



CONTEXT for the RCS

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3.1 The scope of the challenges

This chapter places the RCS and the issues that it addresses in a global and national context. It looks at global and regional environmental challenges and at the creative responses that are being adopted.

Global challenges

The global challenges of managing the environment and sustainable development are well recognised and documented. For example, the recent international review of global change¹⁵ states that:

“The world faces significant environmental problems: shortages of clean and accessible freshwater, degradation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, increases in soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, changes in the chemistry of the atmosphere, declines in fisheries, and the possibility of significant changes in climate. These changes are occurring over and above the stresses imposed by the natural variability of a dynamic planet ...”

“The changes taking place are, in fact, changes in the human-nature relationship. They are recent, they are profound, and many are accelerating. They are cascading through the Earth’s environment in ways that are difficult to understand and often impossible to predict. ...these human-driven changes to the global environment will require societies to develop a multitude of creative response and adaptation strategies.”

Within the Port Phillip and Western Port region, many sound and farsighted decisions have previously been made

Throughout the world, recognition of the magnitude of these changes is mobilising many and diverse responses from all sectors: public and private, non-government and community. Responses include formal international agreements between governments, numerous government policies and programs, the acceleration of innovations in production and recycling processes, and the adoption of better business practices. As well, millions of individuals are making personal commitments to change their lifestyles and consumption patterns.

Regional challenges

In developing the RCS we have taken into account not only global but national, regional and local perspectives to determine the scale and nature of the challenges that confront us.

The RCS acknowledges that many sound and farsighted initiatives and decisions have previously been made within the Port Phillip and Western Port region. It builds on these foundations, drawing on lessons learned from the wide range of responses developed in the later part of the 20th century, and on the emerging understanding of ecological systems and the pressures and conditions on catchment assets in the region.

In particular, it recognises the need for regional planning and reform and the special issues that arise because the region includes a major industrial city and its hinterland.



¹⁵ Global change and the Earth system: a planet under pressure

While Melbourne's urban area only occupies 17 per cent of the Port Phillip and Western Port region, its patterns of natural resource use significantly influence the whole region. A large metropolis like Melbourne pulls in, consumes and transforms material and energy from near and far, posing particular catchment management challenges in terms of population numbers and densities, affluence, production systems and consumption patterns and of the sheer quantity and nature of the wastes generated. Changing the consumption patterns and the flow of wastes into receiving environments will have wide-ranging effects across society. It is this aspect that sets our region apart from the other regions in Victoria.

The RCS emphasises the need for partnerships and community education

The RCS emphasises the need for partnerships and community education because the activities within this region that impact on catchment management and ecosystems are the cumulative outcomes of the choices and actions of individuals going about their businesses, their daily lives and through the organisations and communities. However, the RCS is only one of many mechanisms for vigorously and meaningfully addressing the global challenges of sustainability in the region.

This Regional Catchment Strategy aims to deliver integrated catchment management with a strong focus on the protection and integrated management of water, land and biodiversity within this region. However, there are also clear connections with and dependencies on areas outside this regional boundary, particularly through the air and atmosphere, oceans and across the catchment boundaries.

Connections and dependencies

Despite impressive technological innovations that have transformed life in affluent countries, human life still depends on the earth's natural resources and capacity to sustain the delivery of the ecosystem-based goods and services on which we depend – anything from food and clean water to pollution and flood control, and disease regulation. Through daily actions as simple yet fundamental as breathing and eating each person interrelates with the regional and the global environment. We are connected and dependent. Throughout human history, ecosystem goods and services have provided the fabric of human culture and aesthetics, while humans have shaped nature and have arguably become

the world's most dominant evolutionary force¹⁶. Modern technology, consumption patterns and increasing populations are delivering unprecedented rates of change to global systems so that in many parts of the world, the relationship between biophysical and human systems is becoming profoundly unbalanced as populations will face increasing environmental, social and economic difficulties as the 21st century progresses.

During the 20th century the world population tripled and water use increased sixfold. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in countries affected by chronic or recurrent shortages of fresh water¹⁷. This change will have come at great environmental cost: some rivers will no longer reach the sea, half the world's wetlands will have disappeared and 20 per cent of freshwater fish will be endangered¹⁸.

Around the world, the challenge of protecting ecosystem goods and services is made more complicated by the fact that issues of population, poverty, pollution and resource demand are all interlinked and cannot be solved separately. The social, economic and environmental outcomes of change are related.

A key issue from the perspective of catchment management is the need to adapt and respond to changing circumstances and demands, but in doing so we must stay within critical thresholds of the natural systems involved. Although these thresholds may be hard to determine, many conform to standard patterns based on well-understood ecological processes. Throughout the world, the eutrophication of lakes, estuaries, shallow bays and near-coastal waters is a recognised problem. In the Port Phillip and Western Port region we know that we may be approaching some critical thresholds that could propel the large natural systems we depend on into new, less desirable states.

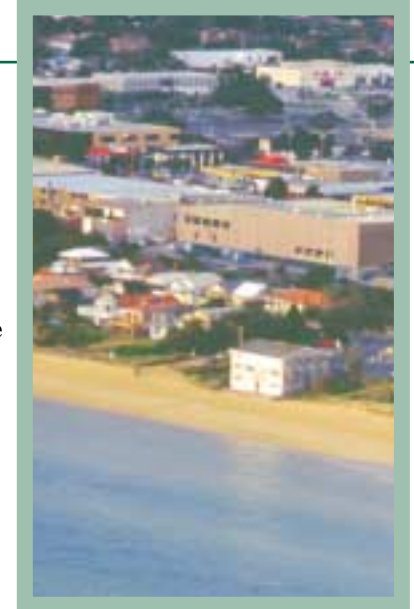
For example, the 1996 CSIRO Port Phillip Bay Study identified nitrogen as the critical determinant of the health of the bay. If little is done to effectively stabilise or reduce nitrogen loads in this bay, then a critical threshold may well be approached. Exceeding this threshold could trigger changes such as frequent algal blooms and the dominance of introduced marine pests. This would fundamentally alter the bay's ecological processes, reducing its attractiveness and usefulness to humans for swimming, boating, fishing and its capacity to assimilate waste. This would threaten the health the productivity of the natural system. And because it would be extremely difficult to reverse it could lead to a major social and political crisis for Victoria.

This example demonstrates the connections and dependencies between human wellbeing and the ongoing capacity of large-scale ecological processes to continue to deliver ecosystem services like waste assimilation and nutrient recycling. While these services remain uncosted in the economic sense, they are clearly critical to economic and social wellbeing. In many cases, this capacity is threatened by cumulative loads and unforeseen interactions.

While natural systems will continue to change, it is important that we manage them to retain their resilience and functional health. It is important to invest in good quality science that can support proactive planning and policy development, and inform regional catchment management. This has been critical

in the case of Port Phillip Bay, where investments in research and development have provided a working understanding of the geochemical and ecological processes that drive its nutrient processing and health. The results of the Port Phillip Bay Study clearly highlighted the need to focus on lowering the total nitrogen load entering the bay each year, triggering the development of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan and other initiatives to protect the health of the system and to ensure that it can still assimilate nitrogen.

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¹⁶ Homo economicus as a keystone species

¹⁷ Sustaining Water, Easing Scarcity: A Second Update.

¹⁸ The UN World Water Development Report for People, Water for Life

3.2 Strategic work that sets the scene

Numerous Acts, policies, strategic documents and plans are relevant to the catchment management issues dealt with in the RCS. Those of particular relevance to us are summarised below. Their focus varies from global right through to local emphasis.

Global, national and state strategies and plans

The concept of sustainability has gathered momentum since publication in 1980 of the World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The IUCN promoted sustainability as a strategic approach to the integration of conservation and development, consistent with the objectives of:

- ecosystem maintenance
- the preservation of genetic diversity
- sustainable utilisation of resources.

A suite of interrelated principles, such as conservation of biodiversity and the precautionary principle, is now accepted as the basis of sustainability. Sustainability principles have been endorsed and adopted by governments around the world, with recognition of the fundamental links between social and economic wellbeing and a healthy environment. These were explained for the first time in 'Our Common Future'.

Integration of economic, natural resources, and environmental policy is critical to making progress towards sustainability goals. This link was explored through Agenda 21 which is a global action plan for sustainable development endorsed by more than 150 nations, including Australia, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Its 40 chapters provide the most comprehensive international strategy for combating the problems of poverty, development and environmental degradation.

Agenda 21 outlines actions that governments, international organisations, industries and the community can take to achieve sustainability. These actions recognise the impacts of

In our region, relative affluence and access to technology have deferred many problems of environment degradation.

human behaviours on the environment and on the sustainability of productive systems. Like most international agreements, it is general in nature, so the real test comes in transferring its broad policies to effective regional action. That is the task of this RCS. Already more than 100 local governments in Australia, including at least 20 in Victoria, have committed to Local Agenda 21, or ecologically sustainable development, through municipal plans and strategies that involve the community.

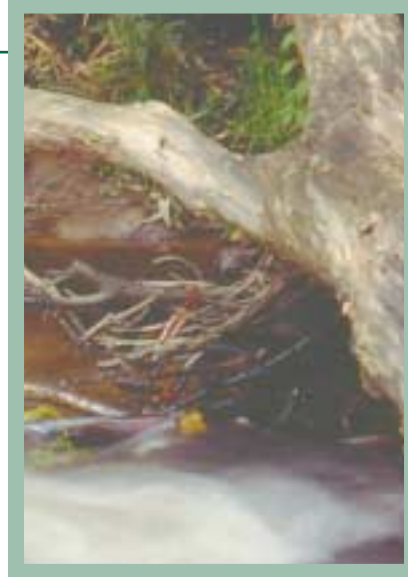
The National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) was endorsed by heads of Government in 1992. It outlined government commitments at state and federal level to achieving sustainable development, and followed the Commonwealth Government's ratification of Agenda 21.

At state level, complementary sustainability strategies exist to provide the context for the RCS, including Growing Victoria Together that sets out the Victorian Government's vision for the future. This requires consideration of triple bottom line (social, economic and environmental outcomes) in government investment.

Plans that involve our region

The challenge of sustainability is acute in the Port Phillip and Western Port region, given the relationship of its large urban agglomeration to the catchments, and given that this is the region where most Victorians live and work.

In Australia, and in our region, relative affluence and access to technology have deferred many problems of environmental degradation. But the need to find solutions remains urgent. Notwithstanding our tremendous advances in technology and material wellbeing, we are now no less dependent on abundant and resilient ecosystems than we were in past decades and centuries. Despite the impressive engineered infrastructure that services cities, the quality of our lives is still linked to basic and indispensable ecosystem services, including those that deliver water and air and those that disperse and assimilate pollution.



Positive signs include heightened environmental awareness, increasing involvement in practices like recycling, and the growth of community groups in areas like urban bushcare and landcare. The RCS aims to support community involvement and to help coordinate institutional responses.

The RCS discusses and addresses the core catchment management issues associated with the region's land, water, biodiversity, people and organisations. Less directly, it also relates to issues whose management can impact significantly on catchment assets, such as urban form, greenhouse and climate change, solid waste, transport and energy use. It is anticipated that the links with these issues will be advanced over coming years and strengthened in future RCSs.

Many documents and strategies relate to catchment management in our region and have been drawn upon in the development of the RCS. These include:

International agreements

- Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA) and China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA), which are international agreements with China and Japan on migratory birds and the protection of their habitat. Areas designated under the agreements require special attention and are described in this RCS.
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which specifies criteria for assessing wetlands of international importance. The Port Phillip and Western Port region has three sites recognised as Ramsar wetlands.

National policies and plans

- National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, which aims to bridge the gap between current activities and the effective identification, conservation and management of Australia's biological diversity.
- Australia's Ocean Policy, which provides a strategic planning and management framework to deal with the complex issues confronting the long-term future of our

oceans, and guidance on addressing the interaction between land and seas.

- The National Aquaculture Policy Statement, which supports the development of ecologically sustainable aquaculture as an industry of the future. Port Phillip Bay and Western Port support a major fishing industry and a growing aquaculture sector.
- South East Region Marine Plan, which was developed under the Australia's Ocean Policy, seeks to ensure the protection and sustainable development of Australia's vast and rich ocean territory around Victoria, Tasmania, eastern South Australia and southern New South Wales.

Legislation

- A range of Acts apply to the management of water resources in the region including the Water Act 1989, the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 and the Coastal Management Act 1995. Water management in Victoria is underpinned by an allocation framework that brings together existing water rights and environmental water requirements to establish agreed water allocations.
- Legislation applying to the management of land in the region includes the Planning and Environment Act 1987 which is the basis for the direction and control of land use and development in Victoria. It is administered through the State Planning Policy Framework and local government planning schemes. There are numerous other Acts and policies which help regulate land use and development in the region including the Environment Protection Act 1970, the Coastal Management Act 1995 and the Forests Act 1958.
- In relation to the protection and management of biodiversity, key Acts include the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. These are the main statutory frameworks for protecting native flora and fauna and ecological communities. There are several other relevant Acts including the Wildlife Act 1975, the National Parks Act 1975 and the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.



This RCS plays an important role in implementing the intent and provisions for integrated catchment management contained in Federal and State legislation. It provides public agencies and community organisations with common operational goals and incentives to coordinate their activities. Further reference to the relevant Acts, policies and plans relating to the protection and management of water resources, land and biodiversity are contained in sections 5.2, 6.2 and 7.2 of this RCS respectively.

State policies and strategies

- Securing Our Water Future Together, the Victorian Government Water White Paper that sets out an action plan over the next 50 years to achieve sustainable management of water. This document, released in June 2004, establishes numerous new policy directions and benchmarks for water conservation and management in Victoria, including the following of particular importance for this region:
 - * Maintaining the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority as a community-based organisation independent of other Government agencies and responsible for strategic planning and priority setting in relation to catchment management for the region, preparation of the Regional Catchment Strategy and coordination of its implementation, and reporting on catchment condition
 - * Establishing Melbourne Water as the “caretaker of river health” for the whole of Port Phillip and Western Port region, thereby resolving some long-standing gaps in waterway management arrangements
 - * Establishing diversion caps on all waterways in the region
 - * Establishing an environmental water reserve for waterways, to be managed by Melbourne Water.
- Sustaining Our Living Wealth, Victoria’s Biodiversity Strategy, which maps out programs for integrating biodiversity conservation into actions in order to ensure that Victoria’s biodiversity is managed in an ecologically sound and sustainable manner. This strategy informs the consideration of biodiversity assets in the RCS and requires the development of Biodiversity Action Plans.
- Waters of Victoria – a State environment protection policy that describes desired outcomes for waters in Victoria. There are also specific schedules for Western Port and its catchment, the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay.
- Healthy Rivers, Healthy Communities and Regional Growth, The Victorian River Health Strategy, which

provides a framework for communities to work in partnership with Government on long-term management and restoration of Victoria’s rivers, and requires preparation of a river health strategy for each catchment management region. The preparation of the Port Phillip and Western Port River Health Strategy is being coordinated in partnership by Melbourne Water and the Catchment Management Authority with a strong emphasis on community consultation.

- The Victorian Coastal Strategy, which seeks to ensure the protection of significant coastal environmental features and provides clear direction for the future use of the coast, including the marine environment. Priorities and actions for the Port Phillip and Western Port region are found in ‘Coastal Priorities for the Central Region: A Framework for Implementing the Victorian Coastal Strategy’.
- CoastAction/Coastcare Strategy, which encourages and facilitates active participation in marine and coastal management. It is a key program implementing the Victorian Coastal Strategy and the coastal and marine objectives of the RCS.
- The Victorian Greenhouse Strategy – this commits Victoria to playing its part in national and international efforts to address the threat of climate change. The RCS does not set out to comprehensively address greenhouse and climate issues. It recognises the threat of climate change to the sustainability of our natural resources and proposes a range of revegetation actions that will provide benefits to not only our land, water and biodiversity assets but will also assist with carbon sequestration. It also proposes careful monitoring of the impacts of climate change on natural systems, biodiversity and processes in the region so that appropriate responses can be developed.
- Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management Framework, which outlines Victoria’s approach to managing our native vegetation. The framework also requires CMAs to prepare detailed regional plans. The Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Native Vegetation Plan meets this requirement.
- Private Forestry Victoria: Growing the future in forestry - growing private forests, which promotes the development of a dynamic forest and forest products industry that generates economic, social and environmental benefits for all Victorians. We have adapted this broad strategy by developing a regional private forestry plan.
- The Victorian Pest Management Framework, which outlines the broad approach to pest plant and animal management in Victoria. It requires CMAs to prepare Regional Weed Action Plans and Regional Rabbit Action Plans. A number of state-wide weed action plans such as the Victorian Serrated Tussock Management Plan and the

Victorian Ragwort Plan also coordinate regional actions to address important weeds. These plans have informed the approach to pest plant and animal management outlined in the RCS.

- The Victorian Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (VICPLAN) which provides a framework to plan for and respond to major incidents of pollution of the sea by oil and other noxious substances.

Regional strategies and plans

- Melbourne 2030: Planning for sustainable growth – the urban planning strategy for metropolitan Melbourne. This identifies growth areas on the urban fringe where some of Melbourne’s anticipated extra one million people over the next 30 years will find housing, and it supports urban consolidation with new infill and medium density housing in existing areas and activity centres. This population pressure sets the context for natural resource management. Melbourne 2030 lays out a rational approach to land-use allocation based on a comprehensive assessment of the issues. It establishes an urban growth boundary and formalises the existence of the green wedges around Melbourne. It has various implications for the RCS. These include increased intensity of urban runoff due to reduced areas of porosity (more hard surfaces), ‘spillover’ urban growth with likely increased population pressures along the coast, in rural towns and adjoining rural residential developments, and management of the green wedge zones.
- 21st Century Melbourne: a WaterSmart City – the water resource management strategy for Melbourne, which recognises that water conservation is an important component of Melbourne’s sustainable future. It will help the RCS achieve its aims through increasing consumer awareness about the importance of our water resource.
- Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan, which facilitates the coordination of planning and resource management activities to target key desired environmental outcomes for the Bay.
- Linking People and Spaces, which is Parks Victoria’s strategy for managing Melbourne’s open space. It provides the foundation for consideration of land assets in the RCS.
- Port Phillip and Westernport Native Vegetation Plan, which will assess and prioritise the remnant native vegetation in this region and identify priority actions for its protection and enhancement. The plan will lead the implementation of Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management Framework in this region.
- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Weed Action Plan,

which clarifies the responsibilities for public and private land managers in this region regarding weed management, lists priority weeds and sets targets for their management

- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Rabbit Action Plan, which clarifies the responsibilities for public and private land managers in this region regarding the control of rabbits and sets priorities for investment in rabbit control activities.
- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy which will assess the values and risks of rivers and streams across the whole region and set priorities for the cooperative management and restoration of rivers by Government and communities. The plan will lead the implementation of the Victorian River Health Strategy in this region.
- Strategy for the Support and Coordination of Landcare and Community Groups in the Port Phillip and Westernport Region, which identifies issues impacting on volunteer community groups in relation to natural resource management. It aims to strengthen partnerships and assist groups to secure funding, to achieve their goals to improve the health of catchments.

3.3 Stakeholders in the management of catchment assets

Numerous agencies, organisations and groups have direct and indirect interests in the management of land and water resources in the Port Phillip and Western Port region. In terms of expertise and resources this presents tremendous problem-solving opportunities. In terms of decision-making it highlights complex relationships and competing interests.

Thus, helping the region's land and water managers work together is important work for the Catchment Management Authority. A fundamental aim for the RCS is to guide purposeful and effective action. There follows a list of some of the region's major land and water stakeholders, with a description of the roles it is anticipated they will take in helping implement the RCS.

Australian Government agencies

- *Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry*

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry [DAFF] prepares and provides incentives and assistance for the implementation of national agricultural, food, fisheries and forest industry policies. It will be able to help implement the RCS through:

- its expertise in setting national standards and helping fund sustainable use of natural resources across whole farm production and marketing systems
- its role as joint manager and investor for the Natural Heritage Trust.

- *Department of Environment and Heritage*

The Department of Environment and Heritage [DEH] will play a critical role in supporting implementation of the RCS through:

- developing and implementing policy for the protection of environments and environmental assets of national significance
- its role as joint manager and investor [with DAFF] for Australian Government investment through the Natural Heritage Trust
- its role in providing investment funds directly to community groups through Envirofund
- its development and administration of the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

State Government agencies and authorities

- *Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority (CMA)*

The CMA is a community-based Board appointed by the Minister for Environment under the provisions of the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. Under the Act, the CMA is responsible for the development and implementation of the RCS. Other core functions of the CMA include:

- promoting cooperation in the management of land and water resources
- advising on regional priorities
- advising on matters relating to catchment and land protection
- advising on the condition of land and water resources, and
- promoting community awareness and understanding of the importance of land and water resources, their sustainable use, conservation and rehabilitation.

The recent release of the Water White Paper Securing Our Water Future Together, has maintained these roles for the CMA and re-affirmed the CMAs role as an organisation independent of other Government agencies and responsible for strategic planning and priority setting in relation to catchment management for the region. The CMA is also obligated to engage key stakeholder organisations and community sectors

Fundamental to better management and planning is the recognition that the environment, including our cultural and natural heritage, is everyone's business.



in regional planning regarding catchment management. The CMA utilises various mechanisms for engaging community sectors across the region and seeks to continually assess its mechanisms and identify new ways that improve communication and coordination

- *Central Coastal Board (CCB)*

The Central Coastal Board was established in 1996 under the provisions of the Coastal Management Act 1995. The CCB provides strategic coastal planning advice to the State Minister for Environment with the aim of implementing the Victorian Coastal Strategy in the Central Region. The CCB and CMA expect to work in close cooperation to plan and invest in RCS actions.

- *Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)*

DSE's mission is to help prepare and lead the implementation of State Government policy for the sustainable use of natural resources in ways that create environmental, social and economic benefits. DSE provides state-wide policy, administrative support and resources for the management of many of the natural resources and built assets for which the CMA is expected to coordinate action at a regional level. These include catchment management, land stewardship, biodiversity and heritage conservation, and planning for sustainable cities and towns.

- *Department of Primary Industries (DPI)*

DPI aims to support the sustainable development of primary industries for the benefit of Victoria. It is committed to driving the adoption of resource-efficient technologies and improving the environmental technologies capability of primary industries. DPI plays a crucial role in policy development, identification of emerging issues, educating communities and helping them manage change associated with industry development, natural hazards (drought, disease, flood, fire), resource management and environmental issues.

- *Melbourne Water (MW)*

Owned by the Victorian Government, Melbourne Water manages Melbourne's water supply catchments, removes and treats most of Melbourne's sewage and manages waterways, floodplains, environmental water reserve and major drainage systems for the region. The Water White Paper Securing Our Water Future Together, has recently established Melbourne Water as the waterway, drainage and floodplain management authority for the whole of the Port Phillip and Western Port region, and also as the manager of the environmental water reserve for this region.

- *Southern Rural Water (SRW)*

SRW is responsible for rural water supply across southern Victoria, from the Great Divide to the coast. In the Port Phillip and Western Port region this includes the management of some large dams and two irrigation districts, as well as the licensing of surface and groundwater extractions and the establishment of water supply protection areas and groundwater management plans

- *Retail water authorities*

The three urban water authorities (South East Water, Yarra Valley Water and City West Water) have operated the water distribution and sewerage systems for the Melbourne metropolitan area since a restructuring of Melbourne's water industry in 1994. Most of the water for retail sale is supplied by Melbourne Water, although some recycled water is supplied directly to customers by the urban retail water authorities.

The rural urban water authorities (Western Port Water, South Gippsland Water, Western Water, Central Highlands Water) are also responsible for water distribution and sewerage systems, but are different as they serve customer bases from around 8,000 to 99,000 properties. Geographic areas are generally larger than the metropolitan retail territory and water supplies for non-metropolitan urban authorities come from a mixture of sources - bulk supply from rural authorities, significant storage areas of their own, and/or groundwater.

- *Parks Victoria (PV)*

Parks Victoria manages a significant estate of terrestrial and marine parks and reserves and is the recreational manager of Western Port and Port Phillip Bay and major waterways. Parks Victoria also plays an integral role in the planning of equitable open space access in the region.

- *Environment Protection Authority (EPA)*

The Environment Protection Authority has a responsibility to enable the protection of the uses and values of Victoria's environment by employing a range of measures consistent with its responsibilities under the Environment Protection Act 1970. The EPA develops and administers a range of statutory tools, such as state environment protection policies, to control pollution on land, in water and air, and industrial noise.

- *Trust For Nature (TFN)*

A statutory body established under the Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972 to conserve native vegetation and wildlife in Victoria. It purchases private land to preserve areas of ecological significance, natural, historic or scientific interest. It also enables private landholders to protect high quality remnant vegetation on their land by placing a conservation covenant on a specific property or piece of land.

- *Marine Safety Victoria*

Marine Safety Victoria is the State's marine safety agency and is responsible for administration of the Marine Act 1988 and the Marine Regulations 1999. It develops and manages the Victorian marine pollution contingency plan.

- *Neighbouring Catchment Management Authorities*

The Port Phillip and Western Port region shares its boundary with four of Victoria's other Catchment Management Authorities: West Gippsland, Goulburn Broken, North Central and Corangamite. These neighbouring authorities will be important partners in catchment management programs that deal with cross-regional and statewide projects.



- *Local councils*

The local government bodies in the Port Phillip and Western Port region (Figure 2) are major investors, planners and project managers in natural resource management, individually and collectively. Local government planning schemes, environmental policies and strategies play a key role in ensuring protection and enhancement of natural resources. Councils are also contributors to natural resource management through local laws and regulatory activities, community engagement and education, on-ground works employing Council and community resources, and monitoring and reporting of environmental change at a local level.

- *Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)*

The MAV is an association of Victorian local government authorities that enables them to communicate and act cooperatively on relevant matters. It operates and supports various sub-groupings of councils, and forums on specific topics.





Community groups

- *Landcare groups and networks*

The region has around 70 Landcare groups, some of which are known collectively as 'networks.' These groups mainly work in rural areas on private land. Members are generally volunteers focusing on sustainable land use and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

- *Waterway Committees*

Waterway Committees such as the three Committees that make up the Northern Waterways Group – Darebin Creek Management Committee, Moonee Ponds Coordinating Committee and Merri Creek Management Committee bring together different levels of government and community members to deal cooperatively on catchment issues and achieve an overall improvement in the condition of waterways.

- *Other groups*

More than 400 community environment groups – more than in any other region of Victoria – are active in the region, generally working on public land and commonly with the backing of the public land manager/owner (usually local councils or Parks Victoria). They include 'Friends' groups, CoastAction/Coastcare and Waterwatch groups, foreshore committees of management and the like.

Environmental organisations

- *Environment Victoria (EV)*

Victoria's peak non-government environment organisation, dedicated to helping local and regional environment groups working on issues of local or regional importance.

- *Greening Australia Victoria (GAV)*

A not-for-profit community-based organisation which forms a federation of similar organisations throughout Australia. Greening Australia Victoria works in partnership with landholders, the community, government and business to tackle environmental challenges and opportunities in a practical, apolitical, scientific way.

- *Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA)*

A group that involves the community in conservation projects in urban, regional and remote Australia. Projects include tree planting, seed collection, endangered species protection, weed control, flora and fauna surveys, walking trail construction, fencing and environmental monitoring. It organises volunteers to complete conservation projects across Australia each year, resulting in positive environmental outcomes, increased community participation, conservation skills and awareness.

- *Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)*

An independent, non-profit organisation formed to protect Victoria's biodiversity through a representative national parks and reserves system. As well as its strategic campaigns for nature conservation and biodiversity it runs Victoria's largest bushwalking and outdoor activities program.

- *Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)*

A non-profit, membership-based environment group that takes a solution-oriented approach to environmental issues such as natural heritage protection and sustainable cities, and seeks to form partnerships with community groups, governments and business to achieve ecologically sustainable results. It lobbies governments and works to raise the level of awareness of environmental issues within Australia.

- *Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation*

A membership-based organisation established to implement the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, which was accepted into UNESCO's worldwide network of Biosphere Reserves in 2002. This is Australia's 13th Biosphere Reserve and the first established for some 20 years. The objectives of the Biosphere Reserve Foundation are to protect biodiversity, to provide for scientific research and monitoring and to foster improved sustainability approaches to a range of industrial, commercial, educational, cultural and social challenges.

- *International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)*

ICLEI is a membership association of cities, towns, counties, metropolitan governments and local government associations. Its mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability. Major ICLEI programs in this region include the Cities for Climate Protection and the Water Campaign.



Rural and urban businesses and industries

- *Primary producers*

In the region primary producers make a significant contribution to regional, state and national economies as well as managing some 45 per cent of the region's land. The condition of the catchment assets of this region is therefore significantly influenced by how primary producers and other landowners manage their land.

- *Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF)*

This body serves and advances the commercial, environmental and social interests of Victorian farmers. It seeks to do this by creating a favourable economic environment for agriculture, encouraging sustainable farming practices, increasing public understanding of the importance of agriculture and improving access to human and community services for farmers.

- *Agricultural industry associations*

A number of these groups represent agriculturalists with similar requirements and pressures, such as strawberry growers, vigneron, beef producers and vegetable growers. Some commodity groups are part of the VFF while others act independently. These groups have a variety of roles, but generally encompass market development, policy and lobbying, improving productivity, environmentally sustainable production and networking.

- *Agribusiness forums*

These have emerged in recent years as a means of facilitating cooperation in the agribusiness sector and of engaging other important organisations (like local government) in a particular area (such as the Yarra Valley). Issues covered include regional branding, links with other sectors, integrated farm management, support for farmers and education, training and employment.

- *Forestry companies*

The harvesting of timber resources is carried out on public land (State parks) and private land. In both situations, there can be significant benefits for and/or impacts on catchment assets depending on the siting and management of forestry coupes and plantations.

- *Mining and extractive industries*

The region contains mineral resources that are extracted, usually from quarries. Companies such as Barro, Boral Resources, CSR, Nubrik and Pioneer all have operations here.

- *Land developers*

The urbanised nature of the region means there are constant incremental changes from rural to residential, commercial or industrial land uses. Development companies range from government bodies such as the former Urban and Regional Land Corporation (now merged with the Docklands Authority and known as VicUrban) to many private developers. Indications about guidelines for land use can be found in Melbourne 2030.

- *Fishing industry organisations*

The region sustains a significant recreational fishery, a growing aquaculture industry and a commercial fishing industry targeting a variety of species in the region's inland waterways, estuaries, Port Phillip Bay, Western Port and near-shore ocean. These industries are represented by the Fisheries Co-Management Council, Seafood Industry Victoria, the Victorian recreational fishing peak body VRFish and the Victorian Aquaculture Council.

- *Businesses and corporations*

Around 180,000 business establishments, represented by a number of peak bodies, employ more than two million people in the region.

Indigenous organisations

- *Traditional owners (tribes of the Kulin Nation)*

The term 'traditional owners' is used to describe people or groups with a traditional (or ancestral) connection to a particular area. This connection may transfer to interests in the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage values within their area of interest. It is currently accepted that the Port Phillip and Western Port region was traditionally occupied by speakers of the Wurundjeri, Boonerwung, Wathaurong and Taungerong languages. These groups formed part of a larger confederacy or language grouping known as the Kulin Nation.

- *Cooperatives/local communities*

Four cooperatives/local communities are listed under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 as having decision-making responsibilities for Indigenous cultural heritage for defined areas in the region. They are the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Inc., Coranderrk Koori Cooperative Ltd, Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd and West Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd. While the Coranderrk Koori Cooperative Ltd has been allocated an area under the Act, no such organisation currently exists, and the Minister personally signs all agreements. Conversely, the Taungerong Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Victorian Boonerwung Elders Land Council Aboriginal Corporation are now in the Schedule, but do not have a defined area of responsibility.

- *Regional cultural heritage programs*

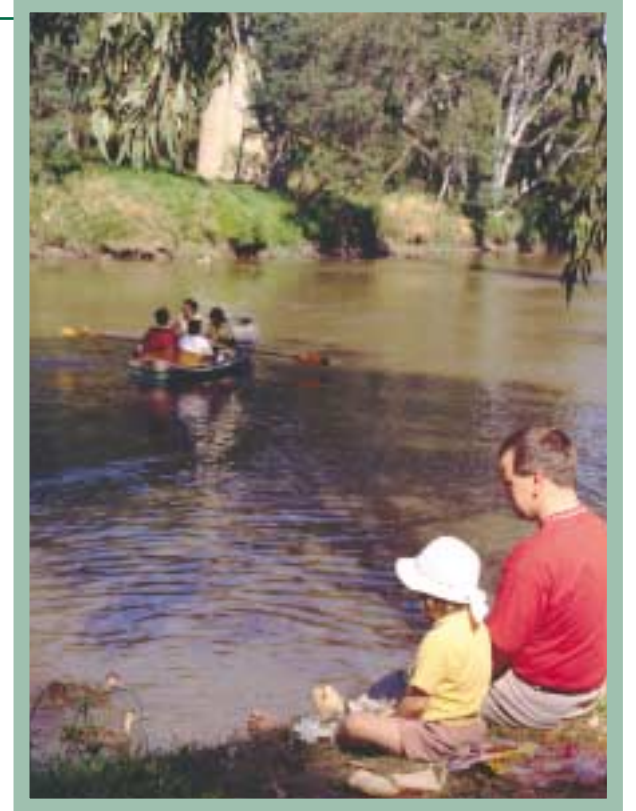
Regional Cultural Heritage Program (RCHP) offices undertake the regional coordination of day-to-day activities in cultural heritage management across Victoria. The Port Phillip and Western Port areas are within the area managed by the Central Victorian Cultural Heritage Project (formerly Kulin Nations) with some overlap into the Gippsland and South West and Wimmera RCHP areas.

Education and research organisations

- *Primary, secondary and tertiary education*

Primary and secondary organisations are the major source of education for the population, and reach or have reached most of the region's inhabitants. This process provides a major opportunity to educate current and future students, and through them their parents, about the importance of environmental issues and sustainable behaviour.

Tertiary education provides more advanced knowledge on natural resource management issues as well as providing a research framework for students and staff. This comes in the form of research-based qualifications, encouragement



for publishing research material and the establishment of research centres.

- *Research centres*

Research is carried out in the region under a number of organisational arrangements. The CSIRO is established purely for research purposes. The Cooperative Research Centre Program is a Commonwealth Government funding initiative to boost the competitiveness of industry and capture the benefits of research for Australians. The CRC Program brings together researchers from universities, research organisations, government agencies and industry for strategic collaborative research.

The broader community

The households and residents of the region benefit from the region's catchment assets as well as putting pressure on those resources. Therefore, natural resource management literally begins at home, with households being able to manage their consumption in terms of volume, using environmentally friendly products, minimising waste, disposing of it correctly and increasing reuse, and providing habitat for native flora and fauna.