA continues to elevate the importance of diversity and inclusion. In 2022–23, our staff-led networks played a significant part in capturing the lived experiences of our people, strengthening intersectionality, diversity and inclusion. These networks have also contributed to organisational strategies and action plans. The 2022 People Matter Survey (PMS) showed that 81 per cent of surveyed staff responded positively to questions about inclusion in the organisation.

With the final year of DEECA’s first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–22*, the department set strong diversity targets, established new policies and procedures, and has committed to comprehensive action plans to ensure our workplace is a safe and inclusive one for our people. Having reached a further maturity point, a new strategy is being prepared for 2023–27 that will have a stronger intersectionality lens and alignment with Whole of Victorian Government strategies.

### Aboriginal Self-Determination

DEECA’s *Pupangarli Marmarnepu: Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–25* sets the direction, outcomes, and priorities for DEECA to meet and respond to in order to maintain genuine partnership with Traditional Owner Corporations (TOC) and Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The third year of the implementation action plan for *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* was completed in 2022–23. Actions taken highlight DEECA’s strength in collaborating across the department to continue our journey to embed true self-determination for Traditional Owner Corporations and Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

DEECA has continued to build on programs to support Aboriginal employment, engagement and networking for new and existing staff, including an Aboriginal talent pool, the work shadowing program and development of a scholarships fund for staff professional development.

### Aboriginal Cultural Safety

The department’s Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework ‘*Our Culture is in our Country, and Our Country is our Culture*’ was launched in June 2022 to support and promote self-determination by building Aboriginal cultural capability among our people. The Framework is intended to ensure staff across DEECA have the foundational knowledge, behaviour, and skills to meet our commitments with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.

During 2022–23, there were 35 DEECA-wide centralised Cultural Safety training courses delivered, with training completed by 427 staff members. As at 30 June 2023, Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training has been completed by 40 per cent of our people leaders.

Additionally, DEECA regions carried out place-based, on-Country, cultural safety, awareness and capability training, and will continue to do so in 2023–24.

DEECA’s Port Phillip Region launched a pilot program where participants move through a self-directed (yet highly facilitated) journey to improve their cultural awareness, understanding and competency. The *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* Learning Network comprises a Steering Committee (including representatives from Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation) selected DEECA staff, and a DEECA corporate sponsor.

DEECA is developing its internal Aboriginal Cultural Safety training, which is expected to be launched in 2023–24.

### Programs Supporting Aboriginal Employment

As at 30 June 2023, 1.88 per cent of DEECA’s workforce identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. DEECA’s Aboriginal Staff network has 134 active members and three gatherings were held during 2022–23 to provide opportunities for staff to come together, build on the foundations of the network and participate in cultural and professional development activities. The Aboriginal Staff Network continues to be a guiding voice towards self-determination.

We understand that there are challenges when building a talent pipeline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, given the limited pool of job seekers across Victoria and other departments within the Victorian Government competing for talent. It requires the delicate balancing of the need to meet DEECA’s targets and objectives in a meaningful manner, while ensuring the Traditional Owner Corporations and communities are supported in their self-determination. The department has focused on building a sustainable talent pipeline whilst listening to the needs of Traditional Owners, so that we are working in partnership to build capacity and can learn and grow together. Key initiatives to attract Aboriginal people and grow our Aboriginal staff numbers are:

* *Aboriginal Talent Pool* – launched in October 2022, DEECA established a First Peoples' Talent Pool to give candidates who are interviewed by DEECA the opportunity to be considered for future career opportunities. The talent pool has been utilised by hiring managers across DEECA and has become a core part of DEECA’s recruitment process.
* *Work Shadowing program* – Announced in December 2022, the Work Shadowing program allows participants to ‘shadow’ another staff member in a different section of DEECA. It was created to support the career aspirations of the Aboriginal Staff Network members, following feedback from the in-person Aboriginal Staff Network Conference. As at 30 June 2023, there has been one participant of the program since its launch.
* *Baring Djinang Internships* – utilising the Victorian Public Sector Commission’s internship program, in partnership with CareerTrackers, DEECA offers three-month internship placements to Aboriginal students, building a talent pipeline for future graduates within the department. During 2022–23, low student enrolments and continued COVID-19 impacts contributed to a shortfall of student registrations with CareerTrackers.

*Traditional Owner Corporation Employee Exchange* – During 2022–23, 15 DEECA staff worked in TOC roles for up to 12 months to build capability and understanding of the important cultural impact of Traditional Owners.

In addition, during the year DEECA acknowledged Aboriginal days of significance through Secretary Messages to all staff, marking Reconciliation Week and celebrating NAIDOC Week.

### Our Commitment to Access and Inclusion

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that disability inclusion remains an organisational priority, DEECA's Senior Disability Adviser continues to work towards enhancing employee capability and creating greater disability confidence and awareness across the department.

A significant amount of work continues across the department to ensure the delivery of key actions under the department’s *Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–24* as well as our commitments under *Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–25*.

### Our Data on Disability

According to 2022 People Matter Survey results, 7 per cent of DEECA staff participating in the survey shared they are a person with disability. This is more than a one per cent increase since 2021, from just under six per cent.

DEECA’s 2022 People Matter Survey results also shows a positive trend in the number of staff with disability agreeing that DEECA encourages respectful workplace behaviours, with 83 per cent of staff with disability strongly agreeing with this statement.

### Inclusive Workplace Culture and Capability

In 2022–23, DEECA delivered several key initiatives from our Access and Inclusion Plan. The initiatives aim to increase the disability confidence of our workforce, and to ensure DEECA is a safe and inclusive workplace for people with disability, health conditions and carers.

As part of our commitment outlined in the Action and Inclusion Plan as well as *Getting to Work*, DEECA launched the third and final eLearn module of the internal Victorian Public Sector Disability Awareness Essentials package via an organisation-wide communications campaign, with mandatory participation targets set for all people leaders across the department. The module, titled Inclusive Recruitment, completed the three-part series of eLearns developed by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) in partnership with the VPS Enablers Network and Autism Success Network. Together with Module One (Disability Awareness Essentials) and Module Two (Workplace Adjustments), the eLearns help to increase disability confidence across the department and improve employment outcomes for people with disability.

Another key project underway is the review of the suite of DEECA templates to ensure that all templates are accessible and available in a range of accessible formats.

Workplace adjustments are essential to an inclusive, disability confident, and barrier-free workplace, and continue to be a key focus area for the department. The Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedure is undergoing a periodic review to ensure the policy continues to support employees with disability and carers of people with disability to perform at their best. The most common types of adjustments made to support employees with disability are flexible work arrangements, provision of equipment, including assistive technology, hardware and specialist coaching supports.

DEECA also supports our neurodivergent employees through the provision of services through the VPS Neurodiverse Confident Services Support program. In 2022–23, managers and colleagues of neurodivergent employees participated in the program to increase awareness about neurodiversity and to help support neurodivergent employees within their teams.

An additional priority was raising awareness of disability across the department. Through collaboration between key departmental stakeholders and the staff-led All Abilities Network (AAN), DEECA employees recognised and celebrated several days of significance. Of note was the VPS-wide online event to celebrate International Day of People with Disability on Friday 2 December 2022 hosted by DEECA's AAN. More than 400 people from across the department and the wider VPS joined the forum to hear an insightful panel discussion exploring the theme, ‘transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world’.

### Inclusive Communities

DEECA is committed to supporting people with disability in the community. We continue to deliver against our commitments as outlined under *Priority 4: Inclusive communities of our Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–24* (AIP) as well as *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–26)*.

Further progress toward creating inclusive communities will be made during Year 3 of the AIP where DEECA will undertake actions in the areas of social procurement, accessible programs and events, and committing to understand and respect the voices of people with disability in our community.

### Gender Equality

DEECA recognises that a gender equal workplace is a crucial aspect of building a diverse workforce that fosters belonging and reflects the community it serves. The department prides itself as a safe and inclusive employer within the Victorian Government, focusing on our people’s safety by addressing gender discrimination and inequality.

Employee’s lived experiences and voice are prioritised to continue to foster a safe and inclusive workplace. In the 2022 People Matter Survey, 92 per cent of DEECA women reported that they believed that gender was not a barrier to success at work and 99 per cent of women believed gender identity was not a barrier to success at work.

In 2022–23, the department comprised 52 per cent women and women make up 53.5 per cent of the executive cohort, a 1.5 per cent increase from the previous year.

DEECA had previously recognised a need to further promote flexible working arrangements that allow women to fully participate in the workforce, in turn, increase their earning capacity and addressing gender pay inequality. In 2022–23, 74.1 per cent of women worked full time, which increased from 73.7 per cent in the previous year.

The department is committed to reducing the gender pay gap and performs a gender pay gap audit annually, with a target of less than two per cent. In 2022–23, DEECA’s gender pay gap was zero per cent for the second consecutive year. This is in line with the VPS, which also reports zero per cent (as published in the [State of the Public Sector Report](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/data-and-research/data-facts-visuals-state-of-the-sector/)).

To further progress gender equality, the department partnered with superannuation fund, Aware Super, to deliver financial education sessions that provide women with the tools they need for financial success. This series completes an action in our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021–22 – 2025–26 and contributes to the state gender equality plan in advancing the economic empowerment of women. The series was successful, attracting more than 3,100 attendees, and resulting in 182 one-on-one private consultations booked with Aware Super.

### DEECA Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–22 – 2025–26

DEECA’s GEAP provides a critical platform to make the department a better and more effective workplace. The GEAP is our inaugural response to the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and has been assessed as fully compliant by the Victorian Gender Equality Commissioner, elevating our commitment to gender equality.

DEECA understands that gender inequality can be compounded by intersectional identity. DEECA has adopted a holistic and intersectional strategy lens to develop synergistic actions to deliver material and reasonable progress to gender equality. We achieved this by leveraging our policies, stakeholder consultations, human resource processes, subject matter experts and peer advocacy groups. Our GEAP will deliver 22 actions across the seven indicators of workplace gender equality outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

### Gender Impact Assessments

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the department is obligated to complete Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs). These are required in the development and review of policies, programs and services.

To streamline the process and to support staff in completing their GIAs, DEECA developed a GIA tool that automates the GIA process. The tool is compliant with the Victorian Gender Equality Commission’s requirements and supports staff to thoroughly consider gender impacts with an intersectional approach in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives. The department also held several sessions for Executive Directors and DEECA staff to build capacity on conducting GIAs.

The tool is intuitive and guides authors through the GIA process, while prompting evidence for an intersectional approach and ensuring their initiatives are compliant with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. Completed GIAs are stored centrally which serves as a library to inform future projects.

Additionally, the department has required GIAs be completed on all budget submissions and has included Gender Responsive Budget budgeting into existing financial bidding templates. Planning templates have also been updated to include consideration of GIAs in initial proposals and budget submissions.

### Forest Fire Management Vic (FFMVic) gender equality and inclusion

DEECA is actively addressing gender-based bias and challenging stereotypes in fire management roles. Through targeted projects and initiatives, DEECA is working to improve the presence of women in fire management roles and create a safe and respectful environment for women in the sector. This also extends to DEECA’s partnerships with Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic). In 2022–23, training for people leaders across DEECA’s forest and fire divisions and the FFMVic partnership was provided on gender-based discrimination, unconscious bias and the importance of safe, respectful and inclusive environments, ensuring the emergency management sector has leaders who are equipped to prevent and call out inequality in the workplace.

DEECA continues to support gender equality through the Aboriginal Women in Fire Pathway program, State Regional Women in Fire Coordinator Group program priorities and the Regional Diversity, Equality and Inclusion working groups. Through this targeted approach, DEECA is championing gender equality across the state, having a positive impact for the community in both metropolitan and regional areas.

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer+ (LGBTIQ+) Inclusion – Championing a Place of Pride

DEECA continues to be a workplace that strives to create inclusion and belonging for our LGBTIQ+ employees. In the 2022 PMS, 8 per cent of staff self-identified as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual or pansexual, with 1 per cent of participants self-identifying as trans, non-binary or gender diverse and a further 10 per cent preferring not to disclose.

In addition to being members of Pride in Diversity and participating in the annual Australian Workplace Equality Index for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, the department’s Place of Pride employee-led network consists of 280 active members and has 16 dedicated employees on its steering committee, creating a sense of community at DEECA. Additionally, the Place of Pride network has led several LGBTIQ+ events to celebrate all things queer, with DEECA having a visible presence at the Midsumma Festival 2023 and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Wear it Purple Day and hosting and participating in events attended by employees across the VPS.

DEECA’s new LGBTIQ+ Awareness Training continues to be delivered by members of DEECA’s Place of Pride network. Aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the LGBTIQ+ community, this interactive training also provides participants with DEECA-specific content and context to build on belonging and inclusion.

### Multicultural inclusion – elevating the voices of diverse communities

Our people are diverse; our teams are rich in cultural identity and are of multiple faiths. From DEECA’s 2022 People Matter Survey results, we know that 14 per cent of staff were not born in Australia, 33 per cent identified as having a cultural identity that is not Australian or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and DEECA staff speak more than 20 different languages. Of the survey participants, 27 per cent of staff identified as having a faith.

DEECA is committed to advancing gender equality and seeks to increase the participation of multicultural women and women of colour in leadership positions. The department is proud to support the Multicultural@DEECA and Women of Colour Networks. These active staff-led networks have more than 80 members and engaged leadership teams and aim to elevate inclusion initiatives for people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The DEECA Women of Colour Network facilitates a mentorship program that connects employees seeking senior and/or leadership positions with executive leaders in the organisation. The program contributes to an action in the department’s Gender Equality Action Plan, which aims to empower women across the organisation and contains a range of measures to increase the number of women (and Women of Colour) in senior positions. The program supports career development, progression and retention of DEECA’s Women of Colour workforce and anyone who self-identifies as a woman or non-binary person of colour. The program was successful in connecting 14 mentees with executive mentors.

DEECA’s staff networks also have a strong presence within the VPS Women of Colour working groups, ensuring DEECA contributes to inter-departmental activities. Members of these multicultural networks have helped shape DEECA’s Gender Equality Action Plan, ensuring an intersectional approach to equality is actioned across the department.

### Diversity and Inclusion through employment pathway programs

Employment programs play an integral role in building a diverse and inclusive workforce and building strong, sustainable talent pipelines. The employment programs provided by the department offer dedicated pathways for Disability, Aboriginal, Refugee and Asylum seeker students through several initiatives, including the Victorian Government Graduate Program, the Barring Djinang internship program, the Australian Network on Disability Stepping into Internship and the Refugee and Asylum seeker internship. During 2022–23, these programs supported 102 participants. Of the participants 8 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 18 per cent identified as a person with disability, 62 per cent were women, and 12 per cent identified as culturally and linguistically diverse.

Employment programs present an important opportunity to achieve our targets outlined in *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning Our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025* and the *Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–25*. To further support inclusion and equity amongst these cohorts, candidates requesting adjustments to the recruitment process and/or during their employment with DEECA, were supported through the workplace adjustments policy and procedure.

Across all of the department’s employment programs, COVID-19 impacts contributed to shortfalls in student enrolments. However, we continued to work towards our targets and action plans by attracting a diverse pool of applicants.

DEECA’s Science Graduate program attracts highly motivated and skilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals, embedding science into policy, planning and decision-making across our portfolio areas. This program has earned recognition as an industry leader and has a proven track record of success, with more than 80 per cent of participants remaining employed by our department for at least a decade.

The department supported several employment initiatives, including the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) codesign model that aims to increase entry-level roles for young people and provide career pathways for those facing employment barriers. As part of the redesign model, DEECA participated in communities of practice and was an early adopter, transforming the model from codesign to implementation and scaling the findings into VPS and public sector agencies. DEECA also participated in audience market research stakeholder interviews to increase the development of opportunities for priority cohorts and those experiencing barriers to employment.

DEECA maintained a strong face-to-face presence at careers expos, forums, communities of practice, professional practice and learning and development sessions, collaborating with major universities and youth organisations to showcase the department and its work. The department also attended the Australian Association of Graduate Employers conference with industry leaders and explored the latest innovations to help grow our programs for the future.

As well as supporting First Peoples employment targets and talent pipelines outlined in *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning Our Future’ Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025*, DEECA continues to use its employment programs to provide meaningful opportunities for new and emerging talent. Initiatives during 2022–23 assisted 102 young people to enter the workforce and helped to build a diverse and inclusive Victorian public sector, with a focus on intersectional representation.

### Safe and Respectful Workplaces Program

DEECA is committed to providing a workplace where our people feel safe, respected and included. The department’s revised Safe and Respectful Workplaces (SRW) Framework encompasses both the Safe and Respectful Workplaces Program Behaviours Policy and Procedure, bringing together a range of strategies to better prevent and respond to reports of sexual harassment and other harmful behaviours.

The approach reflects leading practice; is person-centred and trauma informed; and establishes multiple and improved reporting pathways and support avenues available to all parties, removing the distinction between formal and informal reporting, to encourage an even stronger reporting culture.

Several key methods were developed during 2022–23 to educate staff on the Safe and Respectful Workplaces Policy and Procedures, increase the capability of staff to effectively respond to inappropriate behaviours they might witness or experience in their workplaces, and to support proactive advocacy of the program in work centres:

* Safe and Respectful Workplaces workshops – two-hour training for all staff
* Safe and Respectful Workplaces First Responders – three-hour training for people leaders

Safe and Respectful Workplaces Leaders Network – staff network of active bystanders across groups, VPS levels and work centres.

The workshops are prevention-focused learning and development programs to provide a tailored and flexible set of learning interventions. They are aimed at all staff and incorporate policy and procedure information, People Matter Survey data and practical active bystander actions. In 2022–23, 59 workshops were delivered to 786 participants following the 28 workshops delivered to 464 participants in 2021–22.

First Responder training to support the new Safe and Respectful Workplaces policy and procedure continues to be rolled out to key departmental staff, managers and field-based leaders in locations and work environments that present a heightened risk of negative behaviours. During 2022–23, 33 formal three-hour training sessions have been delivered to 335 people leaders.

The Safe and Respectful Workplaces training content is being refreshed to incorporate feedback, results from the latest People Matter Survey and more targeted and flexible delivery formats with the delivery of training to recommence in late August 2023.

As part of the Safe and Respectful Workplaces Policy, in 2023–24 the Peer Support Network will also be trained as First Responders (managing disclosures in a person-centred and trauma informed way). This collaboration with the Peer Support program will ensure peers are trained and active by the end of 2023.

The Safe and Respectful Leaders program commenced in 2018 to actively promote respect in our workplaces, making sure they are free from everyday sexism, racism, homophobia and other forms of harassment and build staff capacity and capability in calling out and preventing inappropriate behaviours. A variety of professional development opportunities and Community of Practice activities has been offered as part of this network. In late 2022, the network was renamed the Safe and Respectful Workplace (SRW) Champions. A bi-monthly internal Bulletin for Champions and their local networks and links was established in September 2022 to further support, link and educate staff.

As at August 2023, the number of SRW Champions stands at 322.

In addition to these established areas, several other activities are being designed and delivered. A two-stage process updating the Appropriate Workplace Behaviours (APW) e-learn is in progress. The first stage, to update the APW module language, links and format has been completed. The second stage, to develop a completely new eLearn based on the SRW Policy and Procedures, will be delivered in 2023–24. A range of new materials and communications is being developed to enhance staff learning and active bystander actions.

# Climate-related risk disclosure statement

13 Climate Action

## About this statement

This statement summarises DEECA’s approach to climate-related risks and opportunities across its operations. The statement highlights key developments in DEECA’s approach to addressing climate-related risk over the 2022–23 period. Through this statement, the department aims to communicate its actions and approaches to achieving a net zero emission, climate ready economy and community. This includes new strategies, plans, investments and reforms that contribute to managing and monitoring climate-related risks for DEECA’s assets, infrastructure and natural resources.

The statement is informed by the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). It addresses the TCFD themes of Governance, Strategy, Risk Management and Metrics and Targets. DEECA will continue to strengthen its approach to climate-related disclosure. Future statements will consider developments in international disclosure best practice, such as the International Sustainability Standards Board’s inaugural global sustainability disclosure statement standards for climate-related risk.

## Leading Victorian Government action on emissions reduction

In November 2022, the Victorian Government committed to reducing Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions by 75 to 80 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035 and achieve net zero emissions by 2045, five years earlier than previously planned. These world-leading targets build on Victoria’s success to date, having already cut the state’s emissions by a third since 2005. Together with Victoria’s 2030 target to reduce emissions by 45 to 50 per cent below 2005 levels, these commitments are in line with Victoria playing its part in global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C by the end of the century to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

In May 2023, DEECA published an update on [Victoria’s climate action](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-action-on-climate-change). This built on Victoria’s *Climate Change Strategy* (released in 2021) and associated sector pledges setting out actions to reduce emissions in energy, transport, agriculture, land, industrial processes and product use and waste. The update shows how government is continuing to act including by increasing the 2030 Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) to 65 per cent and setting a new VRET target of 95 per cent renewable electricity generation by 2035 and setting targets of 2.6 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy storage capacity by 2030, and 6.3 GW of storage by 2035.

The Victorian Government has also committed to reducing emissions across the Victorian public sector by purchasing renewable electricity, investing in the environmentally sustainable design and energy performance of government buildings and infrastructure and starting to transition its fleet to zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs).

## Climate change impacts on Victoria now and into the future

The latest [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/) confirms that global temperatures are continuing to increase, and that climate change is making many extreme weather events around the world worse, including flooding, heatwaves, droughts and catastrophic bushfires. Victoria’s *Climate Science Report 2019* notes that the Victoria’s climate has warmed by 1.2°C since records began, becoming hotter and drier with an increase in spring fire danger. These trends are projected to continue in the future, likely resulting in more frequent and intense heatwaves, extreme fire conditions, intense rainfall events, storm surges and coastal erosion.

## Climate-related risk governance

This section discloses DEECA’s governance in relation to climate-related risks and opportunities, and the management role it fulfills in assessing and managing climate-related risks and opportunities.

## Fit-for-purpose governance and leadership

The DEECA Executive Board (the Board) leads the department’s risk management framework and is the collective owner of DEECA’s strategic risks. The Board actively manages multiple climate-related physical and transition strategic risks, including risks relating to:

* delivering government commitments to achieve net-zero emissions and a climate-ready economy, environment and community
* reducing the impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property and the environment
* securing and delivering safe, sustainable and affordable water, energy and waste and resource recovery services

planning for and delivering healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment and productive and effective land management.

The Board monitors risk mitigation activities through quarterly executive risk management reporting, which includes updates of mitigation activities and briefings on strategic risk assessment workshops. The Board is supported in managing and monitoring climate-related risks by stewardship committees and assurance committees, as outlined in the About DEECA section of this Annual Report, drawing on expertise from across the department’s executive leadership team as required.

In particular, the Board is supported by the:

* Policy and Legislation Stewardship Committee, which leads and oversees DEECA’s policy and legislative reform agenda on behalf of the Secretary and the Board, and advises on its oversight, direction, monitoring and review for the Victorian Government.
* Biodiversity Committee, which oversees the delivery of the five-year business/implementation plan for *Biodiversity 2037*

Energy Transition Committee, which provides strategic policy direction for multiple government objectives.

The DEECA Risk and Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the Secretary that the department’s risk and control environment is operating effectively and efficiently. This committee actively monitors the department’s risk profile, including climate-related risks, and assesses the risk management strategies adopted. The internal audit program provides further assurance through the assessment of key controls mitigating strategic risks.

DEECA also leads the Victorian Government response to climate change, overseeing legislative, regulatory and governance arrangements, and using economic, research and scientific expertise to develop policy responses to harness Victoria’s climate-related opportunities. Box 1 provides an overview of the Victorian Government’s climate change framework, as set out in the *Climate Change Act 2017* (see Box 1).

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| Box 1. Climate action built into legislation The *Climate Change Act 2017* provides a framework for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Act requires the government to:   * establish a long-term emissions reduction target of net-zero by 2050 (the Act will be updated to reflect the government’s commitment to bring this forward to 2045) * set five yearly interim emissions reduction targets, to keep Victoria on track to meet this long-term target * take account of climate change in decision and policy making by having regard to the Act’s policy objectives and guiding principles * prepare a Climate Change Strategy every five years, which sets out how Victoria will meet its targets and adapt to the impacts of climate change (from 2020) * prepare emissions reduction pledges including sector pledges and whole-of-government pledges every five years, which set out actions to be undertaken to reduce emissions from government's own operations and from across the economy (from 2020) * prepare Adaptation Action Plans for key systems that are either vulnerable to the impacts of climate change or essential to ensure Victoria is prepared (from 2021) * prepare a Climate Science Report every five years * prepare an annual greenhouse gas emissions report that sets out information on the state’s greenhouse gas emissions   establish a system of periodic reporting to provide transparency, accountability and ensure the community remains informed. |

DEECA is providing leadership on the identification and management of climate-related risks within the Victorian Government through the role of the Secretary, DEECA who provides six-monthly progress reports on the climate change program to the Victorian Secretaries Board (VSB). This reporting identifies progress and gaps in meeting commitments on climate action. The VSB comprises the Secretaries of each Department, including DEECA, the Chief Commissioner of Police and the Victorian Public Sector Commissioner. The VSB provides strategic oversight of the Whole-of-Government climate change agenda and evolving risks and opportunities presented by a changing climate. Its role is to coordinate policy initiatives across the public sector and promote leadership and information exchange.

To influence and leverage national climate action, DEECA supports the Minister for Climate Action, the Minister for Energy and Resources and the Minister for the State Electricity Commission as Victoria’s representative on the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC). The ECMC is a forum for the commonwealth, state, and territory governments to work collaboratively on priority issues of national significance and key reforms in the energy and climate change sectors. ECMC meets quarterly with Climate ministers attending at least twice-yearly.

To strengthen climate risk governance, DEECA is supporting its portfolio entities to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to the management of climate-related risks. In 2021–22, DEECA developed whole-of-Victorian Government guidance for Board members of public entities on directors’ duties under the *Public Administration Act 2004* and how these extend to managing climate risk. This guidance was published to the [Victorian Government boards website](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/directors-duties-respect-climate-risk) in August 2022. DEECA also developed director development materials on climate risk for portfolio entity Board member training and provided advice and support to DEECA staff with portfolio entity governance responsibilities.

## Climate-related risk strategy

This section provides information about the actual and potential impacts of climate-related risks and opportunities on DEECA’s business, strategy and financial planning. It also provides an overview of:

* climate-related risks and opportunities that DEECA has identified over the short, medium and long term

the impact of climate-related risks and opportunities on the organisation’s business, strategy and financial planning.

DEECA has played a pivotal role in the development of Victoria’s roadmap for climate action to support net zero emissions by 2045 and a climate-resilient state (see Box 2).

## Climate change is embedded in DEECA organisational planning

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action is one of four cross-cutting themes in the DEECA Corporate Plan. This shows how all groups within DEECA support the government to deliver a net zero emission, climate resilient Victoria.

Climate change has a direct impact on the services and programs that the department delivers on behalf of the Victorian Government, and requires sustained action to manage the risks, maximise opportunities and build resilience. Integral to this, is strengthening the ability of DEECA’s assets and operations to withstand, respond to and recover from extreme weather events.

The economic and social transition to a net zero emission and climate resilient future may entail policy, legal, technological and market changes that impact DEECA’s operations. These transition risks and opportunities are being monitored by DEECA and reflected in DEECA’s corporate planning.

## Prioritising Traditional Owner expertise

DEECA recognises the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country and the value of their unique knowledge and expertise in the development of climate change responses. *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu ‘Owning Our Future’ – Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025* is DEECA’s five-year roadmap that enables self-determination by honouring the rights and dignity of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. *Pupangarli Marnmarnepu* requires DEECA to work in partnership with Traditional Owners to progress self-determination, including by valuing Traditional Owner expertise in climate change programs, increasing the number of Traditional Owner groups involved in climate change planning and response and recognising and implementing the decisions that Traditional Owners make over cultural fire practices and traditional lands, waters and resources.

The *Yarra Strategic Plan, Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo 2022–32* seeks to protect the Yarra River corridor as one living and integrated entity for future generations from key threats, including climate change, while promoting opportunities for self-determination among the Birrarung’s Traditional Owners, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Through the Birrarung Council – the independent voice of the river – and shared governance arrangements established by the *Wilip-gin Birrarung murron (Yarra River Protection Act) 2017*, Traditional Owner voices will continue to inform climate change responses implemented through Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.

The *Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap*, released in September 2022, sets out the opportunities for Traditional Owners to access and manage water for spiritual, cultural and environmental purposes. The Victorian Government announced $3.35 million over two years for the initial delivery of the ‘Water is Life’ roadmap and $18 million for Traditional Owner-led projects. As at 30 June 2023, Victoria has returned 5.86 gigalitres of water to Traditional Owners across the state, supporting the self-determination of Traditional Owners by providing opportunities to manage water in ways that best meet their needs.

*Yananyin Gadhaba* is a signed partnership agreement between Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) and DEECA. *Yananyin gadhaba* means “we walk together” in the Taungurung language. The agreement will enable the two partners to deliver better outcomes for biodiversity by strengthening bio-culturally informed care for Country. Its core principles are trust, respect, accountability and collaboration. Other organisations have contacted DEECA to learn more about the agreement.

The Traditional Owner Climate Action Grant program provides $100,000 to eligible Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) to support their aspirations for climate action. TOCs identified climate action as a key priority at a State-wide Caring for Country Partnership Forum.

In line with self-determination principles, DEECA partnered with TOC Caucus Forum members to design and endorse the grants program, ensuring a Country-centred design process that acknowledged Traditional Owners as the knowledge-holders with cultural responsibilities for Country.

## Science informs DEECA’s understanding and response to climate-related risk

DEECA leverages the latest national and international climate change science to develop its response to climate-related risk. The Victorian Government’s ongoing investment in climate science has delivered projections of the future climate in Victoria, which informed and supported the development of [Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2019](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorias-changing-climate), [Victoria’s Future Climate Tool](https://vicfutureclimatetool.indraweb.io/), [regional climate projection fact sheets](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorias-changing-climate) and other climate science resources.

DEECA is developing the next iteration of Victoria’s Climate Science Report due for completion in October 2024, which will update the best practicably available climate change science and include analysis of downscaled projections from the latest generation of climate change models. The Victorian Climate Science Report 2024 will have a particular focus on climate hazards that pose key risks to Victoria such as bushfires and floods.

## Mitigating climate impacts from DEECA operations

DEECA is committed to mitigating its climate and broader environmental impacts. DEECA is also committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions across its operations.

Adding to commitments in the whole of Victorian Government pledge to introduce 400 Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) into the government fleet by 2023, DEECA now has an additional 38 ZEVs in the shared passenger vehicle fleet and is installing charging infrastructure at DEECA sites to support the transition to ZEVs as part of our ZEV first policy.

More information on these and other measures is provided under ‘*Environmental Performance*’.

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| Box 2. A roadmap for strong climate action **Victoria’s first Climate Change Strategy**  Released in 2021, Victoria’s *Climate Change Strategy* sets out Victoria’s plan for a net zero emissions, climate-resilient state. It provides a pathway for reducing emissions and building resilience to the impacts of climate change.  The strategy aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through transitioning to renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and supporting low-carbon industries. The strategy identifies a range of measures across sectors of the economy: energy, agriculture, transport, waste, industrial processes and product use, whole of Victorian Government operations, and land use, land use change and forestry. These measures are further detailed in emissions reduction pledges for each sector.  The strategy also responds to the need to build resilience to the impacts of climate change that are already locked in. The strategy sets out adaptation objectives and priorities to address climate change impacts, reduce barriers and support transformational adaptation. The priorities are supported by key enablers of capacity building and partnerships, governance and strategic planning, sustainable adaptation finance and leadership and innovation.  **Adapting to climate change across essential statewide systems and regions**  Released on 9 February 2022, the Victorian Government’s [Adaptation Action Plans](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-climate-resilience/our-commitment-to-adapt-to-climate-change/adaptation-action-plans-a-major-step-forward-for-climate-resilience-in-victoria) (AAPs) are a major step forward in ensuring Victoria is ready to respond to the risks and opportunities of a changing climate. The plans cover Victoria’s built and natural environments, the education and training system, health and human services, and the primary production, transport and water cycle systems. The 127 actions set out in the plans will help meet the Victorian Government’s five-year adaptation priorities in *Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy*. The actions address the current impacts of climate change, reduce the barriers to adaptation and lay the foundations for transformational adaptation to ensure preparedness for future climate scenarios.  The Regional Adaptation Strategies (RASs) are community-led plans outlining how Victorians want to adapt to climate change in their own communities. The RASs complement the AAPs by ensuring that adaptation action is integrated locally and caters to diverse community needs, values and priorities across the state’s different regions. The RASs address climate change adaptation issues identified by stakeholders and communities across six regions – Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Greater Melbourne, Hume and Loddon Mallee. Five climate change adaptation stories, showcasing place-based adaptation projects are available here at: [Climate change adaptation stories](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/supporting-local-action-on-climate-change/adaptation-stories).  **Victoria’s significant climate targets**  The Victorian Government’s target to reduce emissions by 75-80 per cent by 2035, builds on the foundations of the Climate Change Strategy. These targets place Victoria alongside international climate leaders and will bring multiple benefits, including new jobs, lower energy bills, improved health and environmental benefits. They build on the success in reducing emissions to date and represent Victoria’s efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees by the end of the century to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. |

### Building resilience through advanced bushfire management and storm, flood and bushfire recovery

The Victorian Government recognises the significant threat that climate change poses to communities, the economy and the environment through more frequent and severe storm, flood and bushfire emergencies. DEECA continues to implement climate adaptation and mitigations across its emergency management functions, including preparedness, response and recovery.

Victoria uses a risk-based approach to bushfire management to ensure that our activities are directed where they will have the greatest impact in reducing risk to Victorians and protecting the things that communities value the most. Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) manages bushfires in national parks, State forests and on other protected public land in accordance with the Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land and aims to reduce bushfire impacts on communities while maintaining the resilience of natural ecosystems. The protection of human life is the highest priority, and FFMVic delivers a fuel management program to maintain fuel-driven bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent of maximum levels. As at, 30 June 2023, statewide fuel-driven bushfire risk was 65 per cent, well below the state’s 70 per cent target.

### Building resilience of our built assets

DEECA undertakes asset management under the requirements of the Victorian Government’s Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF). There are currently six asset classes (building and structures, emergency response and preparedness, roads and fixed crossings, coastal protection assets, Crown land assets and Agriculture Victoria assets) that form part of the annual report for AMAF.

AMAF includes a draft Guidance Note “Impact of Climate Change” that is being used as a part of the risk management processes intrinsic to all asset investment and management.

DEECA utilises the skills of external building design, construction and facilities consultants in asset lifecycle management to ensure compliance with all regulatory building and safety requirements. In line with the Building Code of Australia and the National Construction Code, part of this process includes consideration of bushfire and flooding overlays, effects of intense rainfall events and design for maximum and minimum temperatures and durations.

For the buildings and structures asset class, which includes DEECAs offices, depots and research facilities, these assets are designed in alignment with the Green Building Council ‘Green Star’ guidelines and to achieve a National Australian Built Environment Rating Scheme 6 star rating, which assesses the operational efficiency. DEECA is developing a gas substitution strategy to phase out the use of gas fired plant across the portfolio. Timelines for this roll out will be known once the strategy has been completed.

### Climate-related risk management

This section discloses how DEECA identifies, assesses, and manages climate-related risks. It includes a description of the actions being undertaken across the following themes: embedding climate risk in risk management processes; managing the impact of climate change on built assets; addressing risk through the renewable energy transition; managing the state’s natural assets; building resilience in the water sector; building climate resilience across sectors of the economy; bushfire risk management and managing statewide coastal hazards.

### Embedding climate risk in risk management processes

DEECA’s risk management framework provides the foundation and organisational arrangements to ensure that climate-related risks are effectively identified, assessed and managed throughout the department. The framework is aligned to the *Victorian Government Risk Management Framework* and provides guidance for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management throughout DEECA.

DEECA’s risk management framework requires DEECA business units to consider their operating context, including climate change, and identify and assess risks and opportunities with a view to managing any risks within the department’s risk appetite. Climate-related risks are assessed and managed at the strategic, operational and program/project levels.

DEECA’s risk management framework also requires all risks to be assessed for potential impacts on the environment, with extreme impacts being outside the department’s risk appetite. The department mitigates the impacts of climate-related risks through business adaptation strategies, delivery of climate-related programs and associated operational risk management activities.

### Managing climate impacts on our built environment assets

Risk management is embedded in the asset lifecycle process, utilising the skills of external design, construction and facilities management consultants and the guidance provided in the AMAF Impact of Climate Change Guidance Note. During the planning and acquisition phase, this may include assessing a new site for any risks related to bushfire or flooding, a new air conditioning system for its efficiency or the refrigerant gas used, or a gas hot water or heating system to be replaced by an electric unit. During the operation phase, assets are monitored to ensure a timely maintenance regime is in place for optimal performance. At the end-of-life stage, opportunities for recycling or reuse are implemented alongside compliant disposal.

### Transitioning to a renewable energy economy

DEECA leads significant energy projects for Victoria, which will have broad implications for emissions reduction, climate change and energy security. Many of these initiatives are outlined in the Energy Sector Emissions Reduction Pledge 2021–2025.

**Renewable Energy Targets and Renewable Energy Zones**

To reduce Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions and address energy transition risks, DEECA is legislating targets, planning for, facilitating and delivering a massive expansion of renewable energy. Victoria’s share in renewable sources in Victoria’s electricity generation has increased from 10.8 per cent in 2014 to 26.6 per cent in 2020 and 36 per cent (54,000 GWh) as of 2022. Victoria is on track to meet its VRET 2025 target of 40 per cent and contributing to its commitment to a VRET 2030 target of 65 per cent. DEECA is working towards introducing a Bill to Parliament by the end of 2023 to legislate the proposed new VRET 2035 target of 95 per cent. The legislated VRET targets provide industry with long-term policy certainty needed for new investment in renewable energy projects in Victoria.

DEECA is undertaking a major work program, through VicGrid, to plan for new and upgraded electricity transmission, to realise the benefits of our renewable energy, including in Renewable Energy Zones. The Victorian Transmission Investment Framework, and payments to private landholders hosting new transmission infrastructure, were announced in June 2023, following announcements on critical transmission interconnectors with New South Wales and Tasmania.

**Re-establishment of the State Electricity Commission**

The State Electricity Commission (SEC) Implementation Office has been established as part of DEECA to progress the re-establishment of the SEC. The new SEC will invest an initial $1 billion towards delivering 4.5 gigawatts of power through renewable energy and storage projects – the equivalent replacement capacity of coal-fired power station Loy Yang A, which is set to close in 2035. The SEC will help Victoria achieve its renewable energy target of 95 per cent by 2035.

**Delivering improvements in energy efficiency**

Energy efficiency is one of the most effective and low-cost ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Victorian Energy Upgrades (energy saving) program continues to be strengthened, and lock in significant emissions reductions; in 2022 6.7 million tonnes, and in 2023 the target is 6.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. In June 2023, the VEU program introduced new activities to save emissions by replacing gas with efficient electric appliances.

DEECA is leading several programs to improve the energy efficiency of households, including (with Homes Victoria) upgrading the thermal performance and appliances of public and community housing properties with a $112 million investment; implementing energy efficiency standards for rental homes; and (with the Commonwealth and other Australian governments) putting in place a new 7-Star building standard for new homes, to take effect from October 2023.

**Improving Victoria’s energy resilience**

To support the energy sector, and built environment, to adapt to the impacts of climate change, DEECA is:

* delivering the $7.5 million Energy Resilience Solutions program (announced October 2022) to deliver energy backup systems through installing stand-alone power systems at community hubs in 24 high-risk towns
* working with communities in in Mallacoota, Omeo and Corryong to increase bushfire and energy resilience as part of the $7 million Community Microgrids and Sustainable Energy program
* finalising a government response to the Network Resilience Review Independent Expert Panel, which will further strengthen network performance in the face of climate change impacts
* completing the delivery of the Powerline Bushfire Safety program – by November 2023 the program will have reduced relative statewide powerline-related bushfire risk by 48 per cent and changed the way our electricity networks are designed and managed, to reduce bushfire risk

assessing and improving energy performance of existing and new buildings, so that they are more comfortable in temperature extremes.

**Managing the state’s natural assets**

As part of the DEECA risk-management framework, the department provides leadership to the Victorian community to enable the transition to a climate resilient and net zero emissions economy.

Victoria’s earth resources are playing an important role in supporting the economy’s transition to net zero emissions and the government’s broader climate change actions. This includes actions in the following areas:

* promotion and development of new critical minerals opportunities that will help to meet the growing need for critical and rare earth minerals to support the transformation to less carbon intensive industries
* regulatory scrutiny of the onshore conventional gas industry in relation to its contribution to Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions profile
* mine rehabilitation activities to achieve safe, stable and sustainable landforms supporting the closure of major coal mines and transition of Victoria’s energy sector away from brown coal-fired generation
* securing the supply of extractive materials to support the development of low emission technologies and infrastructure as the state’s wind and solar technologies grow and expand

new geoscience information promoting hydrogen storage potential, with hydrogen seen as a new energy source for the future as it can be transported as a gas, it can be transformed into electricity and methane, and it can be used as a fuel for transportation.

The transition of the energy sector to less carbon intensive industries requires strong support from the state’s earth resources sector and key functions within the Forestry and Resources Group within the department. Through this transition, the state must also maintain energy security, reliability and affordability, and oversee successful closure of three Latrobe Valley power stations that have delivered the bulk of Victoria’s electricity for nearly a century.

**Building resilience in the water sector**

DEECA leads implementation of the Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan 2022–2026 (WCAAP). Informed by a statewide climate change risk assessment of the water cycle system, the WCAAP commits DEECA along with Victoria’s water corporations and catchment management authorities to deliver 21 climate change adaptation actions by 2026. Together, the 21 actions aim to diversify water supplies, enhance the resilience of infrastructure and natural assets, increase operational resilience and efficiency of the sector, engage the community and support an orderly transition to a low-carbon and circular economy. Three examples of adaptation initiatives delivered under the WCAAP in 2022–23 are set out below.

Climate impacts such as more intense rainfall and heatwaves and drier average conditions can affect Victoria’s vital sewer and wastewater infrastructure, and how it operates. In 2022, DEECA published new [Guidelines for the Adaptive Management of Wastewater Systems Under Climate Change in Victoria](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/663561/guidelines-for-the-adaptive-management-of-wastewater-systems-under-climate-change-in-victoria.pdf). Based on an adaptive planning framework, the Guidelines use a five-phase cycle of inquiry to support water corporations to understand the impacts of climate change on wastewater systems and identify and implement strategies and actions to address them.

Climate change amplifies deterioration of water quality through higher temperatures, drought, bushfires, floods and storms. Poor water quality contributes to the increased frequency and distribution of harmful and nuisance algal blooms. Building on the work conducted under the Pilot Water Sector Adaptation Action Plan, a framework to understand future changes in algal risks across Victorian water bodies was successfully trialled at Lake Eppalock in central Victoria in 2023. DEECA is working to identify additional trial sites representing different waterbody types. Together the trials will ensure learnings can be efficiently extrapolated to other waterbodies in Victoria.

Emergency water supply points (EWSPs) provide increasingly critical access to reliable water supplies for local communities in regional Victoria during severe dry and drought conditions, or during emergency events such as bushfire. $1.8 million in funding through the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth’s National Water Grid Fund has been allocated to projects to extend, improve and build the resilience of ESWP infrastructure across regional Victorian communities. Projects are being delivered by local councils and rural water corporations, with construction and upgrades to be finalised in 2023. Projects were identified through an independent review of Victoria’s EWSP network undertaken in 2021. Reviews will be conducted every five years to assess whether supply points sufficiently reflect current and future possible climatic conditions.

**Bushfire Risk Management**

Forest Fire Management Victoria’s (FFMVic) fuel management program delivered 234 planned burns in 2022–23, across 75,868 hectares, and non-burn treatment of 16,762 hectares. DEECA is strengthening and expanding Victoria’s network of strategic fuel breaks, which are designed to reduce the risk and impact of more frequent, intense and damaging bushfires. During 2022–23, DEECA delivered 187 kilometres of strategic fuel breaks, bringing the cumulative total of this program to 1,471 kilometres. DEECA is also implementing a long-term strategy to retain skilled forest-based contractors and working with Traditional Owners to lead the reintroduction of cultural fire practices on Country. These investments support the department to undertake bushfire management more efficiently and effectively in the context of a rapidly changing climate.

Bushfire risk that is not reduced through fuel management is managed through other bushfire risk management interventions, including compliance activities to prevent ignitions, early detection and rapid first attack, bushfire suppression, community warnings and evacuations and community partnerships and capacity building. In response to the Inspector-General for Emergency Management’s Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season (IGEM Inquiry), DEECA committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of fuel management targets including the current statewide target to maintain fuel-driven bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent of maximum levels, to ensure targets remain contemporary and relevant to the changing bushfire risk context in Victoria. This review will make use of significant advancements in bushfire risk modelling that have been achieved through a project called ‘Risk 2.0’, including the introduction of multiple and locally relevant weather scenarios, consideration of suppression effectiveness and ignition likelihood, more accurate building location information and a higher resolution ignition grid. While these advances in bushfire risk modelling do not explicitly consider climate change, the modelling improves the accuracy of our understanding of bushfire risk in Victoria and will enable the bushfire management sector to more effectively manage bushfire risk in Victoria.

A key priority for DEECA is to continue to explore and adopt the latest science and innovation, including investing in next-generation bushfire risk modelling tools, to support improved planning and decision making about where to prioritise investment and effort across bushfire risk mitigations and tenures to deliver the best outcomes under a changing climate. For example, DEECA secured federal funding in 2022–23 to continue an innovative project with the University of Melbourne, ‘Integrated Strategic Bushfire Management in a Changing Climate’. This project is a continuation and expansion of work which examines long-term fire regimes, and how our bushfire management impacts risk in the context of climate change.

DEECA is integrating climate adaptation in the delivery of emergency recovery programs that increase the resilience of communities, the natural environment, built infrastructure and local economies to more frequent and severe events in the future. An example of this work is the rebuild of the Lower Snowy Campground in Gippsland in 2022–23, which was impacted by both the 2019–20 bushfires and October 2022 floods. This campground has been re-designed and built to better withstand impacts of both fires and floods, resulting in a more resilient asset. The works included stabilisation of riverbanks, rebuilding and relocating infrastructure to more protected locations and repairing and improving access roads.

DEECA is committed to Building Back Better to ensure infrastructure, communities and the environment is resilient to future emergency events. By integrating climate sensitive design into bridge and crossing infrastructure built since 2008, including approximately 40 new concrete bridges since 2018, government has seen a return on investment, with infrastructure experiencing substantially reduced damage as a result of extreme events, quicker return to service and reduced cost of reinstatement.

**Managing statewide coastal hazards**

Victoria’s marine and coastal environment including DEECA’s vast portfolio of natural and built coastal assets are susceptible to coastal hazard impacts, including erosion and inundation. These impacts are projected to increase with changes in wave action, storm activity and sea level rise associated with climate change.

The [Marine and Coastal Strategy](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-management/marine-and-coastal-strategy) has embedded climate change adaptation (including coastal hazards) as a core component of planning and management in the marine and coastal environment using a range of statewide and local approaches. Statewide approaches include the Victoria’s Resilient Coast (VRC) program, implementation of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework and updates to statewide land use planning tools and policies. Local approaches include the Regional and Strategic Partnerships, Coastal and Marine Management Plans, Environmental Management Plans, marine plans (where developed) and statutory planning mechanisms. DEECA received $16.9 million to implement the *Marine and Coastal Strategy in 2022–23* under the VicCoasts initiative.

Under the Strategy, DEECA has also embedded climate change adaptation and strategic management of coastal hazards into a long-term statewide asset management plan for coastal protection assets. The plan identifies priority assets for maintenance, replacement or adaptation and satisfies the requirements of the Victorian Asset Management Accountability Framework. The plan has modelled costs for managing these assets from 2022–2042, allowing for proactive investment into assets and reducing the frequency of fix-on-fail approaches.

Proactive asset management, embedded in adaptation pathways planning, also aligns with [Victoria’s Resilient Coast – Adapting to 2100+](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-management/victorias-resilient-coast-adapting-for-2100) framework and guidelines. The Victoria’s Resilient Coast (VRC) program delivers on priority actions in the Marine and Coastal Strategy (2022) and directions of the Marine and Coastal Policy (2020), to achieve the vision for a healthy, dynamic and biodiverse marine and coastal environment that is valued in its own right and benefits the Victorian community now and in the future.

DEECA led the development of a strategic approach for coastal hazard risk management and adaptation for Victoria, through [Victoria’s Resilient Coast – Adapting to 2100+ program](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-management/victorias-resilient-coast-adapting-for-2100). This includes a framework and guidelines that were made under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018 in May 2023, and a grants program to support strategic adaptation planning.

As an example, the Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) is bringing together Traditional Owners and nine agencies with responsibility for managing coastal land, assets and infrastructure in the region to proactively plan for future changes to the coastline around Inverloch, Venus Bay and Anderson Inlet via the [Cape to Cape Resilience Project](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/cape-to-cape-resilience-project). In 2022–23, the Cape to Cape Resilience Project developed a draft Coastal Resilience Plan through collaborative input across all project partners and informed by the VRC framework and guidelines. The Resilience Plan will guide collaborative implementation of strategic short and long-term adaptation for the region, and is informed by specialist technical studies to date including coastal hazard assessments, adaptation options modelling, a Cultural Values Assessment, a coastal risk and vulnerability assessment and adaptation framework.

**Agriculture sector climate related activities**

Agriculture Victoria has dedicated funding through the Agriculture Sector Emissions Reduction pledge for enabling actions to support the agriculture sector to reduce its emissions. This includes funding for emission reduction climate change research undertaken at DEECA-owned research farms. There is also a suite of climate information products offered. DEECA also partners with the Commonwealth to deliver the Future Drought Fund.

Agriculture Victoria has detailed climate and land use modelling capabilities as well as a range of research and innovation expertise related to climate adaptation and mitigation including reducing emissions in livestock and plants, as well as adaptation challenges for farm systems.

Agriculture Victoria has provided training to staff and service providers to increase capability related to calculating and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector, directly related to service delivery and policy development. There is also a regular schedule of climate [webinars](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/climate-and-weather/climate-updates-newsletters-and-webinars/climate-webinars) on aspects of climate risks, seasonal conditions and emissions reductions.

Agriculture Victoria also facilitates the Victorian Agriculture Climate Change Council, which provides independent and strategic advice to the Minister for Agriculture on how the agriculture sector can prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change and inform the government’s broader climate change agenda as it relates to the agriculture sector.

Climate change related to the agriculture sector is a priority through Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee and Ministerial (AMM) agriculture groups coordinated across jurisdictions and chaired by the Commonwealth. Agriculture Victoria is active in these groups advocating for a proactive and coordinated approach to climate action. This includes through the interjurisdictional sub-working group, the Climate Change Task Group, established to inform a National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture.

Ellinbank Smart Farm in Gippsland has an ambitious target of being the world’s first carbon-neutral dairy farm by:

* reducing methane emissions
* generating electricity through a range of alternate options including solar, wind and bio-digestion

improved fertiliser and manure management practices.

The Horsham SmartFarm in the Wimmera is focused on improving productivity and biosecurity outcomes for the grains industry through seed-to-landscape innovations and mitigating the impacts of climate change through the adaptation of cropping systems and energy supply and storage.

**Ending native timber harvesting**

On 23 May 2023, the Victorian Government announced that commercial native timber harvesting would end by 1 January 2024. The transition to exit native timber harvesting has been brought forward from 2030, the date originally projected for the cessation of native timber harvesting in 2019.

This transition provides an opportunity to consider new forest management approaches, including regeneration and restoration of previously harvested coupes, or of forest damaged by severe events such as bushfire, taking into account evolving needs for climate adaptation, and contributing to overall climate resilience.

Key to adaptive forest management is the ability to recognise and respond to the changing pressures facing forests today. The Major Event Review, a feature of the modernised Victorian Regional Forest Agreements, provides a response mechanism to major natural disturbances such as bushfires. The Major Event Review enables assessment of the impacts of a major event and identification of remedial actions, which assists in both mitigating and managing climate-related risks.

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments agreed to undertake an independent Major Event Review to specifically assess the impact of the devastating 2019–20 bushfires. The review was undertaken by an independent panel and the report has been informed by science, Traditional Owner knowledge and public consultation. As at 30 June 2023, the Victorian Government is considering the independent review recommendations with the Commonwealth Government, which include proposed actions to understand and manage the impact of these fires, and more broadly climate change, on its forests. This Major Event Review process is an example of adaptive forest management in response to climate-related risks and demonstrates DEECA’s ability to leverage opportunities in this space.

|  |
| --- |
| **Urban Heat Management**  DEECA is preparing for adaptation to climate change and combatting urban heat risk to Victorian communities by contributing to urban cooling and greening through investing in increasing urban canopy coverage where it is needed most. In 2018, the Victorian Government commissioned a report into [Urban Vegetation Cover Coverage in Melbourne](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/data-and-insights/melbournes-vegetation-heat-and-land-use-data), which identified that Melbourne's west had just 5.5 per cent canopy cover in urban areas compared to 17.4 per cent in the inner south-east and 25.9 per cent in the east. The western suburbs experience the greatest urban heat island effect across metropolitan Melbourne.  In May 2021, the Victorian Government announced the [More Trees for a Cooler, Greener West](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/more-trees-for-a-cooler-greener-west/program/about-the-program) program, which seeks to plant 500,000 trees across Melbourne’s west, creating cooler spaces for families in the western suburbs to enjoy for generations to come. This program will provide more shade and green spaces, driving down pollution, reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality. To deliver this important initiative, DEECA is partnering with Traditional Owners, the six local councils across Melbourne’s west, other public land managers, schools, Zoos Victoria, Environment Education Victoria, environmental and ‘friends of’ groups as well as volunteers in the community to undertake tree planting projects right across Melbourne’s west. Approximately 200,000 trees have been planted since commencing the program and DEECA expects by the completion of Phase Three in June 2024, approximately 345,000 trees will have been planted. |

**Climate-related metrics and targets**

*This section describes the metrics and targets used by DEECA to assess and manage relevant climate-related risk. This includes reporting on DEECA’s operational emissions.*

**Providing transparency through emissions reduction reporting**

DEECA publishes the Victorian Greenhouse Gas Report every year on Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions, based on the most recent data available. This draws on emissions data prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water in accordance with internationally agreed rules. There is a two-year lag between reporting periods and when the data is available for use. The latest report available is the *2020 Victorian Greenhouse Gas Report on* the DEECA [website](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorias-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-targets).

**Improved reporting on departmental emissions**

DEECA reports climate-related metrics and targets in line with the Victorian Government’s updated Financial Reporting Direction (FRD) 24. DEECA’s reporting against these metrics and targets are detailed in the next section of the Annual Report on Environmental Performance.

This updated reporting provides greater transparency for the Victorian community of the environmental impacts of public services and illustrate how they are being responsibly managed. Improved reporting will also support delivery of five-yearly whole of government emissions reduction pledges required by the *Climate Change Act 2017*.

The updated [Financial Direction 24: Reporting of environmental data by government entities](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/financial-reporting-policy/financial-reporting-directions-and-guidance) is available on the Department of Treasury and Finance website. DEECA has implemented these requirements in this annual report and will continue to lead work across the Victorian Government to support implementation by all departments and agencies.

# Environmental Reporting

* 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
* 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
* 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
* 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

13 Climate Action

DEECA is a new department that was established on 1 January 2023 through Machinery of Government changes. Under the Financial Reporting Direction 24 (FRD 24) reporting requirements, environmental reporting indicators for DEECA will be reported for the full reporting year and this environmental report will also form a new baseline for the department.

All government entities are required to report on office and non-office activities across a range of environmental indicators in their annual reports. Where an entity loses or gains staff or facilities though Machinery of Government changes, the entity that is responsible for the staff or facilities on June 30 of the reporting year is to report all data relating to these staff and facilities.

This information provides greater transparency for the Victorian community of the environmental impacts of public services and illustrate how they are being responsibly managed. Improved reporting is supporting delivery of five-yearly whole of government emissions reduction pledges required by the *Climate Change Act 2017*. DEECA will establish a revised net zero commitment in advance of the 2023–2024 annual report. The following illustrative disclosure is a mix of narrative and quantitative data, presenting the department's environmental performance over 2022–23.

Note that due to the impact of Machinery of Government changes that occurred between DEECA and the former DELWP relating to the number of offices, sites and staff, previous year results are not directly comparable.

**Green Team Program**

DEECA’s Green Team program continues to promote awareness of environmental objectives by encouraging positive environmental behaviours across the department. A group of staff Green Team volunteers help develop, implement and refine a range of site-based initiatives and activities aimed at raising staff awareness to improve environmental performance.

## Environmental Management System (EMS)

The department’s EMS is a structured approach to manage both environmental performance and environmental compliance. Since 2003, all Victorian Government departments have been required to:

* adopt an EMS which is aligned to International Standard ISO 14001
* report annually on their environmental performance under FRD 24

engage an independent environmental auditor to biennially audit their EMS.

The former DELWP EMS was last audited in 2021 and the first audit of the DEECA EMS is scheduled to occur in September 2023.

## Reporting boundary for environmental data

DEECA reports environmental data from 1 April to 31 March (each year) to allow for a full reporting year and provide greater accuracy for the annual report. Data is tracked through consumption reports, surveys and audits at DEECA sites. This report will form the baseline for the department.

DEECA reporting excludes residences and sites where DEECA staff are located within another department’s facility. Non-DEECA staff accommodated within a DEECA-managed facility are counted towards the DEECA reported consumption figures (but not full-time equivalent (FTE) figures). Entities co-located within DEECA tenancies are also included in this report. All other DEECA entities are excluded from this reporting.

While many office-based elements of environmental reporting can be more clearly managed, other operational environmental impacts can be dictated by seasonal events, such as fire response activities.

Under the updated FRD 24 reporting requirements, consumption indicators require further breakdown by site type. To address this requirement, the following site categorisation has been established and used throughout this report.

| Site category | Description | Number of locations |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Offices | DEECA office sites | 27 |
| Mixed use sites | DEECA office sites with depots or warehouses attached | 41 |
| Research centres | Agriculture Victoria research centres | 12 |
| Other | Airbases, depots, farms, fire towers, radio towers and warehouses | 49 |

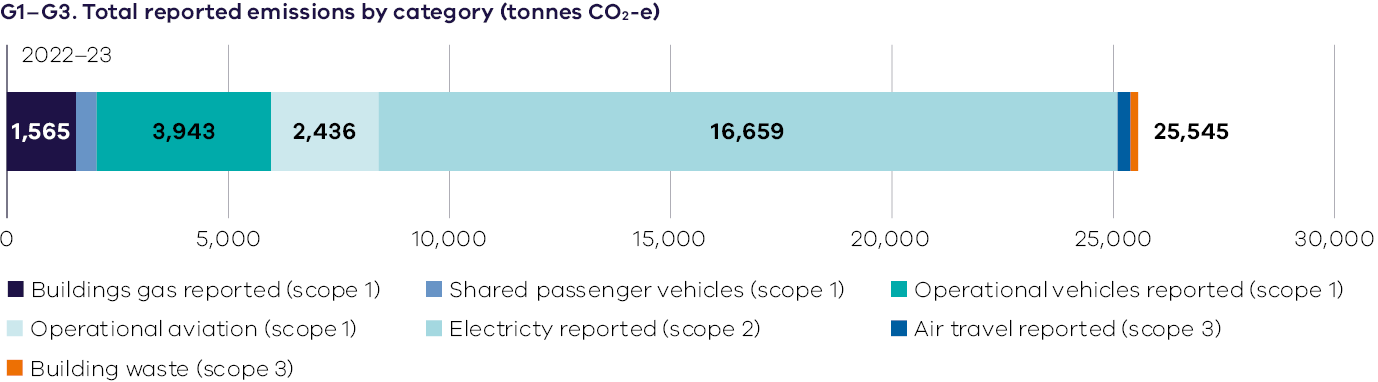
## Greenhouse gas emissions

Under FRD 24 reporting, the following DEECA emissions are included in this report. These emissions are also broken down and categorised into the following three scopes.

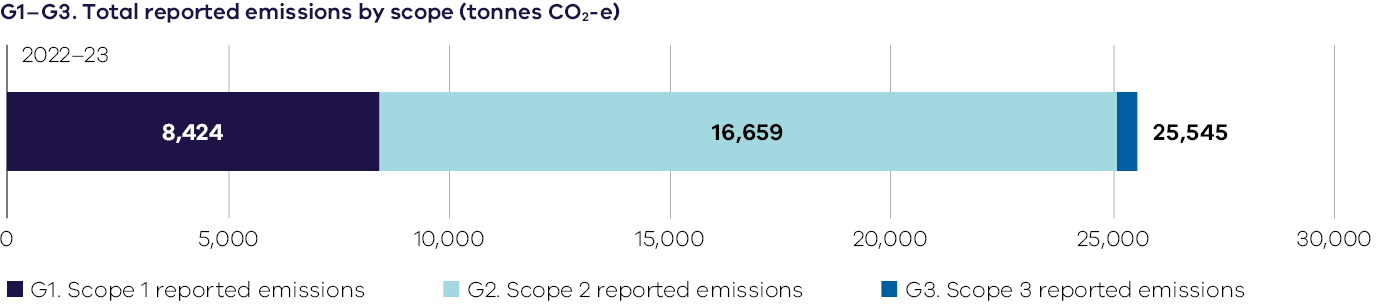
**Scope 1:** Emissions released to the atmosphere as a direct result of an activity.

**Scope 2:** Emissions released to the atmosphere from the indirect consumption of an energy commodity.

**Scope 3:** Indirect emissions that are generated in the wider economy. They occur because of the activities of a facility, but from sources not owned or controlled by that facility's business.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **Total reported greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **25,545** |
| **G1. Scope 1 (direct) greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **8,424** |
| Carbon Dioxide CO2 | 8,368 |
| Methane CH4 | 4 |
| Nitrous Oxide N2O | 52 |
| **G2. Scope 2 (indirect electricity) greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **16,659** |
| **G3. Scope 3 (other indirect) greenhouse gas emissions associated with commercial air travel and waste disposal (tonnes CO2-e)** | **462** |



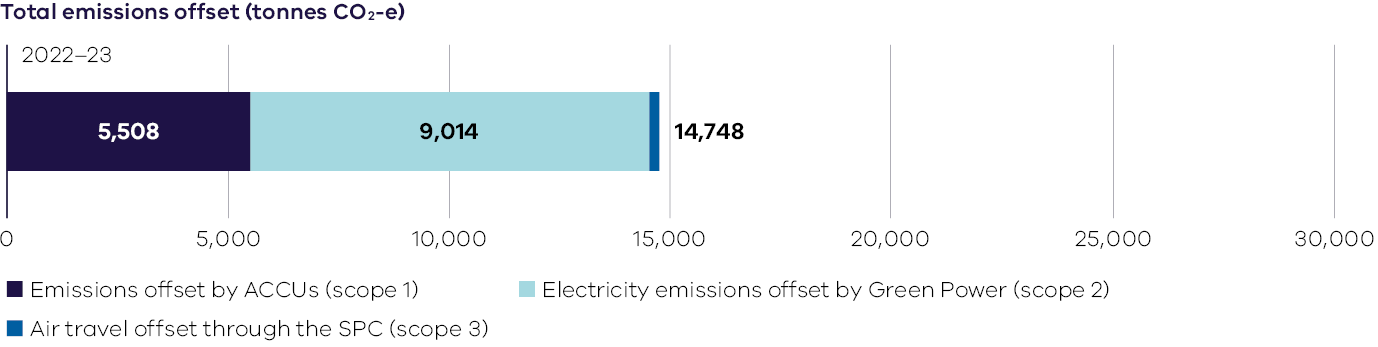
### Offsetting of DEECA emissions

For the reporting period, the department has offset 50 per cent of Scope 1 emissions associated with operational vehicles and gas use in buildings through the purchase of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs)i. For details, please refer to the stationary fuel use and transportation sections of this report.

The progress towards purchasing 100 per cent Green Power at DEECA managed sites has also offset a proportion of electricity emissions over the reporting period. All remaining DEECA managed sites will progressively purchase 100 per cent Green Power from July 2023 onwards. The remaining sites will come under the commitment of 100 per cent renewable electricity for government operations by 2025.

The progress towards offsetting all departmental air travel through the State Purchasing Contract (SPC) has seen the department offset a proportion of air travel emissions over the 2022–23 reporting period. DEECA offset all staff air travel through the SPC from April 2023.

A total of 14,748 tonnes CO2-e have been offset over the 2022–23 reporting period. These emissions would have been in addition to the reported greenhouse gas emissions in the previous section.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| Total emissions offset | 14,748 |
| **Scope 1:** Emissions offset from ACCUs | 5,508 |
| ACCUs banked from 2021–22 8,329,078,344 – 8,329,078,843 | 500 |
| ACCUs purchased in 2022–23 8,343,718,572 – 8,343,723,579 | 5,008 |
| ACCUs banked for 2023–24 8,343,723,580 – 8,343,724,071 | 492 |
| **Scope 2: Emissions offset from Green Power purchasing** | **9,014** |
| **Scope 3: Emissions offset through the SPC for air travel** | **226** |

Explanatory Notes:

i. ACCU refers to Australian Carbon Credit Units. An ACCU is a unit issued by the Clean Energy Regulator and represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent stored or avoided by a project.

## Electricity production and consumption

Total electricity consumption for DEECA over the reporting period was 31,303 Megawatt hours (MWh).

All DEECA new builds and significant rebuilds have LED lighting and solar installation as a standard requirement and are built to both 6-star NABERS ratings and Green Star principles.

| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **EL1. Total electricity consumption (MWh)(i)** | **31,303** |
| Purchased electricity | 30,203 |
| Generated electricity (consumed) | 1,100 |
| Offices | 5,618 |
| Mixed use sites | 5,243 |
| Research centres | 20,028 |
| Other | 414 |
| **EL2. On-site electricity generated (MWh)(ii)** | **1,305** |
| Generated electricity (consumed) | 1,100 |
| Generated electricity (exported) | 205 |
| **EL3. On site Solar Photo-Voltaic (PV) installed generation capacity (Megawatts)** | **1.390** |
| **EL4. Green power purchased (MWh)** | **10,605** |
| **G2. Reported scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions from electricity consumption (tonnes CO2-e)** | **16,659** |
| Electricity emissions (excluding Green Power) | 25,673 |
| Electricity emissions offset through the purchasing of Green Power | 9,014 |

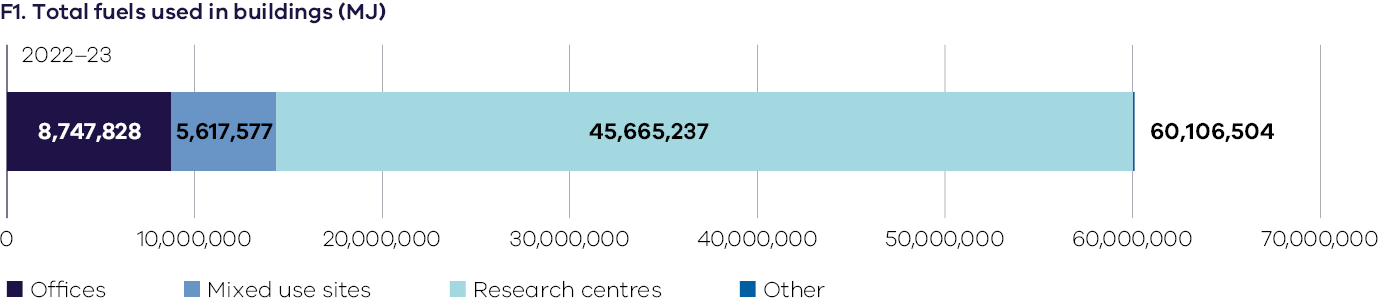
**Explanatory notes:**

i. This includes tenancy space in the CBD currently occupied by staff from the Department of Transport and Planning that will in the future be occupied by DEECA staff.

ii. Some older Solar PV do not have the capability to be tracked. Estimations are included where actual data is unavailable.

## Stationary fuel use

Total stationary fuel consumption for DEECA over the reporting period was 60,106,504 Megajoules (MJs). DEECA will continue to audit gas consumption across all sites and work to phase out consumption wherever practical, to support the Victorian Government Gas Substitution roadmap.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **F1. Total fuels used in buildings (MJ)** | **60,106,504** |
| Natural Gas | 56,417,665 |
| Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)(i) | 3,688,839 |
| Offices | 8,747,828 |
| Mixed use sites | 5,617,577 |
| Research centres | 45,665,237 |
| Other | 75,861 |
| **F2/G1. Reported scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (tonnes CO2-e)** | **1,565** |
| Stationary fuel consumption emissions (excluding ACCUs) | 3,130 |
| Stationary fuel consumption emissions offset through the purchasing of ACCUs(ii) | 1,565 |

Explanatory notes:

i. This figure is based on LPG delivered to site (either as canisters or refilled into site LPG storage tanks). Canisters and tanks can remain unused for long periods of time.

ii. ACCUs were purchased as a former DELWP commitment. The future purchasing of ACCUs is currently under review by DEECA.

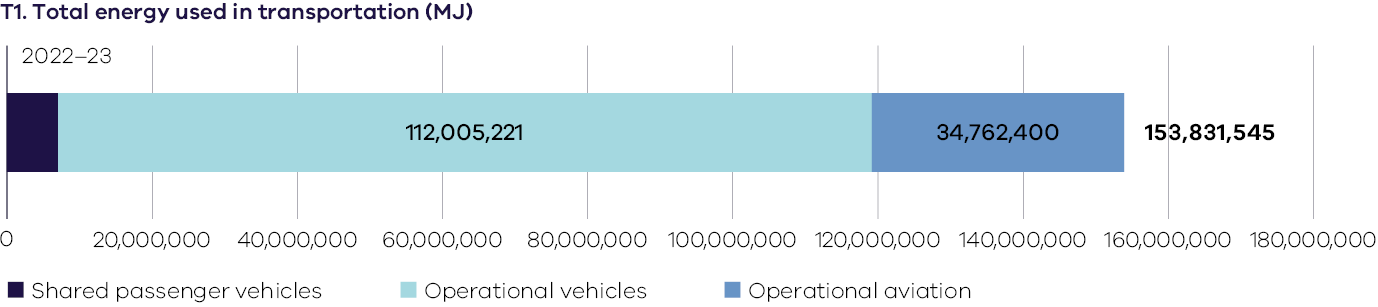
## Transportation

The total energy used in transport for DEECA over the reporting period was 153,831,545 Megajoules (MJ). The fleet of shared passenger vehicles accounted for 5 per cent of this total with the remaining 95 per cent from operational vehicles and operational aviation. The departmental ‘Digital First’ program enabled greater collaboration and efficiency in the way staff work through technological innovations such as virtual meetings. DEECA aims to minimise travel whenever possible, and staff are also encouraged to use public transport options.

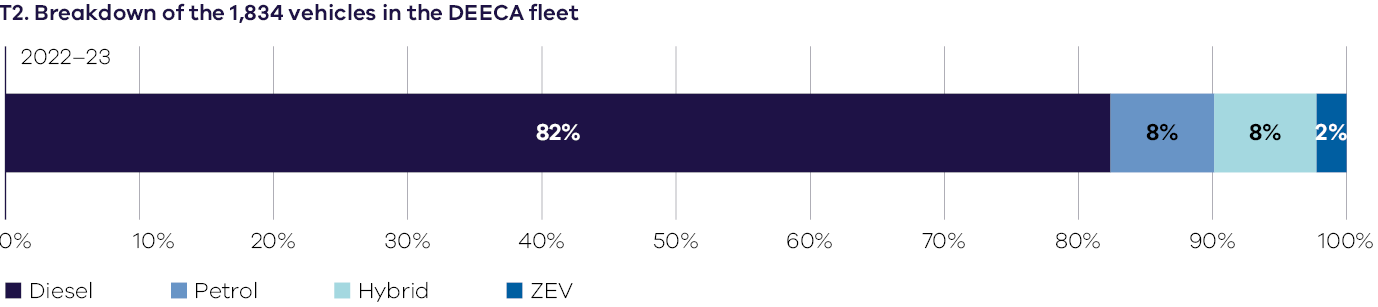
DEECA continues to support the policy of ‘Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) first’ for the shared passenger vehicle fleet. The DEECA fleet will transition to ZEVs as current leases expire, with supporting charging infrastructure also installed to assist with this transition. There are now 365 vehicles in the shared passenger fleet which includes 38 ZEVs.

As part of the Forest and Fire Mixed Fleet Strategy, a ZEV Preparation Plan was developed to guide the transition to lower emission operational vehicles at the optimum time. DEECA is unable to transition to ZEVs or low emission vehicles to replace existing operational fleet until later this decade when more options are expected to become available. However, DEECA can prepare for transition through better understanding of performance and range of existing fleet, understanding emerging ZEV technologies, managing staff behaviour change and continuing to plan a program of work for the transition when it commences. This includes participation in a trial with *Roev – Electrifying fleets across Australia* to convert three of the current operational vehicles (Ford Ranger or Toyota Hilux) to ZEVs. In addition to the above, Agriculture Victoria also have three electric utility terrain vehicles.

DEECA is unable to transition operational aviation away from fossil fuels due to limited available options. However, DEECA is trialling Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (drones) which will also help to address operational aviation emissions.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **T1: Total energy used in transportation (MJ)** | **153,831,545** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **7,063,924** |
| Diesel | 1,412,714 |
| Petrol | 2,735,923 |
| Hybrid | 2,883,477 |
| ZEV | 31,810 |
| **Operational vehicles(ii)** | **112,005,221** |
| Diesel | 111,712,847 |
| Petrol | 292,374 |
| **Operational aviation(iii)** | **34,762,400** |
| Diesel | 33,109,308 |
| Kerosene | 1,653,092 |



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **T2: Number of vehicles in the DEECA fleet** | **1,834** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **365** |
| Diesel | 68 |
| Petrol | 119 |
| Hybrid | 140 |
| ZEV | 38 |
| **Operational vehicles(ii)** | **1,469** |
| Diesel | 1,443 |
| Petrol | 23 |
| ZEV | 3 |

| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **T3: Reported scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions from transport (tonnes CO2-e)** | **6,859** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **479** |
| Diesel | 99 |
| Petrol | 185 |
| Hybrid | 195 |
| **Reported operational vehicles(ii)** | **3,943** |
| Diesel | 7,866 |
| Petrol | 20 |
| Operational vehicle emissions (excluding ACCUs) | 7,886 |
| Operational vehicle emissions offset through the purchasing of ACCUs(iv) | 3,943 |
| **Operational aviation(iii)** | **2,436** |
| Kerosene | 2,324 |
| Gasoline | 112 |

Explanatory notes:

i. The shared passenger vehicle fleet includes leased 2WD and AWD shared vehicles and departmental use of the vehicle fleet managed through the Shared Services Provider. This data includes the vehicles that will transfer to the Department of Transport and Planning that are still currently managed under the DEECA system. Executive vehicles are not included in the shared passenger vehicle fleet and are no longer covered under FRD 24 reporting.

ii. The operational vehicle fleet includes all owned and leased utility vehicles, ultralight tankers, heavy tankers, dozers, heavy-duty vehicles and farm vehicles. All data for Agriculture Victoria operational farm vehicles is estimated, as this fleet is not currently tracked for reporting purposes. Systems will be established to include actual data for future annual reporting.

iii. The operational aviation data includes DEECA’s use of a hired fleet used by DEECA Forest and Fire Management operations.

iv. ACCUs were purchased to offset 50 per cent of operational vehicle emissions. Future purchasing of ACCUs is currently under review by DEECA.

## Commercial air travel

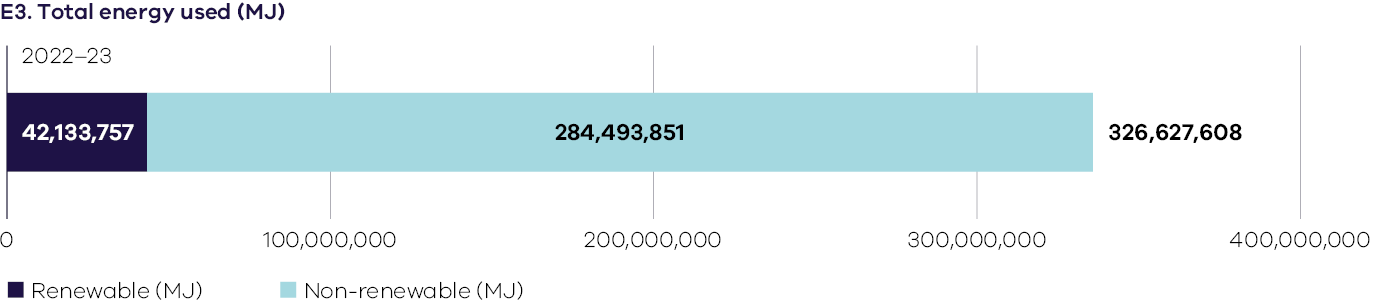
| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **T4. Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (km)** | **2,967,028** |
| **G3. Reported scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from commercial air travel (tonnes CO2-e)** | **331** |
| Commercial air travel emissions (excluding State Purchasing Contract offsets) | 556 |
| Commercial air travel emissions offset through the State Purchasing Contract(i) | 225 |

Explanatory notes:

i. All former DELWP emissions from air travel have been offset since July 2016 through the SPC for travel management services. All DEECA air travel emissions will be offset from April 2023 onwards.

## Total energy use

The total energy used for DEECA over the reporting period was 326,627,608 MJ. This includes all energy used in buildings and transportation.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **E1. Total energy used from fuels (MJ)** | **213,938,049** |
| Stationary | 60,106,504 |
| Transportation | 153,831,545 |
| **E2. Total energy used from electricity (MJ)** | **112,689,559** |
| **E3. Total energy used segmented into renewable and non-renewable sources (MJ)** | **326,627,608** |
| Renewable | 42,133,757 |
| Non-renewable | 284,493,851 |
| **E4. Units of energy used normalised by FTE (MJ/FTE)** | **57,994** |

## Sustainable buildings and infrastructure

DEECA will continue to implement sustainable building guidelines to ensure the design and delivery of buildings incorporate best practice sustainable design principles and resource efficient features. This means that all new builds and significant rebuilds will have LED lighting and solar installation as a standard requirement and will be built to both 6-star NABERS ratings and Green Star principles.

For the reporting period, an additional 71 Kilowatts of solar PV has been installed at three sites and LED lighting upgrades undertaken at a further two sites.

The Shared Service Provider (SSP) (through Department of Government Services managing leases on behalf of DEECA), has now established Green Lease Schedules at the following six sites where DEECA staff are located:

* East Melbourne: 8 Nicholson Street
* Melbourne: 2 Lonsdale Street
* Melbourne: 150 Lonsdale Street
* Morwell: Latrobe Valley Government Hub
* Orbost: 171–173 Nicholson Street

Wangaratta: Ovens Street.

The Green Lease Schedules provide minimum performance expectations between landlord and tenant, compelling the landlord to regularly rate buildings and improve building efficiency.

All new SSP managed government office buildings and tenancy fit-outs will have a minimum 5-Star NABERS energy efficiency rating from 2021 and a 6-Star rating from 2025. The table below summarises all NABERS rating that have been undertaken by landlords through SSP lease requirements during the current reporting period.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of building | Building type | Rating scheme | Rating |
| East Melbourne: 8 Nicholson Street | Office | NABERS – Energy | 5.0 |
| Melbourne: 2 Lonsdale Street | Office | NABERS – Energy | 5.5 |
| Melbourne: 150 Lonsdale Street | Office | NABERS – Energy | 4.0 |
| Morwell: Latrobe Valley Government Hub | Office | NABERS – Energy | 6.0 |
| Orbost: 171–173 Nicholson Street | Office | NABERS – Energy | 3.0 |

Additionally, Agriculture Victoria has a network of SmartFarms (Ellinbank, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura and Tatura) that focus on research and innovation, and are committed to demonstrating emerging technologies, such as emissions reduction activities, to the wider agricultural industry. For example, the Horsham SmartFarm is exploring the use of a Ground Source Heat Exchange system that uses the excess heat from the cooling of one glasshouse for other heating requirements across the site. This replaces emissions-heavy conventional heating and cooling systems and provides increased knowledge of the options for the agriculture industry.

The SmartFarms are also exploring electrification of their vehicles. While there are currently limited options to reduce emissions from heavy machinery, AgVic is exploring options for side-by-side vehicles. The Ellinbank SmartFarm has a fleet of 10 side-by-side vehicles, five of which are now electric versions. This is helping Ellinbank make progress towards its goal of being the world’s first carbon-neutral dairy farm.

## Sustainable procurement

DEECA considers sustainable procurement objectives through its implementation of Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework, which establishes requirements that apply to Victorian Government departments and agencies when they procure goods, services and construction.

The department has phased out use of specific single-use plastics at all sites, and for all operations, including straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers and plastic cotton bud sticks. This aligns with the Tackling Plastic Pollution: single-use plastics ban and associated statewide Victorian Government commitment(i).

The department’s Procurement Team provides internal procurement advice to support and strengthen environmental procurement practices. Departmental templates for tendering and contracting have been updated for tenderers to consider environmental sustainability benefits/impacts in their tender response which allows tender evaluation teams to weight and score this as a separate assessment criterion, where relevant.

Staff are encouraged to consider environmental aspects and sustainability in planning their procurement activity. The Procurement Approval template includes specific questions to demonstrate whether sustainability was considered in the evaluation and how it was considered.

The department will continue to promote greener procurement and strengthen environmentally sustainable practices when procuring stationery, IT equipment, fleet vehicles and office furniture.

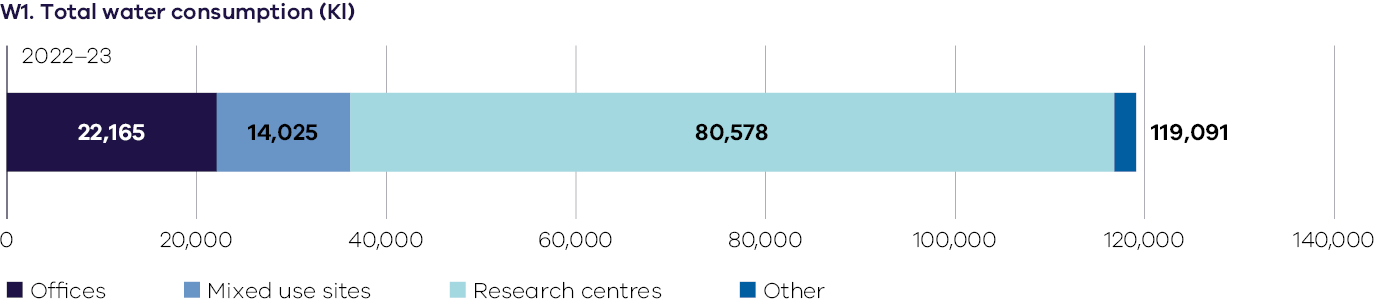
Explanatory notes:

i. Further details available at [single-use-plastics webpage](https://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics)

## Water consumption

Total water consumption for DEECA over the 2022–23 reporting period was 119,091 Kilolitres. The department continues to track daily water consumption across 32 sites through the VicFacilities portal. This has enabled any water leaks to be identified at sites in advance of billing data becoming available.

All new builds and significant rebuilds have water efficient fixtures, water efficient appliances and rainwater systems as a standard requirement and are built to both NABERS 6-star and Green Star 6-star principles. Water storage tanks continue to be installed at sites to support both firefighting operations and a reduced demand for mains water.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **W1. Total water consumption (Kilolitres)(i)** | **119,091** |
| Offices | 22,165 |
| Mixed use sites | 14,025 |
| Research centres | 80,578 |
| Other | 2,323 |
| **W2. Units of office water used per FTE (Kilolitres /FTE)** | **21.1** |

Explanatory notes:

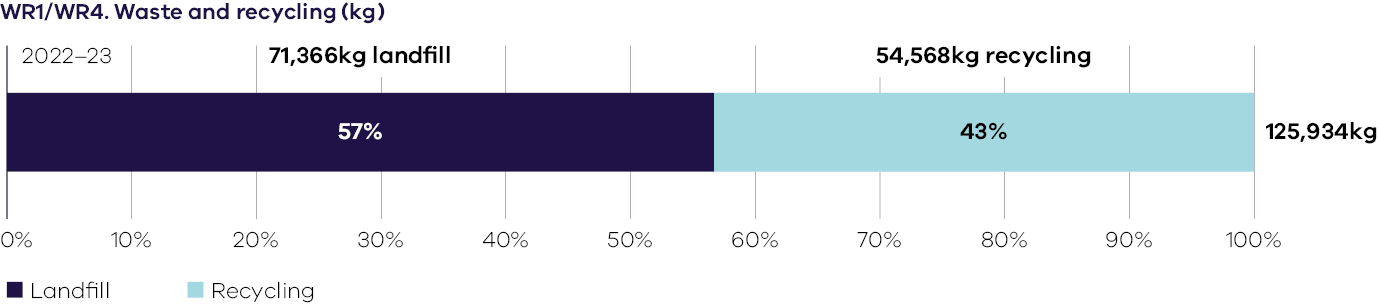
i. Water data is sourced directly from water corporations, building managers, or estimated where data is unavailable. Water consumption for multi tenanted CBD sites (and some regional offices) is taken as a proportion of the total building water consumption.

## Waste and recycling

Total waste generation for DEECA over the 2022–23 reporting period was 125,934 kilograms. The department collects this data from independent annual waste audits.

DEECA also collected an additional 1,311 kilograms of metal, plastics, batteries, mobile phones and stationery through the Green Collect recycling scheme and 11,599 kilograms of redundant IT equipment through the ReTech scheme. Excess office furniture and fit-out materials are reused and recycled, reducing waste generated by office moves across all sites. The department continued to participate in the take-away coffee cup recycling scheme at 8 Nicholson Street.

DEECA has phased out the use of specific single-use plastics at all sites and for all operations, including straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers and plastic cotton bud sticks. This aligns with the Tackling Plastic Pollution: single-use plastics ban and associated statewide Victorian Government commitment.



| Indicator | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- |
| **WR1. Total units of waste disposed of (kilograms)(i)** | **125,934** |
| Landfill | 71,366 |
| Recycling – comingled | 20,186 |
| Recycling – paper and card | 9,759 |
| Recycling – secure documents | 17,262 |
| Recycling – food and garden organics | 7,361 |
| **WR2. Percentage of office sites which are covered by dedicated collection services for:(ii)** |  |
| E-waste | 12% |
| Printer cartridges | 41% |
| Batteries | 31% |
| Soft plastics | 0% |
| WR3. Total units of waste disposed of normalised by FTE | 22.4 |
| WR4. Recycling rate percentage | 43% |
| **WR5/G3. Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from with waste disposal (tonnes CO2-e)** | **131** |

Explanatory notes:

i. DEECA waste and recycling data is calculated from annual waste audits at 16 locations where 65 per cent total staff are located.

ii. This indicator includes offices, mixed use sites and research centres. The e-waste collection service is a serviced collection managed by the department. Outside of the CBD, battery and printer cartridge collections are managed by staff volunteers. No soft plastics collections are in place at present although these will recommence once drop off points are re-established across the state. In 2022–23, the waste audits included an additional five DEECA (Agriculture Victoria) sites. This waste and recycling data was measured for kitchens and stationery rooms only.

# Financial Review

Table 1. Five-year financial summary

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2023 $’000(iii) | 2022 $’000(iv) | 2021  $’000 | 2020 $’000(v) | 2019  $’000 |
| Income from government(i) | 3,420,474 | 2,373,698 | 2,477,285 | 2,168,943 | 1,987,429 |
| Total income from transactions | 4,370,800 | 3,246,486 | 3,157,203 | 2,782,305 | 2,976,910 |
| Total expenses from transactions | 4,114,619 | 3,114,827 | 3,184,016 | 2,785,079 | 2,800,466 |
| Net result from transactions(ii) | 256,181 | 131,659 | (26,813) | (2,774) | 176,464 |
| Net result for the period | (81,783) | 613,586 | 769,765 | (97,689) | 186,546 |
| Net cash flow from operating activities | 408,385 | 215,478 | (31,678) | 69,824 | 17,991 |
| **Total assets** | **12,807,741** | **12,210,155** | **10,344,722** | **8,487,868** | **9,029,020** |
| **Total liabilities** | **1,411,951** | **894,127** | **740,993** | **430,920** | **416,018** |

**Note:**

The Five-Year financial summary differs to the Budget Portfolio outcomes. The variations relate to the inclusion of small entities such as the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability in Budget Portfolio reporting.

**Notes:**

(i) Income from government includes both output and special appropriations.

(ii) The ‘net result from transactions’ is identical to the ‘net operating balance’ for the general government sector.

(iii) From 1 January 2023, the following two entities have been combined into the DEECA’s financial statements pursuant to a determination made by the Assistant Treasurer under section 53(1)(b) of the *Financial Management Act 1994*:

Rural Assistance Commission (RAC)

Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA).

(iv) The comparative amounts in the five-year financial summary are not restated for Machinery of Government (MoG) changes.

(v) Total income and expenses from transactions have been revised for 2020 following a review of the department’s chart of accounts and reclassifications to reflect classifications used by the Department of Treasury and Finance whole-of-government reporting.

## Current year financial review

### Overview

The Victorian Government considers the net result from transactions to be the appropriate measure of financial management that can be directly attributed to government policy. This measure excludes the effects of revaluations (holding gains or losses) arising from changes in market prices and other changes in the volume of assets shown under ‘other economic flows’ on the comprehensive operating statement, which are outside the control of the department.

In 2022–23, DEECA recorded a net result from transactions of $256.2 million, higher by $124.5 million on the 2021–22 net result of $131.7 million (for the former DELWP).

### Financial performance and business review

As part of the Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 251) 2022, the transfer of outputs on 1 January 2023 was reflected in the financial statements of the Department as follows:

* the Planning and Heritage, Building and Land Use Victoria outputs are included for the period 1 July to 31 December 2022. From 1 January to 30 June 2023 these outputs are reported by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

the Agriculture and Resources outputs are included from 1 January to 30 June 2023. From 1 July to 31 December 2022, they were reported by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (formerly DJPR).

From 1 January 2023 as part of the Administrative Arrangements Order, the department’s name also changed from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Amounts referenced below compare the 2022–23 results for DEECA (incorporating the Machinery of Government changes noted above) with the 2021–22 results for the former DELWP.

In 2022–23, DEECA recorded a net surplus from transactions. The increase in total income of $1.1 billion and an increase in total expenses from transactions of $999.8 million resulted in total income exceeding total expenses.

The observed increase in total income is largely attributable to increased output appropriation in line with parliamentary appropriations. This is partly offset by reductions in special output appropriations and initial recognition income from derivative financial instruments.

The increase in total income was primarily due to the following:

Increase of $1.2 billion in output appropriations in line with annual parliamentary appropriations.

The increase in total income was partly offset by:

* Reduction of $117.2 million in special output appropriation revenue due to the outgoing transfer of the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contributions as part of the Machinery of Government changes (MoG).

Reduction of $55.2 million in initial recognition income from the fair value of financial derivatives associated with the Energy Support agreements that reached initial recognition in 2021–22.

The increase in expenditure of $999.8 million was primarily driven by:

An increase in grants and other transfers expense of $916.1 million primarily associated with the delivery of the Power Saving Bonus and the Opal Australian Paper worker support program transferred in through the MoG.

Other economic flows included in the net result in 2022–23 is a loss of $338.0 million, a decrease of $819.9 million from 2021–22 primarily due to:

* A loss on financial instruments of $177.0 million was recorded in 2022–23 due to the change in fair value of derivative financial instruments for the Victorian Renewable Energy Targets, a gain of $381.1 million was recognised in 2021–22.

A loss of $159.0 million on non-financial assets primarily due to the derecognition of a duplicate Crown land parcel identified through the MoG.

### Financial position – balance sheet

DEECA’s net assets increased by $79.8 million from 2021–22 to $11.4 billion.

The observed increase in total assets of $597.6 million to $12.8 billion, is largely attributable to an increase in property, plant and equipment and receivables. This increase is partly offset by a decrease in derivative financial instruments.

* Property, plant and equipment increased by $657.0 million primarily due to the transfer in of assets for the Agriculture output as part of the MoG.
* Receivables increased by $293.3 million primarily due to the transfer in of loans receivable for the Rural Assistance Commission and the State Administration Unit balance for the Agriculture output as part of the MoG.

Derivative financial instruments decreased by $282.8 million due to the fair value assessment of the derivatives relating to the Victorian Renewable Energy Targets.

Total liabilities increased by $517.8 million to $1.4 billion in 2022–23. The increase is primarily due to an increase in payables and borrowings.

* The increase in payables of $131.3 million is primarily due to the transfer in of the Agriculture output as part of the MoG.
* The increase in borrowings of $390.6 million is primarily due to the transfer in of the joint operations Royal Melbourne Showgrounds and BioSciences Research Centre – AgriBio.

These increases were partly offset by the decrease in other provisions of $60.7 million primarily due to the unwinding of the compulsory acquisition of land provision for the Suburban Parks program.

### Cash flows

DEECA’s net cash inflow from operating activities increased by $192.9 million in 2022–23, resulting in an overall net cash inflow of $408.4 million. This increase reflects DEECA’s net result from cash transactions for the year, adjusted for the impact of non-cash items such as depreciation.

### Subsequent events

In August 2022, the State Government approved consolidation of fire management operations functions within DEECA and Parks Victoria (PV). The outcome of this initiative is for some fire management resources and staff to be transferred to DEECA from 1 July 2023. To give effect to this decision, a transfer agreement has been signed by the PV CEO and DEECA Secretary under section 28 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* to effect transfer of employees from PV to DEECA. In accordance with Financial Reporting Direction 119 – Transfers through contributed capital, the assets and liabilities associated with the PV Tier 1 fire management function will transfer to DEECA and will be recognised as direct adjustment to equity and designated as contributions by owners.

Since 30 June 2023, a number of public announcements have been made relating to the operations of the national energy market. These include Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)’s release of its 2023 Inputs Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR), updated 2023 Electricity Statement of Opportunities Report (ESOO), the Commonwealth, Victorian and Tasmanian governments' decision to defer the final decision on whether to proceed with the second Marinus Link cable and the NSW Government’s announcement that it would engage in discussions for a ‘temporary’ extension of the Eraring power plant’s operating life (closure was initially scheduled for 2025). These announcements may impact inputs used in determining the fair value of DEECA’s financial derivatives, specifically the assumptions used to estimate future wholesale electricity prices. An estimate of the impact of the two announcements cannot be made, but the value of the derivatives is highly sensitive to movements in these underlying prices.

## Financial governance

The department diligently exercises its various financial management obligations, which include compliance with the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the Standing Directions 2018 under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (directions) and taxation legislation.

The department’s compliance with the directions is formally assessed at 30 June each year. The department prepares and publishes in its annual report, a public attestation of its material compliance with direction requirements. There is also a rolling internal audit program in place to review the department’s compliance with the directions.

The department also maintains financial policies and procedures to ensure good governance, effective internal controls and consistency with financial reporting. These documents are reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate to ensure ongoing relevance and conformance with external reporting requirements.

Financial transactions are subject to regular compliance reviews by the Financial Compliance team within the Finance, Infrastructure and Procurement Services division in DEECA.

Governance of Financial Management (GOFM) training is mandatory for all new financial delegates within the department. Refresher GOFM training is to be undertaken every four years for financial delegations to be maintained. Governance and integrity training is available online and compulsory for all staff.

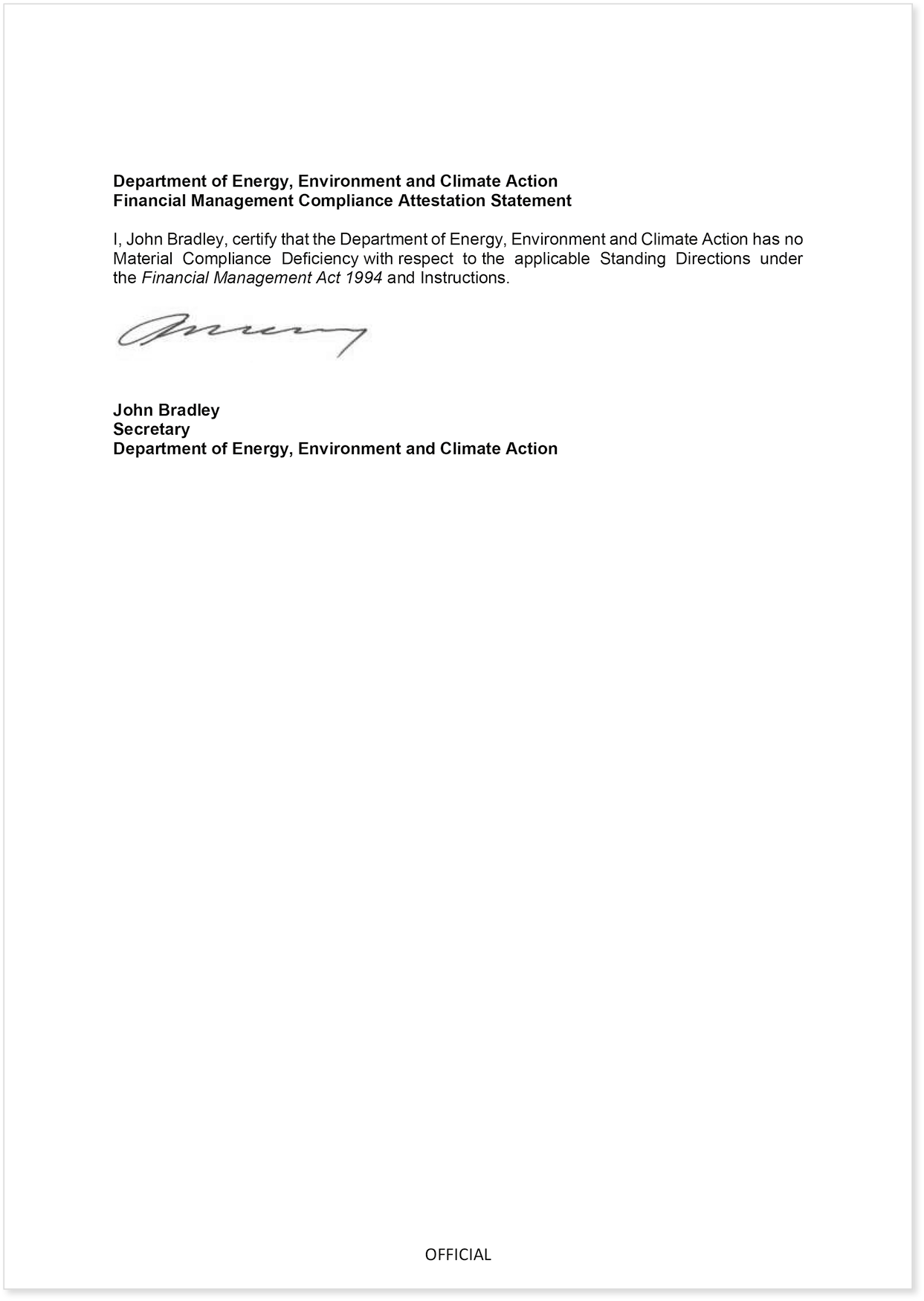
Leadership teams throughout the department actively participate in financial management. Financial compliance continues to be embedded into work practices. Regular communication of the requirements will continue through financial forums and daily work practices.

These activities form part of the department’s commitment to championing a culture of integrity within the public sector.

## Budget portfolio outcome statements

A comparison of the budget portfolio outcome statements for the department, as published in the 2022–23 Budget Paper No. 5, and the actual results for the year can be found at Appendix 4.

## Attestation for financial management compliance with Ministerial Standing Directions 5.1.4



**Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action**

**Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement**

I, John Bradley, certify that the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

**John Bradley**

**Secretary**

**Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action**

# Legislative and other information

## Major Entities

### Agriculture

Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd (AVS)

Dairy Food Safety Victoria

Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation

Melbourne Market Authority

Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee

PrimeSafe

Phytogene Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of AVS)

Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria

VicForests

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development

### Energy and Resources

Electric Line Clearance Consultative Committee

Energy Safe Victoria

Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

Office of the Mining Warden

Victorian Electrolysis Committee

### Environment

Budj Bim Council

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability

Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board

Director of National Parks

Environment Protection Authority

Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Marine and Coastal Council

National Parks Advisory Council

Parks Victoria

Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of Management

Reference Areas Advisory Committee

Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria

Scientific Advisory Committee

Sustainability Victoria

Trust for Nature (Victoria)

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Zoological Parks and Gardens Board

Committees of Management (various) and trustees appointed under restricted Crown grants(i)

Ministerial advisory committees (various)

### Water

Birrarung Council

Border Groundwater Agreement Review Committee

Barwon Region Water Corporation

Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation

Central Highlands Region Water Corporation

Coliban Region Water Corporation

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

East Gippsland Region Water Corporation

Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Corporation

Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation

Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation

Greater Western Water Corporation

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation

Mallee Catchment Management Authority

Melbourne Water Corporation

North Central Catchment Management Authority

North East Region Water Corporation

North East Catchment Management Authority

South East Water Corporation

South Gippsland Region Water Corporation

Victorian Environmental Water Holder

Wannon Region Water Corporation

Westernport Region Water Corporation

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

Yarra Valley Water Corporation

(i) In the DEECA portfolio there are approximately 1,000 committees of management established under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and approximately 35 restricted Crown grants where trustees manage one or more Crown land reserves. Major incorporated committees of management include Barwon Coast Committee of Management, Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management and Working Heritage.

## Acts Administered

### Minister for Agriculture

*Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992*

*Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Victoria) Act 1994*

*Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*

*Biological Control Act 1986*

*Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*

Certain provisions are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment and Minister for Outdoor Recreation and, in so far as it relates to the exercise of powers for the purposes of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* these powers are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Water, or certain provisions solely administered by the Minister for Agriculture (such as certain provisions of the *Forests Act 1958*) or the Minister for Outdoor Recreation (such as certain provisions of the *Fisheries Act 1995*). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

*Control of Genetically Modified Crops Act 2004*

*Dairy Act 2000*

*Domestic Animals Act 1994*

*Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*

Parts IVA and IVB. Part XI (this Part is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health)

*Farm Debt Mediation Act 2011*

*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*

Certain provisions jointly administered with the Minister for Environment. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

*Food Act 1984*

Section 63 in so far as it relates to the making of regulations related to primary production and processing standards (in so far as it relates to those matters this section is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Health).

*Forests Act 1958*

Certain provisions jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment and two provisions which are solely administered by the Minister for Agriculture. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

*Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996*

*Grain Handling and Storage Act 1995*

Part 3 (The Act is otherwise administered by the Treasurer).

*Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*

*Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Act 1972*

Section 3 (this section is jointly administered with the Minister for Environment).

*Livestock Disease Control Act 1994*

*Livestock Management Act 2010*

*Meat Industry Act 1993*

*Melbourne Market Authority Act 1977*

*Plant Biosecurity Act 2010*

*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*

*Rain-making Control Act 1967*

*Rural Assistance Schemes Act 2016*

*Seafood Safety Act 2003*

*Stock (Seller Liability and Declarations) Act 1993*

*Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004*

Part 2, section 45, Division 1 of Part 6 and Part 8. Sections 3, 22, 23(1) and 24 and Part 9 are jointly administered with the Minister for Environment.

*Veterinary Practice Act 1997*

*Wildlife Act 1975*

Certain provisions, in so far as it relates to the effective management of hunting, including preserving good order among hunters of wildlife, are jointly administered with the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation. Certain provisions, in so far as it relates to the hunting of game, are administered by the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation. This Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

### Minister for Climate Action

*Climate Change Act 2017*

Except certain provisions jointly administered with the Premier and jointly and severally administered with the Minister for the State Electricity Commission in so far as those provisions relate to the Solar Homes program.

### Minister for Energy and Resources

*Electricity Industry Act 2000*

The Act is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for the State Electricity Commission.

*Electricity Safety Act 1998*

*Energy Safe Victoria Act 2005*

*Extractive Industries (Lysterfield) Act 1986*

*Fuel Emergency Act 1977*

*Gas Industry Act 2001*

*Gas Safety Act 1997*

*Geothermal Energy Resources Act 2005*

*Greenhouse Gas Geological Sequestration Act 2008*

*Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*

*Mines (Aluminium Agreement) Act 1961*

*National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005*

*National Gas (Victoria) Act 2008*

*Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act 1983*

*Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010*

*Petroleum Act 1998*

*Pipelines Act 2005*

*Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017*

Except sections 8 and 10 which are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for the State Electricity Commission in so far as these provisions relate to the Solar Homes program.

*State Electricity Commission Act 1958*

Section 107 (The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for the State Electricity Commission and the Treasurer).

*Underseas Mineral Resources Act 1963*

*Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007*

*Victorian Renewable Energy Act 2006*

### Minister for Environment

*Aboriginal Lands Act 1991*

The Act is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples.

*Alpine Resorts Act 1983*

*Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997*

*Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*

The Act is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Water.

*Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017*

*Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*

*Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*

*Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*

Certain provisions are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Outdoor Recreation and, in so far as it relates to the exercise of powers for the purposes of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* these powers are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Water, or certain provisions solely administered by the Minister for Agriculture (such as certain provisions of the *Forests Act 1958*) or the Minister for Outdoor Recreation (such as certain provisions of the *Fisheries Act 1995*). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

*Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*

Except certain provisions for Crown Allotments administered by the Premier, the Assistant Treasurer, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Ports and Freight, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, the Minister for Corrections and the Minister for Health.

*Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963*

*Dental Hospital Land Act 2011*

*Environment Protection Act 2017*

*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*

Except certain provisions jointly administered with the Minister for Agriculture.

*Forests Act 1958*

Except certain provisions jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Agriculture or solely administered by the Minister for Agriculture.

*Geelong Lands (Steampacket Place) Act 1996*

*Geelong Market Site Act 1983*

*Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020*

*Heritage Rivers Act 1992*

*Land Act 1958*

Except certain provisions for Crown Allotments jointly administered with the Assistant Treasurer, or administered by the Assistant Treasurer, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Health Infrastructure, the Minister for Government Services, the Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the Minister for Creative Industries.

*Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Act 1972*

Except section 3 which is jointly administered with the Minister for Agriculture.

*Land (Goonawarra Golf Course) Act 1988*

*Land (Reservations and other Matters) Act 1997*

*Land (Reservations and other Matters) Act 1999*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations – Metropolitan Land) Act 2016*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations – Regional Victoria Land) Act 2016*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations) Act 2008*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations) Act 2012*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations) Act 2016*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations) Act 2019*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations and Other Matters) Act 2009*

*Land (Revocation of Reservations) (Convention Centre Land) Act 2008*

*Land (St. Kilda Sea Baths) Act 2000*

*Land (St Kilda Triangle) Act 2006*

*Marine and Coastal Act 2018*

*Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985*

Sections 24–28 only, the Act is otherwise administered by the Premier, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events.

*Melbourne Strategic Assessment (Environment Mitigation Levy) Act 2020*

*Melbourne (Yarra Park) Land Act 1980*

*Except sections 8 and 18 which are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Planning.*

*National Environment Protection Council (Victoria) Act 1995*

*National Parks Act 1975*

*Parks and Crown Land Legislation (Mount Buffalo) Act 2010*

*Parks Victoria Act 2018*

*Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1986*

Sections 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 23B, 23D, 23E, 23G, 23J, 23K, 23L and 24E. Sections 30 and 47 are jointly administered with the Minister for Ports and Freight. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Ports and Freight.

*Queen Victoria Market Lands Act 1996*

*Reference Areas Act 1978*

*Royal Agricultural Show-grounds Act 1931*

*Royal Agricultural Showgrounds Act 2003*

*Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*

*Royal Children’s Hospital (Land) Act 2007*

*Royal Women’s Hospital Land Act 2012*

*Safety on Public Land Act 2004*

*South Melbourne Land Act 1986*

*Southgate Project Act 1994*

*State Owned Enterprises Act 1992*

Division 2 of Part 2 in so far as it relates to the Victorian Plantations Corporation. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Government Services, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Minister for Water and the Treasurer.

*Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004*

Part 2, section 45, Division 1 of Part 6 and Part 8. Sections 3, 22, 23(1) and 24 and Part 9 are jointly administered with the Minister for Agriculture and the Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Agriculture.

*Sustainability Victoria Act 2005*

*Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Authority (Repeal) Act 1994*

*Temperance Halls Act 1958*

*University of Melbourne Land Act 2000*

*Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972*

*Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*

*Victorian Plantations Corporation Act 1993*

*Water Industry Act 1994*

Parts 4, 4A, 7 and 8. Section 184 is administered jointly and severally with the Minister for Water and the Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Water.

*Wildlife Act 1975*

Except: Certain provisions, in so far as it relates to the effective management of hunting, including preserving good order among hunters of are jointly administered with the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation. Certain provisions, in so far as it relates to the hunting of game, are jointly administered with the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation. This Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment.

*Zoological Parks and Gardens Act 1995*

### Minister for the State Electricity Commission

*Climate Change Act 2017*

Part 4, Division 1 of Part 5 and section 97 in so far as these provisions relate to the Solar Homes program (these provisions are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Climate Action).

*Electricity Industry Act 2000*

The Act is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Energy and Resources.

*Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017*

Sections 8 and 10 (these provisions are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Energy and Resources in so far as these provisions relate to the Solar Homes program.

*State Electricity Commission Act 1958*

Except section 107 (this section is administered by the Minister for Energy and Resources). The Act is otherwise jointly and severally administered with the Treasurer.

### Minister for Water

*Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*

The Act is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment.

*Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*

In so far as it relates to the exercise of powers for the purposes of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* the powers are jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment.

*Groundwater (Border Agreement) Act 1985*

*Murray-Darling Basin Act 1993*

*State Owned Enterprises Act 1992*

Division 2 of Part 2 in so far as it relates to the Water Training Centre. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Government Services, the Minister for Environment, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Treasurer.

*Water Act 1989*

Except section 324 (this section is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Outdoor Recreation in so far as it relates to the making of regulations for houseboats).

*Water (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2008*

*Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005*

*Water Industry Act 1994*

Except Parts 4, 4A, 7 and 8 (these Parts are administered by the Minister for Environment) and section 184 (this section is jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment).

*Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017*

## Implementation of the Local Jobs First Policy

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

Departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the Local Jobs First policy in all projects valued at $3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or for statewide projects, or $1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria.

MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at $20 million or more.

The MPSG guidelines and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG-applicable and VIPP-applicable projects respectively where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

A Local Jobs First Standard Project is a project:

* with a budget of $1 million or more in rural and regional Victoria, or
* with a budget of $3 million or more for statewide projects or for projects in metropolitan Melbourne, or

declared to be a Standard Project by the responsible minister/s under section 7A (1) of the Act.

A Local Jobs First Strategic Project is a project:

* with a budget of $50 million or more, or

declared to be a Strategic Project by the responsible minister/s under section 7A (2) of the Act.

### Projects commenced – Local Jobs First Standard

During 2022–23, the department commenced 69 Local Jobs First standard projects totalling $495.93 million to which a Local Industry Development Plan (LIDP) was required. Of those projects, 43 were located in regional Victoria with an average local content commitment of 61 per cent, and 20 in metropolitan Melbourne with an average local content commitment of 72 per cent. Six standard projects were commenced that occurred statewide with an average local content commitment of 33 per cent. The MPSG applied to two of these projects.

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

* an average local content commitment of 62 per cent
* a total of 701 jobs (Annualised Employee Equivalent (AEE)), including the creation of 186 new jobs and the retention of 515 existing jobs (AEE)
* a total of 92 positions for apprentices, trainees and cadets, including the creation of 39 new apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships, and the retention of 53 existing apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships

engagement of 1,934 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on commenced standard projects.

### Projects completed – Local Jobs First Standard

During 2022–23, the department completed 34 Local Jobs First standard projects, totalling $121.57 million to which a LIDP was required. Of those projects, 20 were in regional Victoria with an average local content commitment of 80 per cent, 12 in metropolitan Melbourne with an average local content commitment of 95 per cent. Two standard projects were completed that occurred statewide with an average local content commitment of 46 per cent. The MSPG applied to none of these projects.

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

* an average local content of 56 per cent
* a total of four jobs (AEE), including the creation of one new job and the retention of three existing jobs (AEE)
* a total of one position for the retention of existing traineeship; no new apprenticeships, cadetships or traineeships were created, or existing apprenticeships or cadetships retained

engagement of 163 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on completed standard projects.

### Projects commenced – Local Jobs First Strategic

During 2022–23, the department commenced seven Local Jobs First strategic projects, valued at $1,581 million to which a LIDP was required. Of those projects, three were in regional Victoria with an average local content commitment of 80 per cent and two in metropolitan Melbourne with an average local content commitment of 94 per cent. Two strategic projects were commenced that occurred statewide with an average local content commitment of 52 per cent. The MPSG applied to three of these projects.

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

* an average local content commitment of 76 per cent
* a total of 732 (AEE) positions were committed, including the creation of 393 new jobs and the retention of 339 existing jobs (AEE)
* a total of 42 positions for apprentices, trainees and cadets, including the creation of 35 new apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships, and the retention of seven existing apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships

engagement of 290 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on commenced strategic projects.

### Projects completed – Local Jobs First Strategic

During 2022-23, the department did not complete any Local Jobs First strategic projects.

### Reporting on grants provided

For grants provided during 2022–23, a total of 12 interaction reference numbers were required, which entailed a conversation with the Industry Capability Network (Victoria) Ltd on how to best maximise local engagement on the grants that were provided during the financial year.

**Note:**

Data excludes the Planning portfolio from 1 January 2023, and includes Agriculture Victoria and Forestry and Resources activities from 1 January 2023. Data for these portfolios was supplied by the Department of Jobs, Skills Industry, and Regions (DJSIR).

## Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework

Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework enables departments and agencies to deliver greater benefits from their procurement spend. The framework aims to harness the government’s buying power to deliver social and sustainable outcomes that benefit all Victorians.

The Social Procurement Framework is administered by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, with support from the Department of Government Services.

Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework identifies 10 objectives, as listed below – seven relate to social procurement and three relate to sustainable procurement:

* opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people
* opportunities for Victorians with a disability
* equality and safety for women
* opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians
* support for safe and fair workplaces
* support for sustainable Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses
* sustainable Victorian regions
* environmentally sustainable outputs
* environmentally sustainable business practices

implementation of Climate Change Policy objectives.

The social procurement objectives apply to all individual purchases of goods, services and construction-related services, and they contribute to DEECA’s social procurement commitments.

In 2022–23, DEECA spent[[2]](#footnote-2) a total of $11.35 million through direct engagement of 120 social benefit suppliers, including a total of $4.26 million with 53 Victorian Aboriginal businesses.

In September 2022, DEECA released its refreshed Social Procurement Strategy 2022–25. The Strategy outlines some of the ways the department is progressing to meet its social procurement obligations, namely:

* purchasing from certified Victorian social enterprises
* purchasing from certified Victorian Aboriginal business and granting a standing exemption from some procurement processes for direct selection of an Aboriginal business for contracts with a value less than $200,000
* maintaining a current register of Victorian Aboriginal businesses

incorporating requirements for environmentally sustainable outputs and business practices in DEECA’s requests for tender and quotation documents.

During 2022–23, the strategy focused on five of the 10 objectives set out in Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework:

* support for sustainable Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses
* environmentally sustainable outputs through procurement-specific requirements to use sustainable resources, manage waste and pollution and use recycled content in construction works
* adoption of sustainable business practices by suppliers
* opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians, and

women’s equality and safety.

## Consultancies

In 2022–23, there were 72 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2022–23 in relation to these consultancies was $16.4 million (excluding GST).

In 2022–23, there were 26 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than $10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2022–23 in relation to these consultancies was $0.10 million (excluding GST).

Details of individual consultancies over $10,000 are listed in the DEECA Annual Report 2022–23 – Additional Information document, published on the DEECA website. The full list of all consultancies is available on DEECA’s Annual Report website.

**Note:**

The above disclosed consultancy expenditure excludes the Planning portfolio from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023, and includes Agriculture Victoria and Forestry and Resources activities from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023. Data for these portfolios was supplied by the Department of Jobs, Skills Industry, and Regions (DJSIR).

## Disclosure of major contracts

During 2022–23, the department entered into two contracts greater than $10 million in value (excluding GST). Details of the contracts are published on the Victorian Government Contract Publishing System and can be viewed online at [Buying for Victoria](http://www.tenders.vic.gov.au/).

## Disclosure of Emergency Procurement

In 2022–23, DEECA activated Emergency Procurement on three occasions in accordance with the requirements of Victorian Government policy and accompanying guidelines. Four new contracts, each valued at or more than $100,000 (GST inclusive), were awarded in connection with the emergency. Details of the department’s emergency procurements are shown below.

| Nature of Emergency | Date of activation | Summary of goods and services procured under new contracts | Total spend on goods and services in response to the emergency | Number of new contracts awarded valued at $100 000 (incl. GST) or more |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grading of Nhill-Murrayville Road due to storm in September 2022 | 12 December 2022 | Grade and gravelling of the entire Nhill-Murrayville Road | $135,250.00(a) | 0 |
| Emergency stabilisation works for Loddon Mallee Floods 2022 | 24 October 2022 | Emergency stabilisation works to forest tracks and strategic fire access track network in the Bendigo Forest management area  Emergency stabilisation works and repairs to forest track network in the Cohuna work centre footprint | $565,375.00(a) | 3 |
| Kennett River Bushfire Emergency | 18 March 2023 | Undertake remedial works on dwellings for the removal of excess fire retardant which was dropped on properties during bushfire response; and management of water tanks which have been contaminated with the fire retardant. | $1,460,789.93(a) | 1 |

**Note:**

(a) This is the total of all expenditure including GST, including contracts under and over $100,000.

Expenditure excludes the Planning portfolio from 1 January 2023 and includes Agriculture Victoria and Forestry and Resources portfolios from 1 January 2023. Disclosure of emergency procurement is based on critical incident procurement forms submitted to Procurement branch.

## Disclosure of government advertising expenditure

In 2022–23, there were three advertising campaigns with a total media spend of $100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). The details of each campaign are outlined below.

| Campaign name | Start/ end date | Advertising (media expenditure) ($ ex GST) | Creative and campaign development expenditure ($ ex GST) | Research and evaluation expenditure ($ ex GST) | Print and collateral expenditure ($ ex GST) | Other campaign expenditure  ($ ex GST) | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Round 3 $250 Power Saving Bonus | 17 July 2022 – 30 October 2022 | $1,623,858.19 | $99,704.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $4,389.00 | $1,727,951.19 |
| Round 4 $250 Power Saving Bonus | 2 April 2023 – 28  June 2023 | $1,000,000.00 | $112,189.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $16,071.00 | $1,128,260.00 |

The $250 Power Saving Bonus program was designed to help ease cost of living pressures and encourage Victorians to compare their household energy prices and save money. In 2022–23, the third and fourth rounds of the $250 Power Saving Bonus were delivered. The third round of the program ran from 1 July 2022 until 23 March 2023 and the fourth round commenced on 24 March 2023 and is scheduled to run until 31 August 2023. Two advertising campaigns were delivered to increase community awareness of each round and encourage Victorian households to apply. The campaigns also aimed to create awareness of the Victorian Energy Compare comparison tool, which has the capacity to save consumers money on their energy bills, on an ongoing basis.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Campaign name | Start/ end date | Advertising (media expenditure) ($ ex GST) | Creative and campaign development expenditure ($ ex GST) | Research and evaluation expenditure ($ ex GST) | Print and collateral expenditure ($ ex GST) | Other campaign expenditure ($ ex GST) | Total |
| ‘Save with solar’ advertising campaign | 28 August 2022 to 30 June 2023 | $1,497,614 | $329,010 | $72,506 | $0.00 | $40,963 | $1,940,093 |

The ‘Save with Solar’ campaign was aimed at increasing consumer access to affordable energy and help households switch to using cheaper, cleaner energy in the home. The advertising campaign ran from 28 August 2022 to 30 June 2023 and promoted rebates and interest-free loans available under the Victorian Government’s Solar Homes and Solar for Business programs for the installation of solar panels, batteries and energy-efficient hot water systems at Victorian homes, rental properties and businesses. The campaign was highly targeted and utilised a range of channels, including cinema, television, radio, print media, social media and online.

## Details of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) expenditure

ICT expenditure refers to the department’s costs in providing business enabling ICT services. It comprises Business as Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and Non BAU ICT expenditure. Non BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing the department’s current ICT capabilities. BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure, which primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

For the 2022–23 reporting period, the department had a total ICT expenditure of $212.2 million with the details shown below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | $’000 |
| Operational expenditure | 61,160 |
| Capital expenditure | 2,347 |
| Non Business as Usual (non BAU) (Total = Operational expenditure and Capital Expenditure) | 63,507 |
| Business as Usual (BAU) (Total) | 148,648 |
| **Total ICT expenditure** | **212,155** |

**Note:**

The above disclosed Information and Communications Technology (ICT) expenditure excludes the Planning portfolio from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023, and includes Agriculture Victoria and Forestry and Resources activities from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023. Data for these portfolios was supplied by the Department of Jobs, Skills Industry, and Regions (DJSIR).

## Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* allows the public a right of access to documents held by the department. The purpose of the 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 Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by a department. This comprises documents both created by the department or supplied to the department by an external organisation or individual. Information about the type of material produced by DEECA is available on the department’s website under its Part II Information Statement.

The Act allows a department 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 department in-confidence.

The prescribed processing time for requests is 30 days. When external consultation is required under the Act, the processing time automatically increases 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 the department, under section 49A of the Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

### Making a request

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests must be made in writing. A request can be submitted online at [OVIC](http://www.ovic.vic.gov.au/) or by sending a written request to: [FOI Unit](mailto:foi.unit%40delwp.vic.gov.au)

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

An application fee of $31.80 applies. Access charges may also be payable.

The department’s FOI Unit can be contacted by email at [FOI Unit](mailto:foi.unit%40delwp.vic.gov.au)

### FOI statistics and timeliness

For the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, the department received 202 new FOI requests. They came from:[[3]](#footnote-3)

|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Individuals | 97 | 48 |
| Members of Parliament | 9 | 5 |
| Lawyers | 37 | 18 |
| Journalists | 23 | 11 |
| Community groups | 22 | 11 |
| Companies | 14 | 7 |
| **Total** | **202** | **100** |

For the same period, the department made decisions on 138 requests. Thirty-nine of these requests were received during prior financial years. The outcomes were:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| Full access granted | 48 | 35 |
| Partial access granted | 56 | 40.5 |
| Access denied | 9 | 6.5 |
| No relevant documents found | 25 | 18 |
| **Total** | **138** | **100** |

The processing time for the FOI requests is shown below, with an average of 51 days.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| Within statutory timelines | 97 | 70 |
| 1–45 days overdue | 29 | 21 |
| 46 days or more overdue | 12 | 9 |
| **Total** | **138** | **100** |

The department closed 22 requests with the outcomes shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number |
| Request not processed(i) | 21 |
| Unreasonable diversion of resources | 1 |
| **Total** | **22** |

**Note:**

i. Request not processed includes: all requested documents released outside the Act; request withdrawn by applicant; deposit not paid and where the Act does not apply.

The department also responded to 61 requests, including four received during the previous financial year, with the outcomes shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number |
| Invalid request(i) | 26 |
| Transferred | 35 |
| **Total** | **61** |

**Note:**

i. Application fee not paid or request terms unclear and applicant did not provide clarification.

### 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 [OVIC](http://www.ovic.gov.au/)

## Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

### Reviews

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) received 10 requests for a review of an FOI decision made by the department.

### Complaints

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, the department was advised by OVIC of two complaints made about the processing of FOI requests.

## Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, two applications for a review of an FOI decision made by the department were lodged at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

## Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (the Act) encourages and assists people in making disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in accordance with the Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

The department does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor 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.

The department will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure to the extent it is legally possible.

### Reporting Procedures

Disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by departmental employees or contractors may be made to any of the following department personnel:

* Secretary of the department
* Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator
* manager or supervisor of the discloser
* manager or supervisor of the person who is the subject of the disclosure

a person acting in any of the above roles.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, PO Box 500,

East Melbourne Victoria 8002

Telephone: 1800 903 877

email: [Disclosures](mailto:disclosures%40delwp.vic.gov.au)

Alternatively, disclosures may also be made directly to:

The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)

Level 1, North Tower 459 Collins Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000

GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Telephone: 1300 735 135

Website: [IBAC](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/)

### Further Information

The Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedures, which outline the system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the department or any of its employees and/or officers, are available on the department’s website.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FOI | 2022–23 number | 2021–22 number |
| The number of disclosures made by an individual to the department and notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission | 2 | 1 |

Further information about making and handling public interest disclosures is available at [DEECA](http://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/).

## Compliance with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*

DEECA recognises the role that many of our staff have as carers and supports them to balance their work and care responsibilities This includes staff that care for and support people with a mental illness, disability, chronic illness or complex care needs as well as older people with specific needs, children and young people with additional care needs, and people who have terminal illness.

The department has taken all practical measures to comply with its obligations under the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. Our program of work to support carers is informed by the carer relationship principles set out in the Act and the priority actions outlined in the Whole of Victorian Government *Recognising and Supporting Victoria’s Carers: Victorian Carers Strategy 2018–2022*. The department’s actions aim to reduce the barriers to workforce participation for carers and ensure carers can make choices about work and their carers roles, are enabled to participate socially and economically, and are supported with their health and wellbeing.

Carers as they are defined under the *Carer Recognition Act 2012* are included in DEECA’s Workplace Adjustment Policy, which ensures they can access the supports they need to manage both work and caring responsibilities.

DEECA’s flexible work settings are set out in the VPS Flexible Work Policy and DEECA’s Flexible Work Implementation Guide. Flexible work arrangements are also available as one of the ways that employees can balance their caring responsibilities, in the context of their role.

The department’s support programs, including our Employee Assistance Program, peer support network and Workplace Conciliator are also available to employees. The department has a number of staff-led networks, including the Parents and Carers Staff Network and the All-Abilities Staff Network which supports disability inclusion and awareness.

## Compliance with the *Disability Act 2006*

The *Disability Act 2006* reaffirms and strengthens the rights of people with a disability and recognises that this requires support across the government sector and within the community.

The department has complied with its obligations under the *Disability Act 2006* to prepare a Disability Action Plan through the completion of the *Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2024*. Reporting against our Disability Action Plan can be found in the ‘Our People’ section of this report.

As set out in the section above on caring, the department’s Workplace Adjustments Policy and flexible work settings are available to help meet the workplace needs of our employees with disability. Our support programs and staff-led networks are also important supports in place for employees with disability.

## Compliance with the *Building Act 1993*

The Department of Government Services' Shared Service Provider (SSP) manages, maintains and reports on the leased and part-owned accommodation portfolio occupied by DEECA.

DEECA has responsibility for the management of its owned portfolio assets via an outsourced facilities management service provider. The owned portfolio includes offices, combined office/depot sites, depots, residences, airbases and fire lookout towers.

DEECA complies with the *Building Act 1993*, the Building Regulations 2018 and associated statutory requirements and amendments. Annual Essential Safety Measures Reports are undertaken by the facilities provider and a certificate is issued and displayed at each site. Dependent on the category of the building, an occupancy permit or a Certificate of Final Inspection is obtained when construction is completed. This includes new buildings and upgrades to existing facilities.

### Combustible cladding

The department is an occupant of 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne where combustible cladding was identified. The building owner embarked on a voluntary remedial program to remove external cladding. The initial program of works was completed in September 2019. Since the completion of the initial works, the building owner has made a further voluntary decision to replace all cladding on the exterior of the building. The north, west, south and east sides were completed in August 2023.

### Major Works Projects

Major works projects (over $50,000) commenced or completed in 2022–23 include:

**Projects commenced:**

* Bendigo (Epsom) incident control centre and depot redevelopment
* Nowa Nowa office and depot amenities upgrade and washdown bay construction
* Cann River office, incident control centre and depot redevelopment
* Powelltown office and depot development
* Broadford office and depot amenities upgrade
* Gellibrand work centre deck replacement and car park expansion
* Heywood female amenities upgrade and crew room extension including land purchase to expand depot facility
* Corryong office, incident control centre and depot development
* Marysville office/depot soil remediation
* Benalla office fit-out
* Heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrade at 8 Nicholson Street office
* Installation of passenger lift and construction of kitchenette at Colac office
* Briagolong and Noojee depot upgrades
* Electrical vehicle charging stations at Alexandra office/depot, Altona North office/depot, Angelsea office/depot, Bacchus Marsh office, Bairnsdale office, Benalla office/depot, Colac car park, 8 Nicholson Street office, Heidelberg (Arthur Rylah Institute), Heywood office/depot, Knoxfield office/depot, 2 Lonsdale Street office, Ovens office/depot, Tallangatta office/depot, Traralgon office and Wodonga office
* Ellinbank replacement of dairy generator and switchboard
* Ellinbank new anaerobic digester and associated civil works
* Horsham innovation hub and glasshouse replacement
* Horsham floating solar panels

Epsom upgrade mechanical services to vaccine production lab

**Projects completed:**

* Powelltown depot washdown bay construction
* Altona depot concrete works
* Bright new G Wagon and chemical shed
* Orbost North depot solar and battery installation
* Ballarat office (level 3) fit out
* Gellibrand office roof rectification works
* Orbost office carpet replacement
* Heyfield office amenities upgrade
* Altona survey depot new site and facilities shed
* Bairnsdale office refurbishment
* Dargo depot upgrade
* Toolangi depot upgrade
* Electrical vehicle charging stations at Ballarat office, Bendigo office/depot and Geelong office.
* Mildura Glasshouse skin replacement
* Tatura Glasshouse skin replacement and internal shade screen replacement
* Statewide fire panel replacement and/or upgrade
* Hamilton replacement of main switchboard to northern side, substation upgrade and relocation of submains to main administration building
* Horsham replacement of main east gate
* Hamilton replacement of cattle yards
* Ellinbank horizontal wind power generation turbines
* Ellinbank vertical wind power generation turbines
* Ellinbank pumped hydro power generation and solar panels
* Ellinbank new hay shed to farm D including relocation of diesel generator, redflow battery and solar panels
* Ellinbank new farm fuel storage
* Attwood conversion of existing hay storage shed to emergency management storage
* Horsham (west side) replacement of existing main switchboard and installation of new generators
* Mildura Water storage and town water pressure boosting
* Hamilton replacement of mechanical services to administration building (north)
* Horsham replacement of end-of-life mechanical services to glasshouses
* Tatura replacement of greenhouse control system
* Hamilton new farm and general vehicles wash bay inclusive of biosecurity contaminated waste diversion
* Mildura building management system replacement to main administration building
* Attwood specialist lab upgrade

Horsham construction of two glasshouses.

### Maintenance of buildings in a safe and serviceable condition

SSP and DEECA primarily manage the department’s leased office accommodation for the central business district and regional centres.

DEECA manages its owned property portfolio via a contracted facilities management service with Jones Lang LaSalle and directly with both ensuring that statutory obligations are met and standards are maintained in a safe, compliant and functional manner.

## Compliance with the *Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017*

Section 32 of the *Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017* provides for DEECA to include in its annual report of operations for each financial year, details regarding the use of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve for the purposes of recreation and for public park purposes during that year.

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust has developed plans that outline medium term directions for the planning, development, and use of the reserve for the purposes of racing, recreation and as a public park. These plans are reviewed regularly and adapt to the changing needs of users, stakeholders, and the community.

In 2022–23, Caulfield Racecourse Reserve was listed on the Victorian Heritage Register as part of protecting a range of heritage buildings as well as the open space in the in-field. With the completion of the second racetrack by Melbourne Racing Club (MRC), planning has commenced on enhancements to the public park and recreation spaces across the Reserve.

Due to the significant impacts of building the second racetrack by MRC, use of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve for the purposes of recreation and public park purposes over 2022–23 was largely for passive recreation and racing events. A regular monthly community market has been established this year bringing strong increases in visitors on those days.

Access to the Reserve has been restricted due to MRC works, however the in-field public park is open to the public every day of the year (except race days), from sunrise to sunset.

## Compliance with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*

The *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (the Act) sets objectives and guiding principles for planning and managing the state’s marine and coastal environment. It establishes an integrated and coordinated whole-of-government approach including partnering with Traditional Owners, industry and the community.

To achieve the objectives of the Act, the former DELWP released the Marine and Coastal Strategy in May 2022. The Strategy consists of six actions to improve marine and coastal management and planning across the state over the next five years. The Strategy puts into practice the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020. Year 1 of the Strategy has been implemented over 2022–23.

### Summary of implementation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy in 2022–23

In 2022–23, significant progress has been made during the first year of the Strategy to deliver 54 activities under the six priority actions. Multiple organisations throughout Victoria are leading implementation of these activities. Coastal Registered Aboriginal Parties, Committees of Management, coastal local governments, coastal Catchment Management Authorities, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport and Planning, Environment Protection Authority, Trust for Nature, Better Boating Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council and DEECA are activity leads. DEECA provides oversight and coordination for implementation of priority actions, and leads key activities within each action including:

* **Action 1 – Traditional Owners determine how their rights and obligations are embedded into the planning and management of the marine and coastal environment.** All five activities are progressing supported by DEECA’s Sea Country grants program. This includes: developing Sea ranger programs (Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation), developing a Biocultural Land Strategy (Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation), facilitating cultural exchanges and cultural heritage recording (Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation), and undertaking cultural mapping and incorporating marine and coastal knowledge in Country Plans (Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation).
* **Action 2 – Improve the condition and ecological connectivity of habitats and respect and care for our marine and coastal areas.** Nine of the 12 activities have commenced to deliver this action. DEECA has expanded coastal habitat mapping and has commenced work to further a blue carbon market in Victoria. DEECA continues to deliver the Coastcare Victoria program to support community stewardship activities by building the capability of volunteers to respond to climate change and deliver protection and rehabilitation of marine and coastal sites and values.
* **Action 3 – Adapt to Climate Change.** Ten of the 14 activities have commenced to deliver this action. The Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program (VCMP) and progress towards the next climate science report are increasing our understanding of coastal hazards and risks. Significant progress has been made by DEECA to embed adaptation as a core component of planning in the marine and coastal environment through the release of the Victoria’s Resilient Coast adaptation framework and guidelines and awarding the second round of grants by June 2023. DEECA is reviewing and updating the sea level rise planning benchmark based on the latest science in the IPCC sixth synthesis report.
* **Action 4 – Support sustainable use and development of the marine and coastal environment.** Eight of the 12 activities have commenced to deliver this action. DEECA supported the development and implementation of coastal and marine management plans through grants delivered in June 2023 and is finalising guidelines and a resource kit for release in 2023. DEECA continues to manage and maintain coastal protection assets by implementing a strategic asset management approach that identifies priority assets for maintenance, replacement or removal that is consistent with the Victorian Asset Management Accountability Framework, and to support coastal managers through coastal hazard risk management grants. Offshore Wind implementation statements were released in October 2022 and March 2023. These statements work towards delivering a thriving offshore wind sector in Victoria that can be supported by guidance and processes in the Marine Spatial Planning Framework.
* **Action 5 – Implement the Marine Spatial Planning Framework. Delivery** of the five activities in this action is on track. The mechanisms needed to support Marine Spatial Planning in Victoria have been progressed, including additional data and research to support progression towards implementing marine spatial planning in Victoria.

**Action 6 – Identify resource needs for sustainable marine and coastal management.** Two of the six activities to deliver this action are progressing. Project planning for an environmental account for the marine and coastal environment has commenced.

### Regional and Strategic Partnerships

Under the Act, the Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership was created to address ongoing and future erosion and inundation impacts. The partnership has overseen the development of the draft Cape to Cape Resilience Plan. The project combines the latest science, technical assessments, and community aspirations to develop a long-term plan to manage important coastal places, assets and other values in the future. The Cape to Cape Resilience Plan uses the knowledge gathered throughout the project to better understand recent changes seen along Inverloch’s coastline, and community values and aspirations. The plan provides long-term coastal hazard resilience and strategic adaptation planning to enable the Cape to Cape community to respond and adapt to climate change impacts on the coast.

DEECA has been working with potential partners to scope a proposed Regional and Strategic partnership approach and product that will respond to climate change and coastal hazard impacts on marine and coastal values of Port Phillip Bay western shorelines.

### Environmental Management Plans

Under the Act, DEECA in collaboration with Melbourne Water and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria, is responsible for implementing the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027 (PPB EMP). The PPB EMP represents the Victorian Government’s ongoing commitment to the vision of a healthy Port Phillip Bay that is valued and cared for by all Victorians.

The 2020–21 EMP Annual Report and Delivery Plan was released online in March 2023 ([Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/ppb-emp/?page=Introduction&views=Current-plan%2CFramework%2CResults-summary-%2CMedical-items%2COverview-%2C2021-Interim-report%2C2020-2021-%2COverview%2COverview----%2CMethodology--%2CYarra-River%2CAustralasian-Gannet%2CMarine-mammals%2CCommon-Dolphin%2CMarine-Biodiversity-Index%2Cview_109%2CMethodoIogy%2CFauna)) and notices were sent out on 7 March 2023 in a new interactive format. For the first time this publication includes report cards for the Priority Areas of the EMP. The Delivery Plan update includes an additional 44 new projects bringing the total to 235 projects. These projects are delivered by Victorian Government agencies, key environmental organisations and other stakeholder groups to achieve the three goals of the EMP: stewardship of Port Phillip Bay is fostered across community, industry and government; water quality is improved to ensure environmental health and community enjoyment of the Bay; the Bay’s habitats and marine life are thriving.

During 2022–23, progress was made to deliver the 2021–22 Annual Report and Delivery Plan update, the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Implementation plan (MERI), planning for a community forum for the Bay hosted with the Port Phillip Bay Fund, the halfway evaluation using the MERI and delivery of the 2022–23 Annual Report and Delivery Plan update.

### Coastal and Marine Management Plans

A Coastal and Marine Management Plan is prepared under the Act to establish an agreement between the Victorian Government, the land manager and community about how an area of coastal Victoria will be managed. Victoria currently has ten approved Coastal and Marine Management plans:

* Barwon Coast Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020–2025
* Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2015–2025
* Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020–2025
* Mount Martha Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2019
* Northern Bellarine Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020–2025
* Sorrento Foreshore Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2018
* Whitecliffs to Camerons Bight Foreshore Reserve Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2019–2024
* Wyndham Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020–2025.
* Kingston Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2021

Hobsons Bay Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2023.

### Consents

All use, development or works on marine and coastal Crown land by any party, including Committees of Management and local government, requires consent under the Act. There are three DEECA regions that cover the marine and coastal environment: Gippsland, Port Phillip and Barwon South West. In 2022–23:

* Barwon South West region granted 64 consents valued at $79,895,900. Types of use and development included maintenance and upgrades, coastal protection structures and environmental protection works, hydrology and geotechnical investigations, facilities, campgrounds, on water construction such as jetties and boat ramps, events, roads and transport, dredging and coastal and marine management masterplans.
* Gippsland region granted 45 consents valued at $103,289,884. Types of use and development included facility improvements, tracks, trails and lookouts, boat ramp upgrades, new and upgraded jetties, geotechnical investigations, sea wall remediation accommodation and events.

Port Phillip region granted 108 consents valued at $60,088,456. The types of use and development included events, dredging, surf life-saving clubs, recreation works and upgrades, maintenance and upgrades, facilities and commercial uses.

## Compliance with the *Melbourne Strategic Assessment (Environment Mitigation Levy) Act 2020*

The *Melbourne Strategic Assessment (Environment Mitigation Levy) Act 2020* provides a legislative framework for the Melbourne Strategic Assessment program. It imposes a levy to fund mitigation measures for impacts on biodiversity caused by the development of Melbourne’s growth corridors. The levy is paid into the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund and goes towards conservation reserves and programs.

Details of the income and expenditure of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund and the balance of the fund for the financial year (ending 30 June 2023) are set out in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund | ($ million) |
| Opening Balance | 68.00 |
| Income | 49.78 |
| Expenditure | 14.04 |
| Closing Balance | 103.74 |

**Note:**

The closing balance of $71.41 million reported in the department's 2021–22 annual report reflected cash accounting. The table has been adjusted to reflect accrual accounting transactions.

## Compliance with the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*

The *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (the Act) establishes the legal and administrative structure to enable and promote the conservation of Victoria’s native flora and fauna. The Act, including its objectives, was amended in 2019 to strengthen it and improve its effectiveness.

A Biodiversity Strategy must be prepared that outlines the proposals for achieving the targets for measuring and the framework for monitoring the objectives under section 4 of the Act. [Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan) is the current Biodiversity Strategy. The most recent assessment on the implementation of Biodiversity 2037 can be found on DEECA’s website.

In addition, the following departmental initiatives, grouped according to broad theme, contribute toward delivering the objectives of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988:

### Grants and community programs

* Bushbank
* Coastal Planning Grants program
* Coastcare Victoria
* Environmental Volunteering Plan
* Landcare for Country
* Nature Fund
* Peri-urban Weed Management Partnership program
* Port Phillip Bay Fund
* Victoria Nature Festival
* Victorian Landcare Program
* Victorians Value Nature
* Victoria’s resilient coast – Adapting to 2100+

Wildlife Advisory Services

### Biodiversity data and knowledge

* ActivityKit
* Research undertaken by the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research
* Biodiversity 2037 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework
* *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* Action Statements
* *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* Scientific Advisory Committee
* Feature Activity Sensitivity Tool (FeAST)
* Habitat Distribution Models
* Habitat Importance Maps
* Native vegetation extent and condition maps including Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs)
* Marine and Coastal Knowledge Framework
* NatureKit
* Specific needs Assessments
* Strategic Management Prospects
* Translocation Assessment Panel
* Victorian Biodiversity Atlas
* Victorian Bushfire Monitoring program
* Victorian Coastal Monitoring program

Victorian Forest Monitoring program

### Programs and regulation

* Basin Salinity Management 2030
* Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program
* Deer Control program
* Faunal Emblems program
* Melbourne Strategic Assessment program
* Office of the Conservation Regulator
* On-ground regulation – Wildlife and Protected Flora
* On-ground regulation – Timber harvesting
* On-ground regulation – Public land
* Protecting Biodiversity
* Regulatory approvals – Native vegetation clearing
* Sustainable Irrigation program
* Victorian Deer Control Strategy
* Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration project
* Weeds and Pests on Public Land program
* Wildlife Care and Protection

Wildlife Emergency Management

### Policy and legislation

* Invasive Species Policy
* Natural Environment Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022–2026
* Marine and Coastal Knowledge Framework
* Marine and Coastal Strategy
* Our Catchments Our Communities
* Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027
* Review of the *Wildlife Act 1975*
* Sustainable Water Strategies
* Threatened Species Policy
* Victorian Forestry Plan and Immediate Protection Areas implementation
* Victorian Koala Management Strategy
* Victorian Waterway Management Strategy
* Wildlife Policy

Wildlife Welfare

### Planning

* Marine Spatial Planning Framework
* Plan Melbourne Action 62: Waterways
* Plan Melbourne Actions 72 and 73: Review green wedge planning provisions and Green Wedge Management Plans
* Plan Melbourne Action 74: Distinctive Areas and Landscapes

Victorian Transmission Investment Framework

Progress against DEECA’s key initiatives is detailed in the Departmental Objectives, Indicators and Outputs section on page 24.

## Compliance with the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*

Pursuant to section 105 of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*, the Mining Warden is required to submit a report to the minister within three months after the end of the financial year.

The report must include information on the following:

* Nature and status of any dispute referred to the Mining Warden under section 97: six new cases were referred and investigated in 2022–23

Nature and status of any matter referred under section 98: no matters were referred and investigated in 2022–23.

## Compliance with DataVic Access Policy

Consistent with the DataVic Access Policy issued by the Victorian Government in 2012, DEECA made 1,778 datasets available in a variety of formats on the DataVic website in 2022–23. Information included in this Annual Report will also be available at [Data Vic](https://www.data.vic.gov.au/) in electronic readable format.

## National Competition Policy

The department is compliant with the requirements of the National Competition 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.

## Water Resource Assessment Program

Under Section 22 (1) of the *Water Act 1989* (the Act), the Minister for Water is required to ensure that a continuous program of assessment of the water resources of the state is undertaken. Under Section 22 (2), the water resource assessment program must provide for the collection, collation, analysis and publication of information about:

the availability of water, including surface water and groundwater

(ab) the use of one water source as a substitute for another water source

(ac) the environmental water reserve

1. the disposal of wastewater (including trade waste, sewage and saline water)
2. the use and re-use of water resources
3. floodwaters
4. drainage and waterway management
5. water quality (including salinity)
6. in-stream uses of water

(ga) current and historic levels of allocation and use of surface water and groundwater

(gb) current and historic condition of waterways and aquifers

1. anything else that the Minister decides is appropriate.

Section 26 of the Act requires DEECA to report annually on these areas.

DEECA provides information on Victoria’s water resources through a range of comprehensive reporting mechanisms, including a weekly update on the state’s water resources published on the DEECA Water and Catchments website, along with more comprehensive information published on the Water Measurement Information System and Victorian Water Register websites, and in the *Victorian Water Accounts* (VWA).

The VWA is an annual statewide summary of Victoria’s water resources. It documents water availability and provides assessments of rainfall, streamflow and groundwater levels, as well as information on water storages and re-use of treated wastewater. Information on water taken for consumptive use, and water set aside for environmental purposes, is provided within the context of the Victorian water allocation framework, which sets out entitlements to water.

The VWA sources data from the state’s surface water and groundwater monitoring networks, and draws on information from water corporations, DEECA, the Essential Services Commission, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and catchment management authorities (CMAs). The VWA is published annually in hard copy and is available online on the *Victorian Water Register* website, available at [Victorian Water Register](https://www.waterregister.vic.gov.au/).

The *Victorian Water Register* is a public register of water entitlement ownership in Victoria. It holds water shares that are recorded by the Victorian Water Registrar. It also holds water licences and delivery shares recorded by the rural water corporations. It records and enables seasonal determinations against water shares and provides for the trading and other dealings with water entitlements. The Victorian Water Register captures information on water availability and price and makes this publicly and freely available via the water register website. The website can also be used to generate statistics and reports on levels of use, directions of trade, and prices paid for water. All water monitoring data collected by DEECA and its partners is made accessible on the Water Measurement Information System, available at [Water Monitoring](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/).

Research through the Victorian Water and Climate Initiative is helping to build an understanding of how the water cycle has been changing over time and the influence of climate change on water resources. The second phase of the research initiative was launched in July 2021. The new research projects expand on the knowledge gained from the previous phase and will improve understanding of current and future water availability. A key objective of the research program is to ensure it remains user focused to inform any future iterations of the *Guidelines for Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Availability in Victoria* and facilitate the application of the best available science for water management in Victoria. Research findings from the program are widely shared with the Victorian water sector through a range of methods, including synthesis report, webinars, and workshops. As well as these reporting tools, there are numerous processes in place to collect and provide specific information as required under the *Water Act 1989*. These are briefly summarised below, with references to sites and resources containing further and more detailed information.

### a) Availability of water

**Surface water**

The state’s surface water resources assessment network includes 950 sites that were monitored in 2022–23 through three regional water monitoring partnerships. These partnerships comprise 55 public and private organisations that procure their monitoring requirements under this program. The partnerships include state government departments, water corporations, catchment management authorities (CMA), local councils (with a flood management function), the Bureau of Meteorology and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA).

Surface water monitoring services are procured by DEECA on behalf of the regional water monitoring partnerships to ensure efficiency and statewide consistency in data quality.

All surface water data collected through the partnerships, summary reports on historical longer-term trends of surface water quality and the current status of water quantity are available on the Water Measurement Information System ([Water Monitoring](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/)) and the Monthly Water Report on the [DEECA Water and Catchments website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/current-water-snapshot).

**Groundwater**

Victoria’s State Observation Bore Network (SOBN) is underpinned by a program that involves monitoring of around 1,422 bores. This monitoring program is jointly managed by DEECA and the rural water corporations.

All groundwater data is available via the Water Measurement Information System. Summary reports on historical longer-term trends in groundwater levels across the state are available on the DEECA website ([DEECA Water and Catchments website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/current-water-snapshot)). Information on groundwater use and trends is also provided in the annual *Victorian Water Accounts*.

Accurate monitoring data is crucial for the sustainable management of groundwater resources and can help resolve management issues, questions or disputes raised by groundwater users.

### ab) Use of one water source as a substitute for another water source

Under *Ministerial Reporting Direction 03*, water corporations are required to provide information in their annual reports on how they are promoting the integrated and sustainable use of water resources in their region. This includes projects undertaken in line with targets set in the entity’s corporate plan to deliver water recycling, water conservation, sustainable and resilient water services systems, and sustainable water strategies. Water corporations’ annual reports are tabled in Parliament and are available on the water corporations’ websites.

### ac) Environmental Water Reserve

DEECA oversees the *Victorian Environmental Water Program* in conjunction with the Victorian Waterway Management Program (see Section (e)) to maintain or improve the condition of Victoria’s rivers, estuaries and wetlands, through provision and protection of water for the environment. The program is delivering priority actions from the Victorian Government’s Water Plan, *Water for Victoria*, including responding to climate change, management of environmental water, strengthened monitoring and reporting, partnering with Traditional Owners, clear and transparent environmental water charging arrangements, and strong governance. The program is a partnership between catchment management authorities, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), Traditional Owners, water corporations and other delivery partners.

The Environmental Water Reserve (EWR) is the legal term for water set aside for the environment under the *Water Act 1989*. The EWR comprises, or is contributed to, by:

* entitlements for the environment that are called either bulk entitlements or environmental entitlements

the operation of caps on licensed consumptive water use (such as sustainable diversion limits or permissible consumptive volumes) and conditions on consumptive bulk entitlements, licences and permits, and as set out in management plans.

In regulated systems, environmental water consists of environmental entitlements, environmental bulk entitlements and various operational conditions on consumptive water use (noting that under some of these conditions, the water is not exclusively for the environment – for example, passing flow requirements). The environmental entitlements and environmental bulk entitlements refer to water usually held in and released from storages. The VEWH holds these entitlements on behalf of the Minister for Water. The VEWH is an independent statutory body responsible for making decisions on the most efficient and effective use of Victoria’s environmental water entitlements.

Potential watering actions are documented by VEWH in its annual seasonal watering plan, which is informed by seasonal watering proposals prepared by each of the CMAs and Melbourne Water. The VEWH then commits water to these actions throughout the year via seasonal watering statements, which authorise waterway managers to use environmental water.

The VEWH is established under Part 3AA of the *Water Act 1989*. Further details about the VEWH, including its annual report and water holdings, can be found on its website: [VEWH](https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/).

As at 30 June 2023, the VEWH water holdings comprised 23 entitlements and 107 water shares. During 2022–23, the VEWH worked with CMAs and Melbourne Water to manage this water to meet environmental objectives at 89 river reaches and 65 wetlands[[4]](#footnote-4), including:

* **Gippsland:** Thomson, Macalister and Snowy rivers, and the lower Latrobe wetlands (Sale Common, Dowd Morass and Heart Morass).
* **Central Victoria:** Yarra, Tarago, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Upper Barwon and Moorabool rivers, Pyrites Creek, the lower Barwon wetlands (Hospital Swamps and Reedy Lake) and two wetlands in the Yarra system (Annulus Billabong and Yering Backswamp).
* **Western Victoria:** Wimmera, MacKenzie and Glenelg rivers and the Burnt and Mount William Creeks, as well as 38 wetlands via the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline.

**Northern Victoria:** Goulburn, Broken, Ovens, Campaspe and Loddon rivers, and the upper and lower Broken Creek, three Living Murray icon sites[[5]](#footnote-5) (Barmah Forest, Hattah Lakes, and Gunbower Forest) and 11 wetlands in the Goulburn, Loddon, central and lower Murray systems.

High natural flows due to saturated catchments, high rainfall and storage spills throughout spring 2022 led to many planned environmental watering actions being met or exceeded naturally. In many locations, natural flooding covered a far greater area than was possible with managed environmental flows.

Highlights from 2022–23 include:

* Significant colonial waterbird breeding at sites that received water for the environment and natural flooding, including:
* approximately 2,000 nests of Australian White Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis (and possibly Royal Spoonbill) in Barmah Forest
* ten species of colonial nesting waterbirds across the Hattah Lakes using 7,000 nests for more than 25,500 chicks, with a further 18 waterbird species detected breeding with an additional 1,700 chicks recorded
* more than 15,000 birds from 21 species recorded at Gunbower Forest and the Kerang Ramsar wetlands during 69 surveys conducted during spring 2022 and autumn 2023.
* High rainfall in October 2022 caused Lake Eildon to spill for the first time since the early 1990s and flooding on the Goulburn River at Seymour reached the highest level on gauged record. Environmental flows were used over summer to help manage impacts following the floods such as providing refuge from poor water quality and blackwater events in the lower Goulburn River. Water for the environment was also used to help manage bank slumping in the lower Goulburn River by slowing the recession of flows from Goulburn Weir where operationally possible.
* During 2022–23 waterway managers sought opportunities to increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in environmental water planning, management and monitoring. Examples of this include:
* For the first time in August 2022, 1,913 ML of water for the environment was delivered to partially fill Lake Boort in partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Clans Corporation, North Central Catchment Management Authority, the VEWH, Goulburn-Murray Water and Parks Victoria. The Lake Boort partial fill aimed to support river red gums that were planted in 2017 and culturally important vegetation, such as spiny flat sedge.
* The delivery of water for the environment to coincide with the Johnny Mullagh Cup on the banks of the Glenelg River (*Bochara-Bogara-Pawur*) in March 2023 to provide cultural and recreational benefits through improved amenity and experience for attendees. The Cup is an important annual cultural event between the Gunditj Mirring and Barengi Gadjin Traditional Owners, that celebrates the 1868 Australian cricket team that toured England and was made up of Traditional Owners from the Harrow region. The water for the environment protects and maintains water quality to provide suitable habitat for fish, water bugs and platypus. As part of the event, Glenelg Hopkins CMA organised a range of activities showcasing the ecological, social and economic values of the Glenelg River including an electrofishing demonstration, temporary water bug tattoos and kayaking.

In unregulated rivers, environmental water is protected through conditions on licences and bulk entitlements, caps or through statutory water management plans and non-statutory local management plans. Water corporations are responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met.

During 2022–23, environmental water was considered and protected through input into numerous reviews in unregulated systems. In the Upper Ovens River, a priority unregulated river, Tea Garden weir fishway was constructed, improving connectivity for fish. Other environmental water program highlights from 2022–23 include:

* Completion of the Buchan River fishway in the East Gippsland region, the Tea Garden Creek fishway in the North East region and the Catfish Billabong regulator in the Mallee region.
* Implementing Murray-Darling Basin Plan environmental watering obligations (Chapter 8, Environmental Watering Plan) in partnership with the VEWH and CMAs, including continuing constructive interjurisdictional collaborations for ongoing and future work to meet mutual obligations.

Delivery of 75.1 per cent of environmental watering actions at planned sites from a target of 90 per cent. Wet conditions during late winter and spring 2022 meant that many sites that were originally planned to receive water for the environment under the Seasonal Watering Plan 2022–23 received natural flooding. As a result, deliveries of environmental water were either not possible due to operational conditions or were not necessary as watering objectives had already been met.

### b) Disposal of wastewater (including trade waste, sewage and saline water)

All urban water corporations are required to report on wastewater disposals as part of the report of operations in their annual reports. These performance reports include indicators related to financial, service delivery and environmental performance. Specific wastewater indicators are prepared for reliability of collection services, quality of disposal and management. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament and available on water corporations’ websites.

### c) Use and re-use of water resources

See section (ab) above, ‘The use of one water source as a substitute for another water source’. All urban water corporations are required to report on total use of alternative water sources such as recycled wastewater and stormwater re-use as part of the report of operations in their annual reports. The performance report includes indicators related to environmental performance for effluent re-use and greenhouse gas emissions. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament and available on water corporations’ websites.

### d) Floodwaters

The *Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy 2016* (VFMS) is the principal government policy for continuously building Victoria’s flood risk resilience. Building on lessons learned from flood emergencies in 2010, 2011 and 2012, the strategy clarifies and confirms government and government agency roles and accountabilities. The VFMS supports agencies to deliver their respective accountabilities by specifying clear actions against each Victorian Government policy set out in the strategy. The VFMS includes 56 actions assigned to agencies across the floodplain management sector, including DEECA, local councils, CMAs and the Victorian State Emergency Service (VICSES). These actions are now all complete and/or embedded as part of agencies’ business as usual practice. The strategy will continue to inform consistent decisions and actions for the management of flood-related issues over its ten-year term from 2016. A third biennial implementation progress report was published in 2022.

Three consecutive La Niña years (2020, 2021 and 2022) brought increased storm activity with heavy downpours resulting in flooding of our waterways and assets, particularly in the northeast, central and south Gippsland areas of the state. The most recent storms and flooding occurred throughout the months of October and November 2022. During this event, much of Victoria experienced intense and heavy rainfall. The high rainfall caused riverine flooding, with various peaks across the state. Many of the areas adversely impacted by these events were sites previously impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires and/or by similar storm events in June and October 2021. During the 2022 event, there were more than 200 reported incidents, including but not limited to 26 dam safety incidents, 16 fish death events, over 71 different sewer spills, 53 additional wastewater discharges, 10 water quality issues, three water service disruptions and four wastewater service disruptions. Almost all incidents have been resolved, with the exception of two wastewater discharges which are being managed under business-as-usual conditions. All dam incidents have been made safe, with several dams requiring medium to longer-term remediation works. DEECA is working with the dam owners in planning these works.

**Longer term impacts of flood events** – while initial incidents have largely been resolved, the longer-term impacts of the October 2022 floods on waterway health remain very significant. Seven of the nine regional CMAs reported medium to extensive damage to numerous waterways, including the Murray River and its major Victorian tributaries (Mitta Mitta, Ovens, Goulburn, Campaspe, Loddon), and to waterways in the Wimmera, Hopkins and Barwon catchments. Damage was recorded to waterway beds and banks, riparian areas alongside waterways, Crown land frontages, existing erosion control structures, environmental water delivery assets including regulators and instream habitat structures. There were also significant impacts at Ramsar sites (Barmah Forest, Gunbower Forest, Kerang Lakes). Initial funding to CMAs supported emergency stabilisation works, critical fish rescue operations (in partnership with Arthur Rylah Institute) and assisting landholders to reinstate riparian fencing which had been installed under government programs. However, as with recovery following the 2019–20 bushfires, a multi-year program will be required to repair and restore waterway assets in the hardest hit areas.

Regional Floodplain Management Strategies (RFMS) are being led by CMAs and Melbourne Water in partnership with local councils, VICSES and other agencies. The purpose of the RFMS is to support communities to identify, prioritise and implement flood mitigation activities, reduce existing flood risks, and manage residual risk. The RFMS have identified more than 400 locally prioritised and led actions for mitigating the effects of flooding for Victorian communities. Work to deliver RFMS implementation plans typically include detailed flood studies, flood mitigation works, flood warning system upgrades and planning scheme amendments.

CMAs worked with local government, VICSES and others to prepare the most recent tranche of competitive funding applications to implement their highest priority actions through the third round of the Risk Resilience Grants Program (RRGP) 2022–23, which opened on 13 June 2023 and closed on 10 August 2023. This work includes securing a commitment from funding applicants that they will contribute local funding equal to at least one third of the proposed project budget in line with government policy on investing in flood mitigation. The program will receive federal government funding through the National Partnership Agreements on Disaster Risk Reduction and will be administered by Emergency Management Victoria.

FloodZoom is a web-based tool that incorporates current flood spatial data, live rainfall and stream level data to enable clear consequence planning, making it a single source of riverine flood information in Victoria to support flood readiness and response. A significant task for the FloodZoom program is ensuring flood data and intelligence products are continually updated as flood studies are completed and delivered by local councils and CMAs. The importance of this work was highlighted during the 2022 floods. The team received considerable positive feedback confirming the platform was indispensable for flood analysts providing advice to VICSES for warnings, evacuations and broader response strategies.

In addition to its role as a key decision support tool for core emergency functions during flood events, FloodZoom also hosts a planning system module used by CMAs to streamline management of land use planning application referrals and permits, an algal module for reporting blue green algae outbreaks, and dam and risk management modules designed to assist water corporations.

### e) Waterway management and drainage

DEECA oversees the Victorian Waterway Management Program that aims to maintain or improve the condition of Victoria’s waterways (rivers, estuaries and wetlands). The program is a partnership between state government, Traditional Owners, regional agencies and authorities, other management partners and local communities.

As part of the program, DEECA is responsible for establishing the state policy framework for waterway management. Regional implementation is led by waterway managers from CMAs and Melbourne Water in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, via the Regional Waterway Strategies.

Through *Water for Victoria*, the Victorian Government is investing $248 million over four years (2020–24) to improve the health of waterways and catchments. This includes:

* significant on-ground works across regional Victoria to implement Regional Waterway Strategies and Regional Catchment Strategies
* management of environmental water entitlements and projects
* funding to support and improve Ramsar sites (including the Gippsland Lakes)

service delivery to provide advice to the public regarding flood risks and processing of thousands of permits and licenses related to works and developments along waterways.

Funding of approximately $40.8 million provided by the Victorian Government in 2022–23 for improving the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments has been invested by CMAs according to these agreed programs. The delivery of projects and services through these programs is tracked and reported annually. Over 2022–23 CMAs have:

* completed approximately 7,000 hectares of waterway vegetation works including tree planting, weed control and fencing alongside waterways
* completed 10 new Regional Catchment Strategies for regions across Victoria
* maintained or improved the environmental condition of approximately 331 river reaches and wetlands
* commenced a second set of eight new Flagship Waterway projects at priority sites around the state, building on the first set that was launched in 2018 (which are still continuing)
* processed 91 per cent of waterway licenses and permits within statutory timeframes
* initiated 17 new catchment stewardship projects working closely with community, sector partners and Traditional Owners to deliver 17,754 hectares of improved catchment stewardship
* further developed foundations with partners and Landcare networks to complete stewardship plans and assessments for over 300,000 hectares across Victoria
* continued delivery of major long term statewide monitoring programs in targeted rivers and wetlands to assess and improve the value and success of the program

continued delivery of a range of citizen science programs that focus on waterway health, including EstuaryWatch and Waterwatch Victoria, school-based programs including River Detectives, and a range of other programs including monitoring frogs, waterbirds and litter.

More information on these programs and achievements can be found at [DEECA Water and Catchments website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/current-water-snapshot) including a report card assessing progress against statewide waterway management targets. The report shows that all ten targets are on track or exceeded at the midpoint for the *Victorian Waterway Management Strategy*.

Major drainage systems in the Melbourne region are the responsibility of Melbourne Water, managed under their Waterways and Drainage Strategy and reported against in the Melbourne Water Annual Report.

### f) Water quality (including salinity)

Water quality monitoring was conducted at 459 partnership sites across the state in 2022–23. A range of water quality parameters are either continuously monitored or sampled at regular intervals from these sites, and cover a range of physical, chemical, nutrient, metal, anion, cation, organic load and algal analyses. Data from the monitoring network is made publicly available through the Water Measurement Information System ([Water Monitoring](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/)). Water quality across the state is generally good. However, it can vary depending on location, weather conditions, land use and land use practices.

### g) In-stream uses of water

Refer to section (ac) above, ‘Environmental Water Reserve’, for details regarding the in-stream use of water.

### ga) Current and historic levels of allocation and use of surface water and groundwater

The *Victorian Water Accounts* provides a comprehensive annual overview of the state’s water resources. This includes providing an annual statewide and system picture of water availability and use for each of Victoria’s 29 river basins and 20 groundwater catchments, and for each of the state’s rural and urban distribution systems.

The 2020–21 accounts were released in June 2022 and have been published online as a digital product, available in a hardcopy format, and are also available on the [Victorian Water Register](https://www.waterregister.vic.gov.au/) website. Details of Victoria’s water availability and use in 2021–22 will be provided in the 2021–22 Victorian Water Accounts. These are expected to be completed in the second half of 2023. Comprehensive historic information on allocations and water use is also available in Water Accounts and State Water Reports dating back to 2003–04.

**Surface water**

In 2022–23, the majority of Victoria received more rainfall than average and more than the previous year. Rainfall was very much above average for large areas of northern and western Victoria, as well as a region spanning the Yarra Ranges south to Western Port. Rainfall was close to average in East and South Gippsland.

For the first time since entitlements were unbundled in 2007, all northern and southern regulated systems received 100 per cent allocation against both high and low reliability water entitlements in 2022–23. All northern regulated systems reached 100 per cent allocation against high reliability water entitlements by September 2022, and against low reliability entitlements by December 2022.

The Thomson-Macalister and Werribee regulated systems in the south both received 100 per cent against high reliability entitlements by August 2022 and 100 per cent against low reliability entitlements by April 2023.

The Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline Product allocation reached 100 per cent allocation of entitlement volumes in January 2023.

**Groundwater**

Seasonal restrictions are announced in accordance with the groundwater management plans developed for Water Supply Protection Areas (WSPAs) and Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs). A restriction may be used to reduce the risks from falling groundwater levels; allow the resource to be shared between all users; or recognise and reduce the social and environmental costs of lowering groundwater levels.

In 2022–23, restrictions on groundwater use were in place in all management zones in the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA (75 per cent), Katunga WSPA (70 per cent) and the West Wimmera GMA Neuarpur Sub-Zone 1 (80 per cent).

### gb) Current and historic condition of waterways and aquifers

DEECA has reviewed and improved Victoria’s existing waterway health monitoring programs to have a greater focus on monitoring the changes that result from management actions – an action in *Water for Victoria*. Management interventions should over time result in improvements to overall waterway resource condition. Statewide condition monitoring programs such as the Index of Stream Condition (ISC) provide information about the overall condition of Victoria’s waterways and guide state policy and regional investment programs. Three previous ISC assessments have been undertaken. A key lesson from these assessments is that changes in resource condition in response to management interventions may take many decades to emerge as the benefits of management interventions accumulate and ecological systems have time to recover. *Water for Victoria* acknowledges that the full benefits of investments to improve waterway health may not be realised for 30 years or more. Responses to management interventions need to be measured at relevant scales and assessed against specific management targets. As such, the schedule of broad scale condition monitoring of rivers, wetland and estuaries has been revised to occur less frequently, cycling between rivers, wetlands and estuaries.

The first statewide [Index of Estuary Condition (IEC)](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways/estuaries) assessment was completed in 2021. IEC results are available on DEECA’s Waterways and catchments website, [MapshareVic](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapsharevic/) and [Data Vic](https://www.data.vic.gov.au/). The results of the third and most recent ISC assessment were released during 2013 and are available at [MapshareVic](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapsharevic/) and [Data Vic](https://www.data.vic.gov.au/). The results from the most recent statewide wetland assessment in 2010 that looked at 827 wetlands are also available at [MapshareVic](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapsharevic/). An updated assessment of statewide wetland condition is due for reporting in 2024–25.

Aquifer condition is monitored through Victoria’s State Observation Bore Network. See section (a) ‘Availability of Water – Groundwater’ for more information.

**Long Term Water Resource Assessments**

The *Water Act 1989* requires a Long-Term Water Resource Assessment (LTWRA) every 15 years to determine whether water availability has declined or if waterway health has deteriorated for reasons related to changes in flow.

The LTWRA for Southern Victoria was published in March 2020. This was the first comprehensive technical assessment of how surface water and groundwater availability had changed across southern Victoria, and the first large-scale effort to measure long-term changes in waterway health due to flow.

The Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS) has considered and identified actions required in response to the LTWRA, having regard to relevant economic, environmental, social, recreational and Traditional Owner values of water.

In October 2021, the ‘Technical Guide to Figures in Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy Discussion Draft’ was published to accompany the CGRSWS Discussion Draft, with the final Strategy delivered in September 2022. The technical guide sets out the data sources and methods used to provide a robust evidence-base for long-term planning. To ensure consistency, water resource assessment methods applied in the LTWRA have also been applied in the CGRSWS, with refinement, such as extending data sets where new data have become available. The LTWRA for northern Victoria is due to commence in 2025, consistent with current legislative timelines to align with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan review scheduled for 2026.

### Sustainable Water Strategies

Sustainable Water Strategies (SWSs) are a legislative requirement under Division 1B of the *Water Act 1989* and fulfil Victoria’s commitment under the National Water Initiative to carry out open, statutory-based water planning. Four SWSs covering the state were produced between 2006 and 2011. These strategies set out long-term plans to secure each region’s water future, identifying and managing threats to the supply and quality of the region’s water resources and identifying ways to improve waterway health. Opportunities for achieving shared benefits, including those related to Aboriginal values of water and recreational values, are also considered.

*Water for Victoria* (2016) commits to maintaining Victoria’s planning framework, including the role of SWSs. The CGRSWS was launched by the Minister for Water on 5 September 2022. The Strategy outlines a pathway to secure the region’s water future over the next 50 years given the current estimate that the region’s water needs will double in the next 50 years. It also replaces and combines both the Central Region SWS and the Gippsland Region SWS. The CGRSWS sets out 96 actions and 41 policies to increase supply by moving to more manufactured water and stormwater sources, as well as continuing to manage demand and find ways to return water for the environment and Traditional Owners.

Implementation of the Strategy has begun and will continue over the next decade in partnership with Traditional Owners and water sector agencies across the region.

Funding of $56 million has been secured to deliver early actions within the Strategy. This includes $1.6 million to begin to invest in augmentation readiness to increase water supply and provide water to Traditional Owners and the environment.

Diversifying water sources by increasing use of rainwater, stormwater and recycled water will be supported by $39 million for Integrated Water Management projects, focused on South East Melbourne. Waterway health will be improved through the allocation of $10 million to implement on ground works in West Gippsland and to investigate future priority works to improve waterway health in the Werribee and Moorabool Rivers. A further $6 million has been prioritised to enable Government to adapt water management strategies under a changing climate through the Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan. The Victorian Government, through the 2023–24 State Budget, has allocated an additional $1.2 million towards targeted programs as part of the CGRSWS. This includes rebates for water efficiency upgrades and continuing partnerships with Traditional Owner groups.

More information on SWSs and further details on the status of each individual SWS action is available on the DEECA website.

## Additional information available on request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details of the items listed below have been retained and are available to Ministers, Members of Parliament and the public on request (subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*).

1. A statement that declarations of pecuniary interests have been duly completed by all relevant officers of the department
2. Details of shares held by senior officers as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary
3. Details of publications produced by the department about the activities of the department and where they can be obtained
4. Details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged by the department for its services, including services that are administered
5. Details of any major external reviews carried out in respect of the operation of the department
6. Details of any major research and development activities undertaken by the department that are not otherwise covered either in the report of operations or in a document which contains the financial statement and report of operations
7. Details of overseas visits undertaken including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit
8. Details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the department to develop community awareness of the services provided by the department
9. Details of assessment and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees, not otherwise detailed in the report of operations
10. General statement on industrial relations within the department and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes, which are not otherwise detailed in the report of operations
11. List of major committees sponsored by the department, the purpose of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved
12. Details of all consultancies and contractors including
13. consultants/contractors engaged
14. services provided
15. expenditure committed to for each engagement.

The information is available on request from the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186, via email: [Customer Service](mailto:customer.service%40delwp.vic.gov.au) or on the internet at [DEECA](http://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/).

1. 60 Standard WorkCover claims were previously reported in 2021–22, however this has been revised to 58 accepted claims. Total claim figures may vary after the time of reporting, as claims are amended. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Spend is exclusive of GST. Expenditure excludes Planning and Land Use Victoria from 1 January 2023, and includes Agriculture Victoria and, Forestry and Resources spend from 1 January 2023. Excludes corporate card purchases as data is not currently available. DEECA follows the Social Procurement Framework Measurement and Reporting Guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. FOI statistics include the Planning portfolio from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 and Agriculture, Forests and Resources portfolios from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The number of sites watered includes estimates for May and June 2023, to be confirmed following the conclusion of the 2022–23 water year. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Flows were managed in Mullaroo Creek and Lindsay River within the Lindsay Mulcra Wallpolla icon site during 2022–23 but they did not result in a net use of water for the environment. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)