

## FOREWORD



The 2004-2009 Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy is the culmination of two years work. It is a plan which will increasingly protect Port Phillip Bay, Western Port, the waterways and their catchments from the impacts of a growing population, from the changing use of land from rural to urban and from larger to smaller properties, many intensively managed.

The RCS Targets and Actions are built upon global sustainability principles embracing economic prosperity, social equity and environmental care. The 97 hard-edged actions respond to the immediate and longer-term risks to many of Victoria's most treasured and highly valued natural assets.

These include the bays and their beaches; the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers; the Yarra Ranges and the Macedon Ranges and their associated forests and parklands, which are the source of most of Melbourne's high quality drinking water; the highly threatened remnant grasslands and other rare vegetation communities and many species of wildlife whose continued existence depends on protecting and expanding their diminishing habitat.

The region is also famous for its productive rural landscapes that support flourishing, high value horticultural and agricultural industries.

This is the first time that a single plan has been prepared for our two valuable bays and all of the catchments that drain into them; a strategy whose priorities will guide the investment by Commonwealth and State Governments in natural resources management through the Natural Heritage Trust and other funding streams.

Identifying the relationships between our catchment assets and the activities that threaten them has been a substantial task.

Now government and non-government agencies, industry and community groups all have a role to play together with the CMA in implementing the Regional Catchment Strategy. Each of the 97 actions designates a lead agency and the partners responsible for their planning and implementation. Melbourne Water, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Department of Primary Industries, the EPA, each of the region's 38 Councils and several other agencies all have designated roles.

I commend the commitment and hard work of the staff and Board of Port Phillip and Westernport CMA in compiling this Regional Catchment Strategy, and also thank the many people from our partnering agencies, who have provided technical advice and assistance to the CMA. Their continued support will be important over the coming years as we work together to implement the RCS.

We now have a regional plan based on a good, although far from complete, understanding of what needs to be done in our catchment. With continued support from governments and the private sector we can now be confident the health of our natural assets will improve and the following generations will be the beneficiaries.

**Dr Mick Lumb**  
**Chairman**  
**Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority**

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