Victoria State Government
Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Annual Report 2023–24

Contents

[Secretary’s message 5](#_Toc183345967)

[Key initiatives and projects 2023–24 9](#_Toc183345968)

[Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community 9](#_Toc183345969)

[Productive and sustainably used natural resources 9](#_Toc183345970)

[Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment 10](#_Toc183345971)

[Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services 10](#_Toc183345972)

[Productive and effective land management 10](#_Toc183345973)

[Safe and sustainable water resources 10](#_Toc183345974)

[Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people,   
property and the environment 11](#_Toc183345975)

[About DEECA 12](#_Toc183345976)

[DEECA’s vision 12](#_Toc183345977)

[Strategic framework 12](#_Toc183345978)

[Direct costs attributable to machinery of government changes 13](#_Toc183345979)

[Community charter 14](#_Toc183345980)

[Sustainable Development Goals 15](#_Toc183345981)

[First Peoples Self-Determination 18](#_Toc183345982)

[Emergency management 19](#_Toc183345983)

[Our ministers 21](#_Toc183345984)

[Our executive 22](#_Toc183345985)

[Our functions and services 27](#_Toc183345986)

[Governance 32](#_Toc183345987)

[Departmental objectives, indicators and outputs 36](#_Toc183345988)

[Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community 37](#_Toc183345989)

[Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment 41](#_Toc183345990)

[Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services 57](#_Toc183345991)

[Productive and effective land management 70](#_Toc183345992)

[Safe and sustainable water resources 82](#_Toc183345993)

[Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies 91](#_Toc183345994)

[Productive and sustainably used natural resources 99](#_Toc183345995)

[Departmental Objective Indicator performance 109](#_Toc183345996)

[Discontinued measures for 2023–24 123](#_Toc183345997)

[Discontinued departmental objective indicators for 2023–24 124](#_Toc183345998)

[Discontinued operations 124](#_Toc183345999)

[Our people 125](#_Toc183346000)

[DEECA’s Workforce 129](#_Toc183346001)

[Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing 133](#_Toc183346002)

[Diversity and inclusion 144](#_Toc183346003)

[Financial review 154](#_Toc183346004)

[Current year financial review 155](#_Toc183346005)

[Climate-related risk disclosure statement 159](#_Toc183346006)

[Climate-related risk governance 160](#_Toc183346007)

[Climate-related risk strategy 161](#_Toc183346008)

[Climate-related risk management 164](#_Toc183346009)

[Climate-related metrics and targets 165](#_Toc183346010)

[Leading climate action for Victoria 166](#_Toc183346011)

[Environmental performance 167](#_Toc183346012)

[DEECA achieving net zero emissions 167](#_Toc183346013)

[Green Team program 167](#_Toc183346014)

[Environmental Management System (EMS) 168](#_Toc183346015)

[Reporting boundary for environmental data 168](#_Toc183346016)

[Greenhouse gas emissions 169](#_Toc183346017)

[Electricity production and consumption 170](#_Toc183346018)

[Stationary fuel use 172](#_Toc183346019)

[Transportation 173](#_Toc183346020)

[Total energy use 177](#_Toc183346021)

[Sustainable buildings and infrastructure 178](#_Toc183346022)

[Sustainable procurement 179](#_Toc183346023)

[Water consumption 179](#_Toc183346024)

[Waste and recycling 180](#_Toc183346025)

[Legislative and other information 182](#_Toc183346026)

[Major Entities 182](#_Toc183346027)

[Administrative offices in relation to the department 185](#_Toc183346028)

[Acts administered 185](#_Toc183346029)

[Implementation of the Local Jobs First Policy 193](#_Toc183346030)

[Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework 195](#_Toc183346031)

[Disclosure of government advertising expenditure 196](#_Toc183346032)

[Consultancies 197](#_Toc183346033)

[Reviews and studies expenditure 198](#_Toc183346034)

[Information and communication technology expenditure 202](#_Toc183346035)

[Disclosure of major contracts 202](#_Toc183346036)

[Disclosure of emergency procurement 202](#_Toc183346037)

[Freedom of Information 203](#_Toc183346038)

[Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner 206](#_Toc183346039)

[Compliance with the *Building Act 1993* 207](#_Toc183346040)

[Competitive neutrality policy 210](#_Toc183346041)

[Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* 210](#_Toc183346042)

[Compliance with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012* 212](#_Toc183346043)

[Compliance with the *Disability Act 2006* 212](#_Toc183346044)

[Disclosure of procurement complaints 213](#_Toc183346045)

[Compliance with the *Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017* 213](#_Toc183346046)

[Compliance with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* 214](#_Toc183346047)

[Compliance with the *Melbourne Strategic Assessment   
(Environment Mitigation Levy) Act 2020* 220](#_Toc183346048)

[Compliance with the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* 221](#_Toc183346049)

[Compliance with the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* 224](#_Toc183346050)

[Compliance with DataVic Access Policy 224](#_Toc183346051)

[Water Resource Assessment Program 225](#_Toc183346052)

[Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) maturity assessment 236](#_Toc183346053)

[Additional information available 242](#_Toc183346054)

**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 2024.

**John Bradley**

Secretary  
Department of Energy, Environment   
and Climate Action  
29 October 2024

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.

© The State of Victoria Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action October 2024

Creative Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence, visit the [Creative Commons website](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, and the Victorian Government and Department logos.

ISBN 2205-8931 (print)   
ISBN 2205-894X (pdf)

**Disclaimer**

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

**Accessibility**

To receive this document in an alternative format, phone the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au, or contact [National Relay Service](https://www.accesshub.gov.au/) on 133 677. Available at [DEECA website](http://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/).

# Secretary’s message

This annual report showcases the dedicated efforts of our department staff, who have closely collaborated with First Nations peoples, local governments, community representatives, industry partners, and our portfolio entities to undertake our key functions. Together, we have made significant progress towards the achievement of the Victorian Government’s priority outcomes in DEECA portfolios. These span agriculture and forestry, climate action, earth resources, emergency management, energy, environment and circular economy, land management and water.

During 2023–24, our staff showed a strong commitment to managing emergencies, while also delivering on substantial programs. DEECA staff responded to high pathogenicity avian influenza outbreaks involving a comprehensive surveillance program and working closely with poultry owners and industry to contain and eradicate the virus. Our Agriculture Victoria teams collaborated with the apiary industry to successfully prevent the incursion of Varroa mite into Victoria, safeguarding the state’s honeybees and pollination-dependent industries after its detection in New South Wales in June 2022. Alongside our Victorian statewide bushfire preparedness and response efforts, we deployed 148 firefighters to support wildfire operations in Canada and assisted interstate emergency response efforts in Queensland and New South Wales.

We continued to strengthen our commitment to Aboriginal self-determination, ensuring cultural safety, and partnering with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians. During 2023–24, we commenced preparations to ensure DEECA is ‘Treaty Ready’ and able to actively support Government’s participation in Treaty negotiations. We supported 29 cultural burns on public land and delivered the Traditional Owner Flood Recovery Grants Program in response to the 2022 flood event, providing grants to 15 Traditional Owner Groups for their self-determined flood recovery needs. We increased our cultural safety and cultural competence as an agency, with 45 cultural safety training sessions reaching more than 900 staff.

During 2023–24, we continued to lead whole of government delivery of Victoria’s climate action and build the state’s resilience to climate change. We brought the net zero emissions target forward from 2050 to 2045 through the Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy and Storage Targets) Act 2024. We partnered with our stakeholders including councils, public land managers and schools to plant over 357,000 trees (to 30 June 2024), to address urban heat risk.

Led by Agriculture Victoria, DEECA staff collaborated with primary producers, local businesses and communities to support the growth and security of Victoria’s $20 billion agricultural sector. We increased the awareness and consumption of Victorian produce by featuring a diverse range of producer profiles on the Vic Grown website and by supporting 17 applications for local events that will showcase Victorian food and beverages through the Regional Activation Grant Program. In launching the Agriculture Victoria Connect client portal in April 2024, we completed the transition to self-service functionality for agricultural chemical permits. We delivered grants to improve the capacity of land managers to manage established weeds and pests through the Partnerships against Pests program and supported farmers to take action in emissions reduction and climate adaption through a regular schedule of climate webinars, which reached approximately 2,000 farmers, supply chains, services providers and industry organisations.

We safeguarded and supported Victoria’s agriculture and regional communities while achieving environmental outcomes and fulfilling our commitments under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. As at 30 June 2024, we secured 826 gigalitres (GL) (77%) of Victoria’s 1,075 GL Basin Plan water recovery target and are delivering the remainder through operational projects, the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project and the Constraints Management Program. This recovered water has been delivered to more than 120 Victorian sites to benefit local plants, animals, and ecosystems, restoring Living Murray icon sites such as the Hattah Lakes and Barmah-Millewa Forest. Following the Commonwealth Government’s announcement in August 2023 to use water purchases to deliver an additional 450 GL of water above the Basin Plan target, we worked with communities to design Victoria’s Planning our Basin Future Together prospectus. Released in May 2024, the prospectus outlines our commitment and approach towards recovering the additional 450 GL while minimising socioeconomic impact and placing communities at the centre of decision making.

We have made considerable progress towards creating a healthier, more resilient, and biodiverse environment. As at 30 June 2024, Victorian’s Container Deposit Scheme had more than 628 million containers returned since its launch, with 564 operational refund collection points, putting more than $62.8 million back into the pockets of Victorians and processing an average of around 17 million eligible cans, cartons, and bottles each week. Meanwhile, we progressed restoration of natural environments through the Bushbank program, approving $6 million in funding for 19 Traditional Owner-led projects, which aim to address biodiversity loss and climate change while enabling Traditional Owners to participate in healing Country.

We have collaborated closely with Traditional Owners, public land managers, and the community to sustainably manage and protect the state’s public land. We completed development of 7 suburban pocket parks and carried out coastal protection works at Phillip Island, Point Lonsdale, Port Welshpool, and Marengo. Additionally, we introduced Victoria’s first statewide Marine Biodiversity Values Map to aid environmental assessments and planning decisions for the state’s marine and coastal areas.

Efforts to mitigate the impact of major bushfires and other emergencies on people, property, and the environment continued. During 2032–24, FFMVic partners conducted 316 burns, treating a total of 138,454 hectares of land to keep the statewide bushfire risk below 70%. In May 2024, we released Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy to enhance Victoria’s bushfire management outcomes by directing resources and investment to where they will be most effective. Skilled staff completed 2,082 kilometres of road improvements and built 10 new bridges to improve access and egress for heavy vehicles and equipment responding to bushfires.

A broad range of energy initiatives designed to enhance energy efficiency, bolster consumer protections, and improve affordability were implemented during 2023–24. This included delivering key reforms in the Gas Substitution Roadmap, including phasing out gas connections for new homes that require planning permits from 1 January 2024. Solar Victoria approved more than 78,000 rebate applications for households to install solar panels and energy efficient hot water systems. The State Electricity Commission was established in October 2023 to lead Victoria’s renewable energy transition with a focus on supply, homes and people.

We collaborated with water corporations, catchment management authorities, government agencies, industry, Traditional Owners, and the community to ensure Victoria’s water resources are safe and sustainable, meeting future urban, rural, and environmental needs. DEECA provided funding of $6 million for revegetation works on urban rivers and creeks via the Green Links grants program to protect waterways so our wildlife can thrive. We improved the health of Victoria’s waterways through supporting catchment management authorities in delivering 19,500 hectares of improved catchment stewardship and more than 11,000 hectares of waterway vegetation works.

To unlock the full potential of Victoria’s earth resources, the Resources Victoria Strategy (Towards 2030) was released in March 2024. This strategy outlined key priorities, including to increase investment, build confidence, and secure a steady supply of quarry materials vital for new infrastructure and construction, while also supporting Victoria’s transition to net zero by 2045. In August 2023, amendments to the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 were passed in Parliament, establishing a new risk-based regulatory framework for mining and quarrying in Victoria. To meet future demand for quarry materials and help reduce prices, the department increased approvals for new quarries, resulting in approximately 300 million tonnes of new quarry resources being approved in 2023–24.

Commercial native timber harvesting in Victoria’s state forests ended on 1 January 2024. Our Forestry Transition Program is supporting Victoria’s native timber industry transition by providing support packages for forestry businesses and implementing long-term programs to help timber communities transition to new, sustainable industries. In 2023–24, this support included approving grants to Baw Baw Shire Council for projects in renewable energy, the visitor economy, and education, and to Murrindindi Shire Council for small business development and community leadership initiatives.

In 2023–24, we continued efforts to make DEECA a safer, more diverse and inclusive workplace. Our employment programs offered dedicated pathways for students with disability, those identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and individuals with refugee and asylum seeker status. In November 2023, we launched the Family Connect and Support program to better support the mental health and wellbeing of staff and their families. We continued to address gender-based bias and challenged stereotypes in fire and emergency management roles through various initiatives, including unconscious bias training for over 300 Forest Fire Management Victoria leaders. Additionally, in August 2023, we launched our new leadership model to help create a culture that puts our people at the centre of everything we do, strengthening our organisational culture and delivering better outcomes for ourselves and the community we serve.

We take pride in delivering these initiatives that drive improvements for communities across Victoria, and we extend our sincere thanks to our stakeholders and portfolio partners for their invaluable support and collaboration.

**John Bradley**

Secretary   
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

29 October 2024

# Key initiatives and projects 2023–24

In 2023–24 DEECA focused on the following outcomes (also known as our departmental objectives in Budget Papers) for Victorian communities:

* Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community
* Productive and sustainably used natural resources
* 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

A subset of key achievements delivered for Victorian communities in 2023–24, grouped by outcome, include:

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

* bringing the net zero emissions reduction target forward from 2050 to 2045
* delivering the 2021 [Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/greenhouse-gas-emissions) in November 2023

amending the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to require planning authorities to consider climate change – including climate change hazards and emissions reduction targets – when making certain planning decisions.

## Productive and sustainably used natural resources

* supporting 17 applications for events across Victoria that showcase local produce through the Regional Activation Grant Program
* launching the Agriculture Victoria Connect client portal in April 2024, completing the transition to self-service functionality for agricultural chemical permits
* delivering innovations to Victoria’s agriculture industry through new technologies such as methane and carbon dioxide sensors to measure dairy cow greenhouse gas emissions at the Ellinbank SmartFarm and auto retractable netting to protect orchards at the Tatura SmartFarm

releasing the [Extractive Resources Supply and Demand Study 2022–2030](https://resources.vic.gov.au/projects/extractive-resources-strategy/extractive-resources-supply-and-demand-study#:~:text=Extractive%20Resources%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Study%202022%2D2030,63.7%20million%20in%202020%2D2021.) in August 2023 to inform actions to secure the extractive resources needed for Victoria’s growth.

## Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment

* supporting 80 part-time Landcare facilitator positions to enable the effective participation of 740 Landcare and environmental volunteer groups, for activities that protect, enhance and restore the natural environment
* progressing work towards restoring more than 20,000 hectares of land through the [BushBank program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/bushbank)

launching the Container Deposit Scheme, which has facilitated the return of more than 628 million eligible drink cans, bottles and cartons across 564 operational refund collection points since its launch on 1 November 2023 to 30 June 2024.

## Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services

* progressing Victoria’s energy transition through the legislation of offshore wind targets of at least 2 gigawatts (GW) by 2032; 4GW by 2035 and 9GW by 2040
* delivering key reforms in the Gas Substitution Roadmap, including phasing out gas connections for new homes requiring planning permits from 1 January 2024
* establishing the State Electricity Commission in October 2023

approving a record 78,626 rebate applications for households to install solar panels and energy efficient hot water systems.

## Productive and effective land management

* completing 7 suburban pocket parks and progressing upgrades at existing parks including Seaford Wetlands and Toolern Creek Regional Park
* delivering coastal protection works at Phillip Island, Point Lonsdale, Port Welshpool and Marengo

delivering Victoria’s first statewide Marine Biodiversity Values Map to support environmental assessments and planning decisions across Victoria’s marine and coastal environment.

## Safe and sustainable water resources

* increasing community resilience to flooding through the allocation of more than $2.9 million to 13 successful funding applications for flood studies through the Building Flood Resilience in Victoria initiative
* improving the health of Victoria’s waterways by supporting catchment management authorities in delivering 19,500 hectares of improved catchment stewardship

delivering priorities in the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, including completion of the Wonthaggi Stormwater Harvesting project in November 2023 and returning water to Traditional Owners for self-determined use.

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

* releasing [Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-bushfire-management-strategy) in May 2024 to drive Victoria towards improved outcomes for bushfire management, directing resources and investment to where they will have the greatest impact
* delivering 316 planned burns on 138,454 hectares of land to reduce Victoria’s bushfire risk
* transitioning 50 fixed term contract roles and 50 seasonal firefighting roles into ongoing year-round Forest and Fire Operations Officer roles, bolstering the firefighting workforce to better protect forests and neighbouring communities.
* In addition to our planned activities, throughout 2023–24 DEECA staff rapidly responded to emerging government priorities including:
* delivery of scaled up support to workers, businesses and communities following the Victorian Government’s announcement on 23 May 2023 to transition away from native timber logging earlier than planned on 1 January 2024
* finalising the wind up of native timber harvesting operations, including the cessation of VicForests on 30 June 2024

responding to various emergency management and event activities relating to events such as bushfires, floods and biosecurity threats including the avian influenza outbreak. Details of DEECA’s emergency response efforts are available on page 12.

A full report of our performance against these outcomes is included from page 23.

# About DEECA

DEECA brings together Victoria’s climate action, energy and resources, environment, water and agriculture portfolios to maximise connections between the environment, community, industry and economy.

DEECA contributes to the government’s commitment to a stronger, fairer, better Victoria by supporting the natural environment to promote economic growth and ensure sustainable communities and industries that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The department employs approximately 6,000 staff in 86 locations across the state. To best serve Victorians, DEECA strives to build a positive organisational culture built on strong leadership, diversity, collaboration, innovation and developing its staff. DEECA’s vision for diversity and inclusion is a workplace culture that embraces individual differences in all forms and fosters innovation.

## DEECA’s vision

The department’s vision is to support thriving, productive and sustainable communities, environments and industries across Victoria by:

* listening to, working alongside and partnering with the community
* leveraging the connectivity between its portfolios to respond to the impacts of climate change and protecting the natural environment in a productive, collaborative and coordinated way

maximising opportunities for attracting investment, creating and maintaining jobs, and developing regional economies by supporting sustainable industries.

## Strategic framework

**Our vision:**

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

**Our values:**

DEECA’s values align with the core public sector values – responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights.

**Our outcomes:**

DEECA’s business in 2023–24 focussed on achieving DEECA’s outcomes:

* **Agriculture and Forestry** – Productive and sustainably used natural resources
* **Climate Action** – Net zero emission, climate-ready economy and community
* **Earth Resources** – Sustainable development of Victoria’s earth resources
* **Emergency Management** – Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies
* **Energy** – Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services
* **Environment and Resource Recovery** – Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment
* **Land Management** – Productive and effective land management

**Water** – Safe, sustainable and productive water resources.

**Our organisational pillars:**

* high performance and delivery for government
* Aboriginal self-determination is enabled
* trusted leadership and inclusive culture
* strong engagement, partnerships and service excellence

empowered people with a One-DEECA mindset.

## 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 incurred the following additional direct costs in 2023–24.

| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | Costs incurred (2023–24) | Anticipated future costs (1 July 2024 onwards) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Direct costs | – | – |
| Consultants and contractors | 734,181 | – |
| Relocation | – | – |
| Telephony | – | – |
| IT and records management | 4,624,472 | – |
| Rebranding | 140,389 | – |
| Redundancies | – | – |
| New staff | 327,558 | – |
| Other | – | – |
| **Total** | **5,826,600** | **–** |

Direct costs incurred in 2023–24 that were attributable to the December 2022 MoG change mainly relate to engaging contract resources to deliver required system changes, records management and updating signage through routine maintenance. All changes were delivered on a strictly as needed only basis.

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

With the majority of the MoG changes now made, future expenditure is expected to be minimal.

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.

## Community charter

DEECA’s community charter describes what the Victorian community can expect from the department. DEECA recognises that communities are made up of diverse sectors, organisations, rights holders, interest groups, influencers, families and individuals.

DEECA works collaboratively with the community to deliver services and create opportunities that support thriving, productive, and sustainable communities, environments and industries.

In all aspects of our work, we will:

* Be available
* **Issues and place‑based focus**  
  Connect with you where you live, work and play on issues that matter to your communities
* **Accessibility**  
  Make sure we are easy to contact and our information is straightforward and available in a variety of ways
* **Flexibility**  
  Recognise and respect the way you want to work with us and adapt our approach according to needs of individuals, organisations and industries
* Involve and listen
* **Active listening and understanding**  
  Listen to and understand your views and needs, actively seek and respect different opinions
* **Honesty and transparency**  
  Be honest about what’s driving our priorities, what we can and can’t promise to do, our timelines and why decisions have been made
* **Clarity and purposefulness**  
  Be clear about why and how we are engaging, making sure we give you real opportunities to participate, shape decisions and make a difference
* Take action
* **Timely and proactive**  
  Engage with communities as early as we can. Identify opportunities and be responsive to issues and feedback
* **Consistency**  
  Ensure we are consistent in the way we approach decisions
* **Closing the loop**  
  Share outcomes with communities and report back on what we heard, and how we adapted

## Sustainable Development Goals

DEECA’s vision is a thriving, productive and sustainable Victorian community, environment and industry. 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.

Graphic of Sustainable Development Goals.
Text listed below.

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

We contribute to the achievement of SDGs in Victoria by:

* embedding the SDGs across relevant policies, programs, and service delivery work
* 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.

### Showcasing DEECA’s contribution to the SDGs

DEECA is already involved in promoting and delivering sustainable development in Victoria. However, we acknowledge that the SDGs are ambitious and that ‘business as usual’ is not enough. This Annual Report showcases our continued commitment to advancing the goals.

DEECA’s major programs of work in 2023–24 closely aligned with 8 of the SDGs:

* Zero hunger
* Climate action
* Responsible consumption and production
* Sustainable cities and communities
* Affordable and clean energy
* Life on land
* Clean water and sanitation

Decent work and economic growth

This Annual Report articulates how DEECA performs in relation to relevant SDGs. In many sections, 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.

## First Peoples Self-Determination

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.

Through Pupangarli Marnmarnepu (‘Owning our Future’), our Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020–2025, DEECA has formalised its commitment to support self-determination and embeds self-determination in its work. Now in its fourth year, Pupangarli Marnmarnepu continues to build on the foundations of its initial years of implementation.

Key initiatives and actions delivered in 2023–24 that were informed or underpinned by the directions in Pupangarli Marnmarnepu include:

* development of a draft Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum implementation plan, to support the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum to deliver on its strategic priority areas and support the transfer of power and resources back to Traditional Owners
* delivery of an annual survey to gauge and monitor Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA’s progress towards self-determination
* introduction of bi-annual progress reporting to the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum to hold DEECA accountable to its commitments under Pupangarli Marnmarnepu
* funding of Department Liaison Officers until 2027 to support resourcing for Traditional Owners Corporations to engage with DEECA on their priorities and aspirations for Country
* commencing preparations to ensure DEECA is ‘Treaty Ready’ and able to actively support Government’s participation in Treaty negotiations anticipated to commence in late 2024
* leading DEECA’s engagement with the Yoorrook Justice Commission’s historic truth telling process, including preparation of 3 ministerial witnesses and production of around 2,000 documents within requested timeframes, to support the Commission’s Land Injustice inquiry into land, sky and waters
* finalisation and implementation of DEECA’s Pathway Towards an Indigenous Data Sovereignty Policy to promote best practice for the collection, use and management of Indigenous data
* establishment of Cultural Fire Community of Practice and onboarding of Cultural Burn Officers in September 2023 within all DEECA Regions, to assist Traditional Owner Corporations through the planning and approval process for the development and progression of their cultural burn nominations and supporting their training aspirations
* delivery of the Traditional Owner Flood Recovery Grants Program in response to the 2022 flood event, providing grants to 15 Traditional Owner Groups for their self-determined flood recovery needs
* implementation through the Neds Corner Transition Advisory Committee of oversight on actions relating to the implementation of the transfer of Neds Corner Station from Trust for Nature to the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation
* implementation of 7 Native Title and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 related Agreements, including provision of support for 4 Recognition and Settlement Agreements, one Co-operative Management Agreement and 2 Native Title Determinations
* implementation of the new Land Use Activity Portal with the 2 Traditional Owner Groups who have a Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA)
* three Traditional Owner Land Management Board re-appointments
* facilitation of 3 funding agreements to support Joint Management, to involve Traditional Owners in decision-making about the management of land and natural resources in equal partnership with the State of Victoria
* delivery of 45 cultural safety training sessions to more than 900 staff, including targeted training for managers and expansion of foundational Cultural Safety training to include Regional Cultural Awareness training
* continuation of monthly yarning circles (women’s, men’s and mixed business), personal wellbeing sessions, Aboriginal Staff Network meetings, and the introduction of annual forums to support culture and wellbeing of Aboriginal staff

delivery of DEECA and Traditional Owner Corporation Exchange Program, involving 26 participants.

## Emergency management

DEECA is one of several Victorian Government departments and agencies with responsibilities in emergency management. Under the Emergency Management Act 2013, the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan, and relevant portfolio legislation, DEECA has significant emergency management accountabilities across all phases of emergency management: mitigation, response including relief, and recovery. This key accountability is reflected in our Corporate Plan 2023–27 which presents emergency management as a cross-cutting theme throughout DEECA’s outcomes.

DEECA is the responsible agency for emergencies related to biosecurity, energy supply disruption, fire in state forests, national parks and protected public land, dam safety, non-hazardous pollution in inland waters, reticulated water and wastewater disruptions (sewerage), blue-green algae, cetacean stranding, entanglement or vessel strike, wildlife impacted by emergency events and wildlife affected by marine and freshwater pollution.

Actions delivered over 2023–24, grouped by emergency responsibility, include:

### Preparing for and responding to energy supply disruptions

* maintaining an energy emergency workforce, supported by a year-round capability and training program, which grew to 59 personnel in 2023–24
* leading the response to the energy supply disruptions caused by the 13 February 2024 storms, which resulted in more than 530,000 homes and businesses losing power at the peak of the event

supporting the independently led Network Outage Review into the system response to the storms, with a final report to be published in September 2024.

### Preparing for and responding to water sector events including dam safety and water service disruptions

* maintaining a water emergency workforce, with 65 rostered positions across 5 roles under a 365-day roster
* progressing critical actions identified from reviews of past events

clarifying water emergency activation triggers and roles.

### Recovering from the October 2022 flood event

* conducting over 700 threatened species assessments and terrestrial weed control on more than 2,000 hectares in flood-affected areas1
* delivering 477 agriculture recovery activities, reaching over 4,600 impacted farmers[[1]](#footnote-1)

reopening more than 920 kilometers of public land roads and over 200 recreation sites on public land1

### Managing wildlife welfare during emergencies by delivering preparedness, response, relief and recovery obligations

* undertaking wildlife emergency response activities in relation to fire, extreme heat, marine pollution, cetacean strandings and disentanglement events
* training over 120 individuals including vets, vet nurses, wildlife volunteers and DEECA staff, to support wildlife affected by bushfires through the Wildlife Emergency Support Network

deploying vets and wildlife volunteers as part of the emergency response to a fire near Beaufort in February 2024 to search for and assess injured wildlife.

### Preparing and responding to biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies impacting agriculture

* continuing to respond from late May 2024 onwards to the detection of avian influenza, which impacted 8 Victorian poultry farms
* working collaboratively with the apiary industry to successfully prevent an incursion of Varroa mite into Victoria and safeguard Victoria’s honeybees and pollination-dependent industries, following a detection of Varroa mite in New South Wales in June 2022

delivering trapping and surveillance programs in response to the detection of Brown marmorated stink bugs in Melbourne.

### Bushfire preparedness and response

* suppressing 1,179 fires impacting 50,890 hectares of public land
* undertaking planned burning and other bushfire risk-reduction activities covering 138,454 hectares of Victoria to maintain risk at or below 70% of maximum levels

delivering the Safer Together – Local Government Partnerships Grants program, which awarded $1.66 million in grants to support local councils to develop and extend bushfire risk reduction programs with local communities.

## 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 Housing and Minister for Equality. Minister Shing has been Member of the Legislative Council for Eastern Victoria since 2014.

**Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP**

**Minister for Environment**

Minister Dimopoulos is also Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Outdoor Recreation. Minister Dimopoulos has been Member of the Legislative Assembly for Oakleigh since 2014.

**Hon Ros Spence MP**

**Minister for Agriculture**

Minister Spence is also Minister for Community Sport and Minister for Carers and Volunteers. Minister Spence has been Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kalkallo (formerly Yuroke) since 2014.

**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.

**Ms Sheena Watt**

**Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action**

Ms Watt has been a Member of the Legislative Council for the Northern Metropolitan region since 2020.

## Our executive

DEECA is led by the Secretary John Bradley who reports to our ministers on page 13. As at 30 June 2024, the Secretary was supported by 7 deputy secretaries and 4 chief executive officers.

### John Bradley PSM

**Secretary**

John Bradley is the Secretary of DEECA and was appointed as the Secretary of DEECA’s predecessor, the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) in September 2017.

John is also the President of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) Victoria and serves on the Victorian Secretaries Board.

Prior to becoming Secretary, John was CEO of Energy Networks Australia and in previous roles served as CEO of 3 Queensland Government agencies.

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

### Kelly Crosthwaite

**Deputy Secretary, Bushfire and Forest Services**

Kelly Crosthwaite was appointed Deputy Secretary, Bushfire and Forest Services in July 2023. Kelly has been with the department since 2014, having previously held the roles of Executive Director, People and Culture and Regional Director, Port Phillip region.

Kelly has worked for State and Commonwealth natural resource management agencies, with a focus on common property resources. She has extensive experience in managing complex stakeholder issues, implementation of policies into on-ground delivery, and leadership of large operational workforces.

Kelly holds a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Environmental Science and is accredited as a General Fire Fighter for bushfire response.

### Sally Fensling

**Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services**

Sally Fensling was appointed Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services in December 2023.

Sally previously worked in the Department of Jobs Skills Industry and Regions where she held the role of Chief – Legacy, Policy and Partnerships in Regional and Suburban Development and prior to that was Executive Director, Animal Welfare Victoria, and Executive Director, Agriculture Regulatory Policy.

Sally holds a Bachelor of Economics (Hons) and a Masters in Public Policy. She is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### Carolyn Jackson

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

Carolyn Jackson is the Deputy Secretary, Regions, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples. Carolyn was appointed to the role in August 2021, leading the department’s regional at-place delivery and key initiatives in climate action, waste and recycling, public land management 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 held a number of roles across government including Executive Director, Energy Demand, Programs and Safety and Executive Director, Finance and Planning (Chief Finance Officer).

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

### 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 8 years.

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

He is a Fellow of IPAA, and an Alumnus of the Williamson Community Leadership Program.

Stan holds bachelor degrees in Economics and Law and a Master of Laws.

### Chris Miller

**Interim Chief Executive Officer, 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.

Chris was previously Deputy Secretary, Tourism and Events at the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and held executive roles in the Department of Premier and Cabinet including Executive Director, Infrastructure, Planning and Major Projects, 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 where he advised on a broad range of energy sector issues and 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.

### Elizabeth Molyneux

**Deputy Secretary, Energy**

Elizabeth Molyneux was appointed to the role of 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 more than 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.

### Alistair Parker

**Acting Chief Executive Officer, VicGrid and Administrative Office Head**

Alistair Parker was appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer, VicGrid and Administrative Office Head of the VicGrid Administrative Office in March 2024.

He has over 35 years’ experience in the energy industry, including a decade of executive leadership roles at AusNet Services in Victoria and the Power and Water Corporation in the Northern Territory.

Alistair’s early career in the United Kingdom comprised 15 years with National Grid as an engineer and in commercial roles. Following this he was a consultant with Ernst & Young in New Zealand and PwC in Australia.

Alistair holds a Bachelor of Electromechanical Engineering from Aston University in England and a Master of Business Administration from Lancaster University in England.

### Dougal Purcell

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

Dougal Purcell was appointed Acting Deputy Secretary and Chief Executive, Agriculture Victoria in January 2024.

Dougal is an experienced executive and has played a pivotal role in leading priority programs and initiatives to support the Victorian agricultural sector to reduce emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and recover from drought, bushfires, and other natural disaster emergencies, and enhance profitability and resilience.

Dougal holds a Bachelor of Agribusiness, Major Rural Science.

### Dr Kirsten Shelly

**Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments**

Dr Kirsten Shelly was appointed Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments in January 2024. She previously held leadership positions across the water sector in Queensland and Victoria, including Director of Water Strategy at Queensland Water Commission, Director of Strategies at Queensland Department of Energy and Water Supply, and a range of roles at Melbourne Water, most recently leading the Services Futures group as their Executive General Manager.

Kirsten’s leadership is complemented by her experience on the Victorian Catchment Management Council, Peter Cullen Trust Board and completion of the Australian Institute of Company Directors program.

Kirsten is a Peter Cullen Fellow and holds a Bachelor of Biology and a post doctorate in marine and freshwater algae.

### Phuong Tram

**Acting Deputy Secretary, Forestry Transition**

Phuong Tram was appointed Acting Deputy Secretary, Forestry Transition in July 2023. She is leading Victoria’s transition out of native timber harvesting and the expansion of Victoria’s plantation estate.

Phuong is an experienced government executive who has held executive roles in the Department of Treasury and Finance, the former DELWP including as the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, and the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. Phuong was a member of the VicForests Board as a Non-Executive Director from 1 December 2023 and Chair from 1 April 2024 until VicForests’ closure on 30 June 2024.

Phuong holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons).

### Matt Vincent

**Chief Executive Officer, Resources Victoria**

Matt Vincent was appointed to the role of Chief Executive Officer, Resources Victoria in December 2023.

Matt previously held leadership positions in the former DELWP, the Victorian Building Authority, Environment Protection Authority, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Zoos Victoria.

Matt holds an Associate Diploma in Applied Science and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Leadership Victoria, and the Harvard Kennedy School.

## Our functions and services

As at 30 June 2024, the following DEECA business groups worked to support our ministers, the Secretary and portfolio partners in delivering the government’s priorities:

### Agriculture Victoria

Agriculture Victoria supports an agriculture, food and fibre sector that is strong, innovative, and sustainable by collaborating with community, industry, and other government agencies to grow and secure agriculture in Victoria. The group partners with the agricultural sector to accelerate emissions reductions, adapt to a changing climate, and recover from drought, bushfires, and other natural disaster emergencies. It also ensures readiness to respond to challenges such as pests, weeds and diseases. Agriculture Victoria provides technical advice and services to enhance resilience and economic performance, including support for exports, investment and diversification, and new product development. Through partnerships with industry and research institutions, it aims to modernise Victorian agriculture with research and innovation to ensure the sector remains competitive and profitable in the future. The group also delivers education and compliance services focused on agriculture and animal welfare, ensuring practices meet regulatory standards.

### Bushfire and Forest Services

The Bushfire and Forest Services group manages 3.2 million hectares of state forests, including delivery and maintenance of recreation assets, tourism services and forest health activities. The group also leads DEECA’s works across the state in preparing for and responding to bushfire and other emergencies, working alongside emergency services under the Victorian Government’s ‘all communities, all emergencies’ operating framework. Underpinned by DEECA’s commitment to work in partnership with Traditional Owners, the group collaborates across government and DEECA to deliver key policies and outcomes in support of communities and industries that use state forests and is directly responsible for recreation policy and service delivery in state forests. The group also undertakes regulatory functions for biodiversity, public land use and fire prevention. It leads development and advice on forest, fire and emergency management policy, strategy and legislation, and delivers safe and fit-for-purpose capability solutions including statewide assets, equipment, technology and learning.

### Energy

The Energy group supports the significant transformation of the energy sector 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 VicGrid, 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.

### Forestry Transition

The Forestry Transition group supports the transition of Victoria’s native timber sector following the end of native timber harvesting on 1 January 2024. The group delivers a range of programs and initiatives to support native timber workers and their families, the communities they live in and the businesses that have relied on native timber. It also supports the expansion of Victoria’s plantation estate through investment in the Gippsland Plantation Investment Program, farm forestry and carbon farming programs. These programs are providing alternative and sustainable wood sources, as well as supporting Victoria’s transition to net zero.

### Regions, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples

The Regions, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples group leads the Victorian Government’s climate action and provides advice to government on principles, strategies, policy settings, programs and initiatives 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 strengthen the waste and recycling sector, while creating jobs and supporting economic growth. Through regional presence, the group provides integrated, place-based design and delivery of programs, projects, and services across departmental portfolios. The group also drives the Aboriginal self-determination reform agenda across DEECA by building the cultural capability of the organisation and 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.

### Resources Victoria

Resources Victoria enables informed and responsible earth resources exploration, development, extraction and rehabilitation across the state. The group performs a key role in: regulating the resources industry to effectively manage risks to the environment and community; managing access to the state’s resources for current and future use; policy development and regulatory reform; regulatory approval coordination; and regional geoscientific investigations and data provision. Resources Victoria is helping to drive increases in the mineral and quarry materials the state needs for a vibrant statewide economy and to support the construction sector, new infrastructure and the renewable energy transition. The group works with industry and other stakeholders to build community knowledge and confidence in the resources sector’s social, environmental and economic performance.

### Solar Victoria

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. The Solar Homes program also administers grants to apartment households who meet eligibility requirements for solar panel installation. 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. Solar Victoria also has governance oversight of the Victorian Energy Upgrades program, the state’s largest emissions reduction program, supporting Victoria to achieve its energy transition and emissions reduction goals through improved energy efficiency, demand management, and household and business electrification.

### State Electricity Commission Implementation Office

The State Electricity Commission Implementation Office led the re-establishment of the State Electricity Commission (SEC) as a government-owned renewable energy company. The new SEC was established as a corporate entity in October 2023 to deliver renewable, affordable, reliable, energy for all Victorians. The SEC Implementation Office provided support in implementing corporate systems and processes for the SEC and delivering key functions including recruitment, financial and procurement services. It supported the SEC in its establishment of key functions such as delivery of consumer energy solutions and in providing an electricity retail service to government customers. The SEC is accelerating Victoria’s renewable energy transition and helping the state achieve its ambitious renewable energy target of 95% by 2035. The SEC is accelerating the transition by: partnering with industry to invest an initial $1 billion towards delivering 4.5 gigawatts of new renewable energy and storage projects that accelerate the transition and deliver sustainable returns; helping Victorian households reduce their energy bills and emissions by introducing more renewable energy to the grid and offering simple and practical solutions to help them switch to all-electric; and investing in the training and skills to build the renewable energy workforce that Victoria’s energy transition requires.

### VicGrid

VicGrid supports the energy transition for the public good and the benefit of all Victorians. VicGrid’s purpose, working closely with communities, landholders, industry and First Peoples, is to ensure the state’s electricity transmission system and Renewable Energy Zones meet Victoria’s energy needs by: delivering Victorian Government energy policy, implementing the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF), enabling the delivery of high priority transmission projects such as the Victoria-New South Wales Interconnector West, offshore wind connections, Western Renewables Link and MarinusLink, and developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan under the VTIF by 2025.

### Water and Catchments

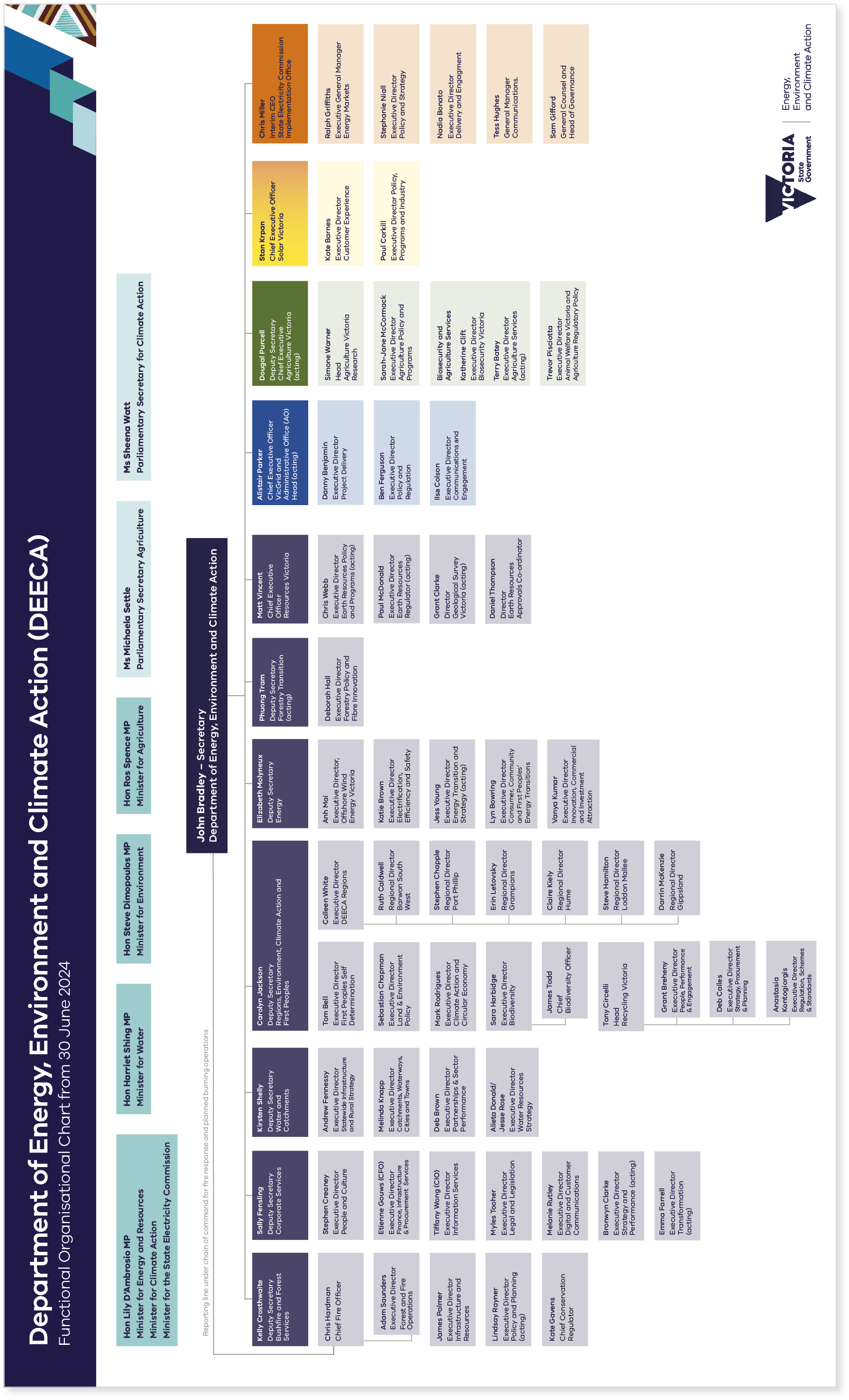
The Water and Catchments group works to ensure that Victoria has safe, sustainable, and productive water resources to meet urban, rural, environmental, and cultural needs, now and in the future. The group works in partnership with water corporations, catchment management authorities, government agencies, 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

The Corporate Services group enables good governance, efficient and effective services that meet customer needs and partners to deliver our vision and outcomes. Corporate Services provides whole-of-department services, systems, processes, policies, strategies, standards, reporting and analysis across transformation, finance, digital and customer communications, including the customer contact centre, people and culture, information services, legal and governance and strategic planning, operations and performance. The group reviews, uses and shares insights, data and business intelligence to inform the department’s decision making and provides support to build a constructive and capable workforce. The group also has a broader whole-of-Victorian Government view, focusing on public sector reform and future capability.

### Organisational structure

as at 30 June 2024



## Governance

Under the Public Administration Act 2004, the Secretary is accountable to the Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for the State Electricity Commission, Minister for Water, Minister for Environment and the Minister for Agriculture.

### 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 leadership and culture.

The DEECA Executive Board membership comprises the Secretary, deputy secretaries, the Deputy Secretary and Chief Executive, Agriculture Victoria and the Chief Executive Officer, Resources Victoria.

The Executive Board supports the Secretary with fulfilling statutory responsibilities and has 4 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, platforms, projects and programs.

Transformation Taskforce – oversight of departmental transformation, change and culture-focused initiatives.

The Executive Board is supported by 9 stewardship and 3 assurance committees that advise and make recommendations to the Executive Board. These committees are required to be reported on under Financial Reporting Directive 22 (FRD22).

### Stewardship Committees

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

**Biodiversity Stewardship Committee**

The Biodiversity Stewardship Committee approves and oversees the delivery of the 5-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 Stewardship Committee**

The Data and Technology Stewardship Committee leads and oversees DEECA’s digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability, capacity, performance and strategic direction. This includes 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 Stewardship Committee**

The Distributed Energy Resources Stewardship Committee monitors progress on electrification and the uptake of related distributed energy resources and seeks to ensure that critical enablers are in place to support the transition of the distribution network. The Committee oversees intersections in energy programs and initiatives and identifies opportunities and needs for alignment and coordination. It also identifies and manages key risks and issues, particularly in relation to consumer protections, regulation, compliance and enforcement.

**Emergency Management Stewardship Committee**

The Emergency Management Stewardship 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 Stewardship Committee**

The Energy Transition Stewardship Committee provides strategic policy direction on delivering large-scale energy infrastructure and supports management of trade-offs between portfolios or local and state-wide outcomes, in the energy transition. The Committee focuses on negotiating solutions for energy projects, which may include: government objectives with natural tension, agreeing and prioritising issues for collaboration and resolution and providing consistent guidance for the investigation and implementation of agreed solutions. The Committee supports a flow of information between regions and 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 5 organisational pillars.

**Recycling Victoria Stewardship Committee**

The Recycling Victoria Stewardship Committee oversees Recycling Victoria as a self-sustaining operation, and delivery of its inaugural legislative functions.

**Aboriginal Self-Determination and Treaty Committee**

The Aboriginal Self-Determination and Treaty Committee drives a 'One DEECA’ approach to enabling Self-Determination and supporting Treaty, by enabling policy and system reform initiatives on behalf of the Secretary and the DEECA Executive Board.

**Assurance committees**

Three assurance committees support the DEECA Executive Board by providing advice on risk and audit, executive staffing and safety and wellbeing.

**Executive Staff and Remuneration Committee**

The Executive Staff and Remuneration Committee ensures a fair and equitable approach to the employment and setting remuneration at the Senior Executive Service, Principal Scientist and Senior Technical Specialist classification.

**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 independent assurance to the Secretary that the department’s risk and control environment is operating effectively and efficiently.

It acts as an advisory committee and its responsibilities relate to the department, including any administrative offices or other entities that are accounted for as part of the department’s annual financial statements.

The Committee independently reviews and assesses the department’s systems and controls for financial management, performance and sustainability, including risk management.

As at 30 June 2024, the Risk and Audit Committee members were:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Peter Lewinsky (Chair) | Independent member |
| Mark Peters | Independent member |
| Rachel Thomson | Independent member |
| Jan Fitzgerald | Independent member (term commenced 21 March 2024) |
| John Nguyen | Independent member (term commenced 21 March 2024) |
| Sally Fensling | Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services (term commenced 31 January 2024) |
| Matt Vincent | CEO, Resources Victoria (term commenced 21 March 2024) |
| Dougal Purcell | Deputy Secretary and Chief Executive, Agriculture Victoria (acting) (term commenced 20 March 2024) |

# 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 2023–24 Budget Paper Number 3: Service Delivery (BP3) and performance of the department’s key initiatives.

The table below provides a summary of DEECA’s objectives, indicators and outputs for 2023–24:

| 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 Action |
| Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment | * Improve Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management * 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 * Proportion of new light vehicle sales in Victoria that are zero emissions vehicles (ZEV) * Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program * Solar systems installed under the Solar Homes program | * Energy * Solar Victoria |
| 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 |
| 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 176.

## 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**

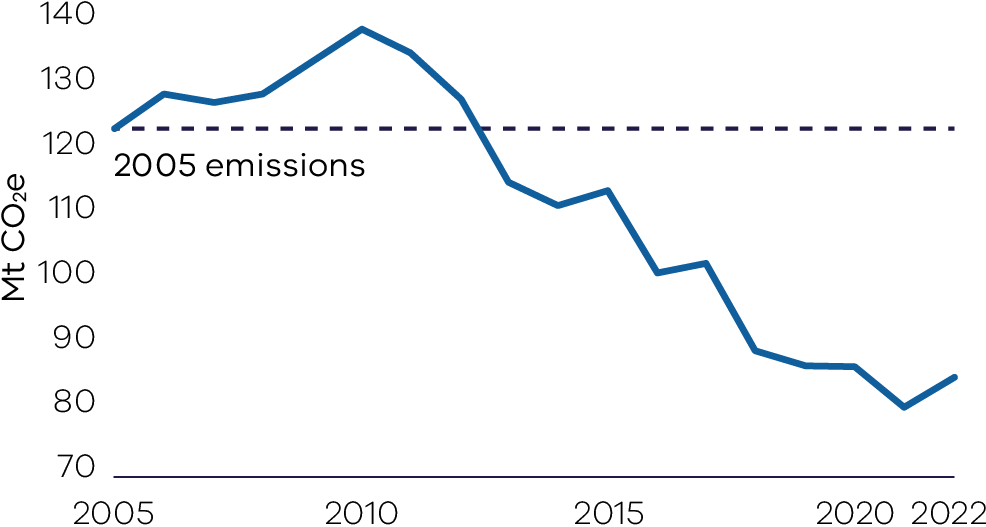
DEECA leads the Victorian Government’s climate action, in line with the Climate Change Act 2017.

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. It drives our transition to a climate resilient community and economy and builds the state’s resilience to climate change.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Drive climate action:   * reduce Victoria’s emissions * strengthen Victoria’s climate resilience * drive climate leadership through Victorian Government operations. | Achievements during 2023–24 included:   * The [Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/greenhouse-gas-emissions) was tabled in Parliament in November 2023. * The Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy and Storage Targets) Act 2024 passed Parliament on 27 March 2024. Updates included bringing the net zero emissions reduction target forward from 2050 to 2045, mandating interim targets and amending the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to create a climate change duty that requires planning authorities to consider climate change – including climate change hazards and emissions reduction targets – when making certain planning decisions. * Expert analysis of updated climate science and projections was conducted to inform Victoria’s second Climate Science Report, scheduled for release in 2024–25. |

**Departmental Objective Indicator performance**

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



Notes on the data:

The most recent Commonwealth data is for 2021–22. There is a 2-year lag in reporting due to the detailed collection process and extensive quality assurance associated with the Commonwealth’s reporting.

The Victorian Government has legislated Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction targets of:

* 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.

The latest available Commonwealth data shows that by 2022, Victoria’s emissions had fallen to 31.3% below 2005 levels, within the range of the 2025 target. Most of these reductions occurred in the electricity sector, with the other key contributor being increased absorption of emissions by Victoria’s forests. 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.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program. 
2022: 7,962
2023: 8,554

Notes on the data:

* Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emissions abatement is calculated per calendar year to align with schools’ reporting period.
* The 2023 result has been calculated using the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water formula for 2022–23, where 1 kilowatt hour (kWh) equals 0.85kg[[2]](#footnote-2) of CO2e emitted.
* ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) reported energy savings of 10,063,674 kWh in the 2023 school year against a target of 8,500,000 kWh, reflecting a larger number of schools than expected uploading their energy use and costings data into Sustainability Victoria's RSS Online system.
* 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.

ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) is delivered in partnership with Sustainability Victoria. Through the program, Victorian schools are recruited and assisted with working through a sustainability framework with the aim of achieving 5-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 2023, Victorian schools avoided 8,554 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emitted through their participation in RSS. This can be attributed 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.

**Climate Action**

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

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annual energy saved by Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program  *Performance is above target due to a larger number of schools than expected uploading their energy use and savings data into Sustainability Victoria's online system.* | kwh | 10 063 674 | 8 500 000 | 18 | 1 |
| Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program  *Performance is below target due to continued challenges in the uptake of extracurricular activities in schools since the COVID-19 pandemic.* | number | 563 | 700 | (20) | 3 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Stakeholder satisfaction with climate action engagement events  *Performance is above target due to a focus on designing sessions based on participant feedback.* | per cent | 98 | 75 | 31 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Completion of Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report | date | Oct 2023 | Oct 2023 | 0 | 1 |
| Delivery of agreed milestones for climate action policy, advice and research within agreed timeframes  *Performance is above target reflecting effort invested in the timely delivery of policy, advice and research.* | per cent | 94 | 80 | 18 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the additional funding for Seizing the Economic Opportunity of a Net Zero and Climate Resilient State initiative and carryover of underspend from 2022–23.* | **$ million** | **20.8** | **15.7** | **32.7** | **3** |

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 Protection

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.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Community Driven Action and Protecting our Iconic Species and Faunal Emblems | During 2023–24, DEECA delivered:   * $4.5 million in funding to community groups across the state to deliver 80 part-time Landcare Facilitator positions who supported 740 Landcare and environmental groups * $1.8 million in funding to Regional Landcare Coordinators working in partnership with Catchment Management Authorities to build the capability of groups, networks and Landcare facilitators through training, workshops and field days * $230,000 in Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants to support 112 wildlife shelters and foster carers to rehabilitate sick and injured native wildlife and release them back to the wild * the Strategic Environmental Volunteer Coordinators trial to support the environmental volunteering sector connect and grow across the state * continued implementation of the Environmental Volunteering Plan, providing resources to support capability building of community groups and delivering a range of campaigns to acknowledge and celebrate the work that environmental volunteers do to protect and enhance our environment * bespoke actions to benefit threatened species including the Orange-Bellied Parrot and the Southern Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby through both the [Icon Species](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/investing-in-biodiversity/icon-species) and [Faunal Emblem Programs](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-species/faunal-emblems-program). |
| Protecting our parks, pets and wildlife – animal welfare | Funding agreements are in place and all annual milestone payments have been made across 4 programs for 2023–24, including:   * 4-year funding agreement executed with Zoos Victoria for creation of a wildlife hospital in south-western Victoria * 1-year funding agreement executed with Zoos Victoria as Wildlife Emergency Support Network Coordinator * 4-year funding agreement executed with Zoos Victoria for continuation and expansion of the Wildlife Outreach program * 2-year funding agreement executed with Wildlife Victoria to support the Wildlife Hotline.   In 2023–24, more than 120 people, including vets, vet nurses, wildlife volunteers and DEECA agency staff were trained and provided with personal protective equipment, enabling their support of wildlife impacted by bushfires through the Wildlife Emergency Support Network.  In February 2024, in a first for Victoria, the vets and wildlife volunteers were deployed as part of the emergency response to a fire near Beaufort and worked alongside DEECA wildlife specialists to search for and assess injured wildlife. Further information on these and other wildlife welfare initiatives are available on the [DEECA website](https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/wildlife-welfare-initiatives). |
| Restore nature for carbon storage through the BushBank Program | Cassinia Environmental, our delivery partner to restore and protect 20,000 hectares of private land by 2036, secured $5.5 million in private investment and initiated planting of native shrubs and trees across 2,900 hectares with more than 1,000 kilograms of seed, and more than 100,000 seedlings. These plantings will help Victoria achieve emissions reduction targets and restore habitat for biodiversity.  Funding of $6 million was provided through the BushBank program for 19 Traditional Owner-led projects to address biodiversity loss and climate change and enable Traditional Owners to participate in healing Country.  $7.2 million was provided through the BushBank program for the restoration of public land across the state. These projects will revegetate areas of cleared public land with native vegetation, providing habitat for biodiversity and sequestering carbon. |
| Reform Household Recycling | The roll out of a 4-stream household recycling system continued to advance during 2023–24. As at 30 June 2024:   * 55 councils offer a kerbside food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service, of which 15 councils also provide a drop off FOGO service * 18 councils offer a kerbside glass recycling service, with an additional council introducing a service in the first week of July 2024 * 17 councils without kerbside services offer separate glass drop-off services for their communities.   Public consultation on [proposed regulations and a service standard](https://engage.vic.gov.au/setting-the-standard-for-better-recycling-at-home) that specify when and how councils and Alpine Resorts Victoria must provide the 4-stream waste and recycling services to households and alpine resorts was completed in August 2024.  All 39 [Transfer Station Upgrade](https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/boosting-recycling-regional-victoria) projects were delivered in 2023–24. These projects helped regional and rural councils upgrade drop-off points to include separated glass and FOGO services in areas where kerbside services were not available. |
| Circular Economy Reforms | Subordinate legislation under the Circular Economy Act (Waste Reduction and Recycling) 2021 was developed, enabling Recycling Victoria to deliver new functions:   * The Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) (Risk, Consequence and Contingency Plans and Other Matters) Regulations 2023 were made on 19 December 2023, which was followed by the release of the first annual [Circular Economy Risk, Consequence and Contingency Plan](https://www.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-risk-consequence-and-contingency-plan-2024) in May 2024. * Consultation was completed in February 2024 on draft regulations that will set a cap on the volume of permitted waste that can be processed through new waste to energy facilities in Victoria and detail licencing requirements for new operators.   The Head of Recycling Victoria issued 4 waste to energy existing operator licences in 2023–24.  Recycling Victoria published the inaugural [Circular Economy Market Report](https://www.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-market-report) in March 2024. |
| Container Deposit Scheme | The Victorian Government launched Victoria’s [Container Deposit Scheme](https://www.vic.gov.au/container-deposit-scheme) on 1 November 2023, allowing Victorians to return their eligible drink cans, bottles and cartons for a 10-cent refund at refund collection points across Victoria. The scheme will reduce the state’s litter by up to half, generate more than 600 jobs statewide and turn used drink containers into new, recycled products.  As at 30 June 2024, more than 628 million containers were returned through the Container Deposit Scheme since its launch, with 564 operational refund collection points. The initiative has put more than $62.8 million back into the pockets of Victorians and is processing an average of around 17 million eligible cans, cartons and bottles across the state each week. |

### Departmental Objective Indicator performance

**Indicator: Improve Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management**

Notes on the data:

Results are reported one year in arrears due to the time needed to collect spatial activity data from delivery partners and complete quality assurance and analysis according to [Biodiversity 2037 activity data requirements](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/activity-data).

This new indicator for 2023–24 reports on the change in suitable habitat for Victoria’s native species populations.

The conservation of Victoria’s biodiversity primarily depends on the retention of suitable habitat and the management of threats within these habitats. Typical threats to native species include competition for resources with introduced plants (for example environmental weeds) and herbivores (for example, deer, goats, rabbits and pigs), along with direct predation by foxes and cats.

DEECA’s Strategic Management Prospects decision support tool analyses the spatial relationship between species habitats and threats, calculating the most cost-effective places to manage threats or restore habitats as well as the predicted benefit of this management for species. The measure of this predicted management effectiveness is Change in Suitable Habitat (CSH).

CSH represents the increase in the likelihood that a species will persist at a location at a future time (for example, 50 years) in response to sustained management of relevant threats. It is expressed as the proportional increase (percentage) in hectares of Suitable Habitat available to a species under a sustained management regime, compared with no management.

The analysis calculates a CSH metric for each species based on the management actions delivered though DEECA’s on-ground biodiversity programs. These individual species’ measures can be summarised in 2 different ways. The first is the mean CSH across species. The second is the percentage of species that have an improvement in suitable habitat, where improvement in suitable habitat is defined as a positive change in suitable habitat greater than 2%. The result for this indicator, using these 2 different summary metrics, based on 2022–23 data is:

**Mean Change in Suitable Habitat (CSH)**

4.7% mean CSH for all species

9.4% mean CSH for species listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

**Percent of species with positive CSH (above 2% CSH)**

38.6% of all species

54.8% of species listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*

An increase in suitable habitat means that a species has an improved outlook or likelihood of persistence because of implemented management actions. However, it does not mean a species can be considered as secured or recovered. This measure should only be considered as an indicator of species that are benefitting from current investment, not as an indicator of species on track for recovery.

DEECA delivers of a range of investment programs to achieve biodiversity policy outcomes through targeted place-based action. This includes:

* [Protecting Biodiversity Program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/investing-in-biodiversity/protecting-biodiversity) including the [Nature Fund](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/nature-fund) ($15 million per annum)
* [Weeds and Pests on Public Land Programs](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/invasive-species-on-public-land/weeds-and-pests-on-public-land-program) ($2.85 million per annum)
* [Peri Urban Weeds Management Partnership Program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/invasive-species-on-public-land/peri-urban-weed-management-partnerships) ($1.0 million per annum)

[Victorian Deer Control Program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/deer-control-program) ($4.4 million per annum)

These programs deliver sustained landscape-scale predator, pest herbivore and weed control as well as complementary and bespoke threatened species actions aligned to the goals and targets of Victoria’s biodiversity plan – [Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan).

Indicator: Reduction in pollutants from priority hotspots

Graph showing Indicator: Reduction in pollutants from priority hotspots.
Number of days where the air quality standard was exceeded in the Brooklyn industrial precinct:
2019-20: 30
2020-21: 10
2021-22: 3
2022-23: 9
2023-24: 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 within the precinct. The Environment Protection Authority Victoria (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 and improve public health outcomes.

In 2023–24, the national air quality standard/Victorian Environment Reference Standard (ERS) was exceeded on 9 occasions. Most of these days were attributed to activities within the Brooklyn industrial precinct. On 6 of the 9 occasions, higher PM10 readings were also measured at other stations (Geelong), indicating that while the main cause of dust in the precinct is due to industry, there may be some contribution from other dust sources further away on these days. This reinforces the need to reduce local emissions of PM10.

EPA provided 14 alerts to notify local industry of high-risk dust days, followed by unannounced inspections to ensure local industry enacted their dust management plans and implemented appropriate control measures. Where EPA officers determined 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

Graph showing Indicator: Environment Protection Authority prosecutions result in a finding of guilt or a clarification of the law.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 90% | 86% | 69% | 97% | 90% |

Notes on the data:

* The 2022–23 and 2023–24 results include summary and indictable prosecutions. Data prior to 2022–23 relates to indictable prosecutions only.

This departmental objective indicator reflects that matters commenced by EPA have a sound legal basis and are in the public interest.

In 2023–24, EPA concluded 98 summary and indictable prosecutions, of which 88 were successful, resulting in a 90% success rate. The number of prosecutions significantly increased from 2022–23, when EPA concluded 63 summary and indictable prosecutions, of which 61 were successful, equating to a 97% success rate in that year. The reduction in the percentage of successful prosecutions is substantially attributable to an increase in the number of contested summary prosecution matters.

In 2023–24, there was also a significant increase in the number of matters dealing with offences under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (EP Act 2017) including a number of criminal and civil proceedings for breaches of the General Environmental Duty. EPA has been granted stronger powers under the EP Act 2017, which have been implemented through an ’education to comply’ approach.

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.

Indicator: Reduction in waste generation per person

Graph showing Indicator: Reduction in waste generation per person.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
| Tonnes per person | 1.11 | 1.2 | 1.24 | 1.19 | 1.18 |

Notes on the data:

• As implementation of the Victorian Government’s circular economy policy, [Recycling Victoria: a new economy](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy) commenced in 2019–20, the 2019–20 result is the baseline from which the ‘reduction in waste generation per person of 15 per cent by 2030’ is measured.

• Historical values may vary slightly from previous reporting if more data subsequently becomes available.

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears. Since the last annual report, Recycling Victoria has collected and analysed an additional 2 years’ worth of data (2021–22 and 2022–23). This data has been compiled from the Victorian Recycling Industry Annual Survey and waste to landfill statistics 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).

This indicator reports on waste generated per person. It includes municipal solid waste and commercial and industrial waste but excludes construction and demolition waste.

In 2019–20, the total municipal solid waste and commercial industrial waste generated was 1.20 tonnes per person. This generation rate has decreased favourably over the past 2 years, with a generation rate recorded of 1.19 tonnes per person in 2021–22 and 1.18 tonnes per person in 2022–23.

Reducing waste requires changes in behaviour, systems and business operations. It can take time for these changes to occur and their impacts to be realised. The department has delivered several 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, the Victorian Government banned a range of single-use plastic items. The ban is supporting Victorians to reduce waste and litter by avoiding single-use plastic items and choosing reusables instead.
* The department provides oversight of Sustainability Victoria’s [Small Acts, Big Impacts](https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-and-recycling/at-home/small-acts-big-impact/) 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) has equipped Victorian businesses with the support they need to take advantage of circular economy business opportunities to reduce waste, increase reuse and generate new streams of revenue for businesses.

The Victorian Government increased Victoria’s waste levies over 2021 and 2022. Waste levies are also scheduled to increase from 1 July 2025, to keep Victoria in line with neighbouring jurisdictions. Increasing the cost of sending waste to landfill incentivises waste avoidance and reduction, along with resource recovery and recycling.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Increase in diversion of municipal and industrial waste from landfill.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
| 69.3% | 69.3% | 70.4% | 68.8% | 69.0% |

Notes on the data:

• Historical values may vary slightly from previous reporting if more data subsequently becomes available.

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears. Since the last annual report, Recycling Victoria has collected 2 years’ worth of data for 2021–22 and 2022–23. 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).

This indicator reports on the percentage of municipal, construction and demolition, and commercial and industrial waste diverted from landfill. Hazardous waste is not included in this indicator.

The Victorian Government’s circular economy policy, [Recycling Victoria: a new economy](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy), establishes a target of diverting 80% of waste from landfill by 2030, with an interim target of 72% by 2025.

The diversion of waste from landfill was 70.4% in 2020–21. This landfill diversion rate has remained stable over the past 2 years at 68.8% in 2021–22 and 69.0% in 2022–23.

The department is delivering several key commitments under [Recycling Victoria: a new economy](https://www.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-circular-economy), which are supporting Victorian businesses and communities to increase diversion of waste from landfill and recycle more, including:

* continuing the implementation of a standardised 4-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 and general rubbish
* giving Victorian households access to a food and garden organics service. This could divert up to 650,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill each year. As at 30 June 2024, 66% of Victorian households already have access to food and garden organics service.
* implementing Victoria’s waste to energy framework so that waste to energy facilities can support diversion of waste otherwise destined for landfill, while ensuring that material is recycled where possible.
* commencing the container deposit scheme on 1 November 2023, enabling the return of eligible drink cans, bottles and cartons for a 10-cent refund at 564 refund collection points across Victoria, reducing the state’s litter by up to half, generating more than 600 jobs statewide and turning used drink containers into new, recycled products.

investing significantly in recycling infrastructure to recover materials that would have gone to landfill. The Victorian Government has invested $122 million in grants to increase Victoria’s annual recycling capacity by 1.7 million tonnes, and it is anticipated that a further 963,000 tonnes of capacity will be installed by 2025.

As the impacts of these programs are longer-term, it is expected that over the coming years they will further increase the diversion of waste from landfill.

Recycling Victoria provides data, information and intelligence to inform industry, Government and the community about waste and resource recovery in Victoria. Data is collected and analysed annually to provide insights on how Victoria is tracking towards its circular economy targets, and to inform strategic planning.

In March 2024, Recycling Victoria released the inaugural annual [Circular Economy Market Report](https://www.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-market-report), an overview of Victoria’s progression to a circular economy. [Market insights reports](https://www.vic.gov.au/market-insights-report) were published in September 2023, providing market profiles for kerbside glass packaging, kerbside metal packaging, kerbside paper and paperboard packaging and kerbside plastic packaging.

### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Environmental volunteer hours contributing to the health of Victoria’s biodiversity  *A final result will be available in late 2024 following the receipt and analysis of responses to the annual Volunteering Naturally survey. The expected outcome is higher than the target as volunteering rates continue to bounce back from previous years impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.* | number | 381 059 (estimate) | 330 000 | 27 | 1 |
| New permanently protected native vegetation on private land  *Performance is above target due to the completion of a backlog of covenant requests. Trust for Nature secured 50 new covenants in 2023–24, noting that hectares per covenant vary at each property.* | hectares | 1 844 | 800 | 131 | 1 |
| On-ground action to support local environmental outcomes  *A final result will be available by early 2025 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to the inclusion of additional deer control activities on agricultural land.* | hectares | 58 000 (estimate) | 40 000 | 45 | 1 |
| Pest herbivore control in priority locations  *A final result will be available by early 2025 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is higher than the target due to delivery of additional on-ground herbivore control through the Protecting Biodiversity program, particularly increased deer control activities.* | hectares | 1 300 000 (estimate) | 500 000 | 160 | 1 |
| Pest predator control in priority locations  *A final result will be available by early 2025 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is lower than the target due to a delivery partner experiencing delays in the commencement of a fox control project in Gippsland. This project is expected to be delivered in 2024–25.* | hectares | 650 000 (estimate) | 700 000 | (7) | 3 |
| Priority conservation actions for threatened species  *Performance is above target due to the early completion of some threatened species projects under the Flood Recovery program, ahead of their scheduled completion dates within 2024–25.* | number | 38 | 20 | 90 | 1 |
| Revegetation in priority locations for habitat connectivity  *Performance is above target due to favourable climatic conditions enabling additional revegetation activity on land secured under the BushBank program.* | hectares | 668 | 500 | 34 | 1 |
| Strategic compliance and enforcement operations implemented by the Conservation Regulator  *Performance is above target as one multi-year operation was completed ahead of schedule within 2023–24.* | number | 7 | 6 | 17 | 1 |
| Weed control in priority locations  *A final result will be available by early 2025 following the receipt and analysis of statewide data. The expected outcome is lower than the target due in part to delays in the commencement of projects, and some delivery partners encountering differences between initial project proposals and the actual extent of weed control performed. A process improvement is being implemented for future projects to alleviate this issue.* | hectares | 32 000 (estimate) | 50 000 | (36) | 3 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annual Arthur Rylah Institute Client Survey respondents rank the level of overall satisfaction with ARI’s research as good, very good or excellent  *Performance is above target reflecting a focus on improvements to timely service delivery and project outputs.* | per cent | 100 | 95 | 5 | 1 |
| On ground biodiversity actions targeted towards priority locations | per cent | 70 | 70 | 0 | 1 |
| Preharvest surveys of areas planned for timber harvesting completed | per cent | 64 | 64 | 0 | 1 |
| Presentations made and scientific publications in peer reviewed journals | number | 60 | 60 | 0 | 1 |
| Traditional Owner groups whose Country plans, cultural values and practices are enabled by biodiversity policies and programs  *Performance is above target reflecting the department prioritising Traditional Owner self-determination including through funding support and building a shared understanding of biocultural outcomes.* | per cent | 59 | 50 | 18 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Native Vegetation Credit Extracts processed within 10 days | per cent | 100 | 96 | 4 | 1 |
| Planning referrals relating to native vegetation processed within statutory timeframes  *Performance is above target reflecting a new prioritisation process that has been embedded in workflows, in line with the continuing increase in the number and complexity of cases associated with renewable energy and transport infrastructure priorities.* | per cent | 83 | 70 | 19 | 1 |
| Wildlife Licence renewals processed by target dates | per cent | 93 | 96 | (3) | 2 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional expenditure for establishing the Western Grassland Reserve under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment program, and the Accelerating Energy Project Delivery and Mitigating Biodiversity Impacts and Regional Fund for Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery initiatives.* | **$ million** | **152.8** | **123.4** | **23.8** | **3** |

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.

### 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 minimal disturbance from noise and odour.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Environment condition notifications provided to Victorians  *Performance is above target due to a high number of pollution incidents requiring public notifications to be issued.* | number | 847 | >800 | 6 | 1 |
| Total inspections of business sites or premises conducted to prevent and respond to risks of harm to human health and the environment  *Performance is above target due to a high number of pollution incidents requiring inspections to be undertaken.* | number | 5 429 | 4 000 | 36 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Victorian community trust in EPA  *Performance is below target reflecting consistency with 'trust' scores for similar organisations in other jurisdictions. EPA is continuing to focus on building community trust, including through communications and engagement.* | per cent | 51 | 70 | (27) | 3 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Applications for internal review of remedial notices completed within statutory timeframes | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Applications for licences and permits completed within statutory timelines  *Performance is above target due to a higher ratio of permit applications received, which are simpler and lower risk activities compared to licences applications* | per cent | 86 | 50 | 72 | 1 |
| EPA advice on planning matters is provided within required timeframes  *Performance is above target due to streamlined advice being provided for lower-risk activities.* | per cent | 86 | 65 | 32 | 1 |
| EPA confirms duty holder compliance with remedial notice requirements, or escalates for further action, within 17 days of the compliance due date  *Performance is above target due to a continued focus on process and system improvement.* | per cent | 89 | 80 | 11 | 1 |
| EPA provides technical advice to lead agencies within agreed timelines during emergency incidents  *Performance is above target due to a continued focus on process and system improvement.* | per cent | 100 | 90 | 11 |  |
| EPA responds to priority waste incidents within 15 hours of notification  *Performance is above target as only one priority waste incident was identified in 2023–24 and it was responded to within 15 hours of notification.* | per cent | 100 | 90 | 11 | 1 |
| Environmental audits and preliminary risk screening assessment reports are reviewed to ensure administrative compliance with legislation and guidelines within 14 days of submission  *Performance is above target due to a continued focus on process and system improvement.* | per cent | 90 | 80 | 13 | 1 |
| Pollution reporters requesting follow up by EPA receive contact within five working days | per cent | 72 | 75 | (4) | 2 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total output cost  *The lower than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the transfer of funding from the Statutory Activities and Environment Protection output to the Waste and Recycling output, resulting from the establishment of Recycling Victoria within DEECA under the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021* | $ million | 151.7 | 164.8 | (7.9) | 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.

### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cumulative increase in Victorian local council sites supported to upgrade infrastructure to safely collect and sort e-waste for recovery | number | 140 | 140 | 0 | 1 |
| Proportion of Victorian households with access to organic food and garden waste recycling services  *A final result will be available by March 2025 following analysis of data from the 2023–24 Victorian Local Government Annual Survey and other sources. Performance is expected to be above target due to strong council participation in food organics and garden organics recycling services. Larger councils with a higher number of households were among the first to offer new services.* | per cent | 66 (estimate) | 50 | 32 | 1 |
| Proportion of Victorian households with access to separated glass recycling services  *A final result will be available by March 2025 following analysis of data from the 2023–24 Victorian Local Government Annual Survey and other sources. Performance is expected to be above target due to a number of councils taking up incentives for early transition to separated glass recycling services. Larger councils with a higher number of households were among the first to offer new services.* | per cent | 32 (estimate) | 23 | 39 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cumulative increase in the capacity of Victoria’s resource recovery infrastructure  *Performance is below target due to delays in some required project site approvals, resulting in the deferral of commissioning 150,000 tonnes of processing capacity. It is anticipated that the shortfall will be recovered by January 2025.* | tonnes | 1 776 154 | 2 000 000 | (11) | 3 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average assessment time (calendar days) for major investment grants from application closure to recommendation  *Performance is below target due to additional effort required to identify risk mitigations and complete due diligence checks for high risk and high value grants.* | days | 125 | 75 | (67) | 3 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding for establishing Recycling Victoria and the reprofiling of Commonwealth funding from 2022–23 to 2023–24 for the Recycling Victoria Infrastructure Fund.* | **$ million** | **146.2** | **49.9** | **193.2** | **3** |

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

8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

### Progress towards achieving this objective

#### Context

Victoria’s energy sector is undergoing a major transformation as coal-fired generators retire. This requires government leadership to deliver major social and environmental benefits as well as 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% of the state’s electricity generation being sourced from renewables, with a result of almost 38% in 2023–24, up from approximately 34% in 2021–22. New forms of energy, including offshore wind and hydrogen, are being developed to provide for Victoria’s long-term energy needs.

DEECA provides policy advice to government on the delivery of reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services, as well as leading programs that improve energy efficiency, electrification, strengthen consumer protections and improve affordability. DEECA also plays a critical role in maintaining the safety of our energy system, including responding to, and building resilience against, events that impact Victoria’s energy system. Events range from changing energy demand, supply and prices, to bushfires, floods and extreme weather. We also work with market bodies as well as 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.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| $250 Power Savings Bonus program | The fourth round of the Power Saving Bonus program was launched on 24 March 2023 and closed on 31 August 2023. Since the program’s launch, more than 1.83 million applications were received, and 1.82 million applications paid. More than 67,000 Power Saving Bonus applications were submitted through DEECA's Community Outreach Program partners, an increase of around 15,000 compared to the previous round of the program. |
| A safe and just community transition to renewable energy | On 16 May 2024, the Energy Legislation Amendment (Energy Safety) Act 2023 came into effect. DEECA and Energy Safe Victoria are implementing its reforms.  DEECA is leading an Energy Safety Review, which is intended to include an energy safety roadmap to identify priority actions to ensure a safe energy transition and drive further work by the Victorian Government. Consultation and engagement have commenced. |
| 100 Neighbourhood Batteries | In August 2023, the [100 Neighbourhood Batteries](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/neighbourhood-batteries) program was launched to deliver a range of benefits for Victorian communities. These include unlocking further solar hosting capacity by addressing network constraints, providing back-up power during network outages and directly reducing the cost of energy bills. In March 2024, 6 successful Round 1 projects were announced that will result in the installation of 25 batteries. All projects have commenced and are expected to be completed by August 2025. |
| Driving down gas bills for businesses and households | In December 2023, an update to the [Gas Substitution Roadmap](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/victorias-gas-substitution-roadmap) was published. It outlined new commitments towards a net zero emissions gas sector that delivers lower energy bills for households and businesses.  On 1 January 2024, a new requirement took effect for all new homes requiring a planning permit to be all-electric. Work is progressing for each of the key reforms within the Gas Substitution Roadmap including developing a Regulatory Impact Statement to investigate options to progressively electrify all new residential, and most commercial buildings, where appropriate electric appliance options are readily available.  Consultation on Victoria’s [renewable gas policy](https://engage.vic.gov.au/victorias-renewable-gas-consultation-paper) also continued with a consultation paper being released in September 2023, discussions with stakeholders undertaken and a Directions Paper in development. |
| VicGrid functions and delivering the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework | In May 2024, the Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy – VicGrid) Bill 2024 received royal assent. The Bill established a new legislative framework to enable VicGrid to deliver the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework and provide VicGrid with the necessary authority for publication of the first Victorian Transmission Plan in 2025. |
| Renewable Energy Zones Priority Investments | The Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) fund provides $540 million for projects that enhance the energy transmission grid and will enable more renewable energy generators to connect to the grid. $480 million from the REZ Fund has been invested in 12 stage one projects to strengthen and modernise the state’s grid.  In December 2023, minor network augmentation projects were granted practical completion and in June 2024, an additional project was granted practical completion.  On 1 May 2024, the Ararat Synchronous Condenser received development approval and, in consultation with the Department of Transport and Planning, commenced works on site in July 2024.  The Koorangie Energy Storage System has finalised design works, commenced construction and is on track for completion by 2024–25.  AusNet’s Mortlake Turn-In Project has commenced construction and is on track for completion in the fourth quarter of 2025.  In March 2024, a study area was announced for the first Gippsland offshore wind transmission project which will support 2GW of transmission capacity. |
| Offshore wind energy program | In December 2023, the Victorian Government published the ‘[Offshore Wind Energy Implementation Statement 3](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/691181/Offshore-Wind-Energy-Implementation-Statement-3.pdf)’ (IS3) which sets out the Victorian Government’s progress and next steps in developing an offshore wind sector.  IS3 provides important updates on the government’s offshore wind procurement approach, legislative and regulatory reform, supply chain and local supply, and transmission and ports. It also outlines the government’s approach to protecting the environment and continued commitment to working with Traditional Owners to support meaningful steps to self-determination.  In March 2024, the Victorian Government legislated offshore wind targets of at least 2 Gigawatts (GW) by 2032; 4GW by 2035 and 9GW by 2040.  On 1 May 2024, the Commonwealth Government announced 6 successful feasibility licences for the Gippsland declared area, with an additional 6 feasibility licences granted in July 2024. The 12 potential projects are progressing the development of their management plans and are expected to participate in a competitive auction to assist in developing their offshore wind projects in Victoria. These are expected to be the first in Australia.  In May 2024, the Victorian Government legislated a new licence regime to enable investigatory activities for offshore wind developments to be conducted on public land. |
| Bringing back the State Electricity Commission – Implementation | In October 2023, the new entity State Electricity Commission Victoria Pty Ltd (SEC) was incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and was subsequently declared a State-owned company under the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1992.  On 26 October 2023, the [SEC Strategic Plan (2023 – 2035)](https://www.secvictoria.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1321/SEC-Strategic-Plan.pdf) was launched, outlining the SEC’s vision, guiding principles and strategic pillars. As a government-owned energy company, the SEC is investing in renewable energy and storage projects that accelerate the transition and deliver sustainable returns; supporting households to go all-electric to reduce their energy bills; and building the renewable energy workforce our energy transition requires.  On 30 November 2023, SEC’s first investment was announced – an equity investment of $245 million to deliver the new 600 Megawatt (MW) Melbourne Renewable Energy Hub (the Hub), near Melton.  The Hub will be one of the world’s biggest battery projects and provide enough energy to power up to 200,000 homes during peak periods. The project is expected to be completed in late 2025. The SEC’s investment enabled construction to begin immediately and supported one of the project’s battery components to double in size.  In April 2024, the Government announced the appointment of the SEC’s independent board. The SEC’s 5 foundational independent directors commenced on 1 May 2024.  During 2023–24, the SEC developed its first pilot to support Victorian homes to switch from gas to electric. The SEC also progressed work on the new SEC Centre of Training Excellence (working closely with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions). The SEC undertook several engagement activities tailored to secondary students and young people to encourage them to become involved in the energy transition. |
| Solar Homes Program | Growing consumer interest in electrification, stemming from uncertainty regarding energy prices, alongside accessibility improvements to the hot water rebate, has led to record demand for hot water rebates and a greater diversification in the technology mix taken up under the Solar Homes Program.  Solar Victoria received record volumes of applications for Solar Homes rebates and loans during 2023–24, driven by higher uptake of hot water rebates, and higher solar PV demand compared to the previous 2 years.  During 2023–24, more than 78,000 rebate applications were approved for households to install solar panels and energy efficient hot water systems, with more than 45,000 approved applicants opting for an interest-free loan to support uptake of rooftop solar. |
| Solar Battery Loan Program | The Solar Battery program reopened for applications as a loan-only program on 17 July 2023, providing interest free loans for solar batteries up to a value of $8,800.  Solar Victoria assesses applicants’ capacity to repay the loan in line with responsible lending guidelines. This makes the loan eligibility assessment more complex. However, it is important to ensure that loans are appropriate for individual circumstances. During the launch period of this new process, the median time for loan application approval was initially 50 business days in November 2023. Following an increase in retailer engagement and improvements to systems and processes, the median time taken to process applications was 12 business days in June 2024. More than 2,000 applications were approved during 2023–24. |
| Victorian Energy Upgrades Program | In 2023–24, more than 541,000 households and 22,000 businesses received discounted energy efficient products and services under the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program.  In 2023–24, the VEU program also expanded support for electrification by providing incentives for households to replace gas appliances with efficient electric alternatives. More than 6,400 households replaced inefficient gas heating and more than 17,200 households replaced inefficient gas water heating.  On 13 May 2024, the Large Energy User Electrification Support Program was launched. These grants aim to accelerate electrification in large gas-using commercial and industrial businesses by helping them identify opportunities to upgrade their gas equipment and processes to electric.  DEECA worked with the energy efficiency industry to improve the technical standards and consumer outcomes for the VEU program.  In December 2023, DEECA released new program specifications to address feedback from industry regarding the technical requirements for energy efficient space heating and conducted a review of the incentives for energy efficient refrigerated cabinets.  In April 2024, DEECA commenced consultation on a proposed induction cooktop activity, and co-payments and warranty requirements for electrification activities.  From 1 May 2024, a ban on telemarketing for VEU upgrades to protect consumers from high-pressure sales tactics and other inappropriate marketing was implemented. A further ban on doorknocking marketing for VEU upgrades took effect on 1 August 2024. |

### Departmental Objective Indicator performance

Indicator: Relative share of Victoria’s electricity sourced from renewables

Graph showing Indicator: Relative share of Victoria’s electricity sourced from renewables.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 24.4% | 29.4% | 34.2% | 38.0% | 37.8% |

Notes on the data:

• Data for 2019–20 to 2022–23 has been revised to incorporate updates to underlying source material, including from the Australian Energy Market Operator.

In 2023–24, the share of renewable energy in Victoria’s electricity generation reached 37.8%, marginally lower than 38.0% in 2022–23 and up from 34.2% in 2021–22. The slight reduction reported in 2023–24 reflects reduced output from wind generation in May and June 2024 resulting from lower wind conditions in these months, less new large-scale wind and solar connections relative to previous years as well as a small increase in coal generation relative to 2022–23. The lower wind conditions in May and June 2024 reduced Victoria’s wind generation by an estimated 0.9 terrawatt hours (TWh) relative to what would have occurred under normal conditions. Under normal wind conditions, it is estimated that Victoria would have achieved around 38.8% renewable electricity generation in 2023–24. Generation from Victoria’s solar projects and rooftop solar PV systems continued to grow in 2023–24.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Percentage of surveyed users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report that they plan to switch offers after using the website.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 51% | 55% | 52% | 28% | 42% |

Of the 33,397 Victorian Energy Compare users who completed the online survey during 2023–24, 42% reported they plan to change offers after using the website. This is higher than the 2022–23 result of 28%, but lower than the 2021–22 result of 52%.

This indicator reflects not only the website’s approach to presenting information to users, but also external influences such as energy market price volatility and retailer pricing behaviour. In July 2022, retail energy prices and the Victorian Default Offer increased, limiting the benefit of switching offers.

The results for 2022–23 and 2023–24 were influenced by the delivery of the $250 Power Saving Bonus program, which drove a significant volume of users to the website whose primary purpose was to access a $250 payment. In 2023–24, the Victorian Energy Compare website received more than 3 million visits, with around 1.2 million of those visitors using the website in July and August 2023 as a result of the $250 Power Saving Bonus program. The program has ensured the Victorian Energy Compare website and its benefits are now well known among the majority of Victorian energy consumers, and repeat traffic to the website has increased significantly as result of the program.

The Victorian Energy Compare website continues to provide value to Victorian energy consumers. More than 79% reported they had a positive experience in 2023–24 and more than 61% reported they understand usage and energy costs better.

Indicator: Proportion of new light vehicle sales in Victoria that are Zero Emissions Vehicles

Graph showing Indicator: Proportion of new light vehicle sales in Victoria that are Zero Emissions Vehicles.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 2.0% | 7.8% | 7.9% |

This new indicator for 2023–24 reports on new light vehicle sales in Victoria that are Zero Emissions Vehicles as a proportion of all vehicle sales.

Victoria’s Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Roadmap sets a target of 50% of new light vehicle sales to be zero emissions by 2030.

Of the 164,186 new light vehicles sold in Victoria in 2023–24, 7.9% were ZEVs. While the overall market share increase of ZEVs only increased by 0.1 percentage points compared to 2022–23, total ZEV sales in Victoria was higher by 11.8% relative to 2022–23.

This indicator reflects the success of policies and programs supporting Victoria’s ZEV Roadmap. Such programs include the roll-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across regional Victoria and the previous ZEV subsidy program. Since commencement of the ZEV subsidy program on 1 May 2021 to its conclusion on 30 June 2023, Solar Victoria paid 9,925 ZEV subsidies, totalling $29.8 million.

The Commonwealth Government’s New Vehicle Efficiency Standard, the design of which DEECA made submissions on, will commence in 2025 to increase supply and reduce the cost of ZEVs. This builds on the Commonwealth Government’s existing electric vehicle discount, which removed fringe benefit tax on eligible electric vehicles from 1 July 2022.

Indicator: Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program

Graph showing Indicator: Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| MW | 519.4 | 940.0 | 1261.14 | 1568.8 | 1927.5 |

Notes on the data:

• 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.

The total cumulative electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program as at 30 June 2024 was 1,927.5 MW, with the annual result for 2023–24 totalling 358.7 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, and solar PV systems installed simultaneously with a battery or Virtual Power Plant rebate.

Demand for solar PV rebates increased in 2023–24, which saw the highest ever total approved applications under the Solar Homes Program. Additionally, the average system size increased from 7.3 kilowatts (kW) to 7.9 kW, further accelerating the increase in generation capacity in 2023–24.

Indicator: Solar systems installed under the Solar Homes program

Graph showing Indicator: Solar systems installed under the Solar Homes program.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-2020 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 86,465 | 151,067 | 201,149 | 248,348 | 320,599 |

Notes on the data:

• 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, including solar PV, hot water, battery and Virtual Power Plant systems.

The cumulative total number of installed systems under the Solar Homes program (as at 30 June 2024) was 320,599. The annual result for 2023–24 totalled 72,251 systems. Solar PV uptake was approximately 30% higher in 2023–24, up from 38,043 solar PV rebates approved in 2022–23 to 51,198 approved applications in 2023–24.

This increase is attributed to program adjustments such as:

* increasing the household income eligibility threshold from $180,000 per annum to $210,000 per annum (August 2023)
* allowing households to access the program again if they move to a new property (October 2023)

allowing households with a solar system that is more than 10 years old to access rebates and interest free loans to replace ageing systems that may no longer be fit for purpose (October 2023).

Additionally, the Solar for Apartments and Residential Electrification Grants programs supported uptake of solar PV and efficient electric hot water systems at scale, including amongst harder to reach cohorts including apartment residents and rental households.

Recent data shows that Victoria is achieving a similar level of installations per month to Queensland, and significantly more than South Australia and Western Australia.

To assist Victorians with the installation of a solar PV or battery system, the Solar Homes program has approved more than 164,000 customers for an interest-free loan. As at 30 June 2024, 97% of customer loans have been fully paid within the required 4 year loan term.

### Energy

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

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annual Melbourne tram network demand offset by solar generated large-scale generation certificates | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Energy back-up systems established at Community Hubs | number | 24 | 25 | (4) | 2 |
| Government-supported events that engage business and supply chains regarding the energy sector | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Neighbourhood batteries installed  *Performance is below target as no batteries were installed during 2023–24, due to the timelines required for detailed program design and the funding agreement processes. Works on all projects have commenced and all 10 batteries from 2023–24 are expected to be delivered within 2024–25.* | number | 0 | 10 | (100) | 3 |
| New Energy Jobs Fund projects completed  *Performance is below target due to Distributed Network Service Provider timelines, planning approval processes and supply chain issues delaying 2 projects. One of the 2 projects was completed in July 2024 and the remaining project is anticipated to be completed by December 2024.* | number | 13 | 15 | (13) | 3 |
| 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 |
| Share of Victoria’s electricity generation from renewable sources  *Performance is below target reflecting reduced output from wind generation during May and June 2024, a small increase in coal generation and less new large-scale wind and solar connections relative to previous years.* | per cent | 37.8 | 40 | (6) | 3 |
| 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 | 6.6 | 6.9 | (4) | 2 |
| Vulnerable Victorian energy consumers reached through consumer support programs  *Performance is above target due to the extension of the Community Outreach Program, which supported low-income and hard-to-reach energy consumers experiencing hardship to apply for the $250 Power Savings Bonus.* | number | 17 785 | 13 000 | 37 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report a better understanding of their usage costs after using the website  *Performance is below target, likely due to the high volume of repeat visitors to the Victorian Energy Compare Website who are already aware of their energy usage costs.* | per cent | 61 | 65 | (6) | 3 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding for Round 4 of the $250 Power Saving Bonus, the Bringing back the State Electricity Commission initiative, VicGrid functions and the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework initiative, partially offset by reprofiling of funding from 2023–24 to future years for the Energy Efficiency Upgrades for Homes initiative.* | **$ million** | **339.3** | **289.5** | **17.2** | **3** |

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.

### Solar Victoria

The Solar Victoria output implements multi-year programs to incentivise the uptake of solar panel energy systems and hot water systems, and interest-free loans for 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.

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

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Applications for Solar Battery loans approved  *Performance is below target due to delays in finalising loan agreements and the complexity of meeting responsible lending obligations. Solar Victoria continues to prioritise responsible lending obligations, requiring customers to provide evidence of their ability to repay the loan.* | number | 2 036 | 4 500 | (55) | 3 |
| Applications for Solar PV rebates for owner-occupied households approved  *Performance is below target reflecting customer demand. This is consistent with solar PV market trends as reported by retailers and installers.* | number | 47 877 | 52 000 | (8) | 3 |
| Applications for Solar PV rebates for rental households approved  *Performance is above target due to high uptake of rebates through the Solar for Apartments program.* | number | 3 321 | 1 000 | 232 | 1 |
| Applications for hot water rebates approved  *Performance is above target due to unprecedented consumer interest in obtaining energy efficient hot water systems, influenced by changes to the eligibility criteria and simplification of the application process.* | number | 27 428 | 4 510 | 508 | 1 |
| 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 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Solar Homes Program customers who rate the overall performance of Solar Victoria as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ in post-approval surveys  *Performance is above target due to efforts to improve the customer experience, particularly on improving document verification processes.* | per cent | 85.6 | 75 | 14 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Average number of weeks for Solar Victoria to process completed eligibility applications  *Performance is above target reflecting efforts to improve document verification processes.* | weeks | 1.4 | 2 | 30 | 1 |
| Rebate payments for Solar retailers processed within five business days  *Performance is above target due to efficiency gains from improvements applied to the payment process (including document verification) and customer service experience.* | per cent | 85.7 | 80 | 7 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The lower than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the reprofiling of funding for Round 4 of the $250 Power Saving Bonus from the Solar Victoria output to the Energy output and lower than expected uptake of Solar Homes loans, partially offset by additional funding received for energy efficient hot water rebates.* | **$ million** | **150.2** | **164.2** | **(8.5)** | **3** |

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.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Implement the Suburban Parks Program | Since 2018, the Victorian Government has committed more than $315 million through the Suburban Parks Program to create, connect and upgrade more than 6,500 hectares of open space across metropolitan Melbourne. Key actions delivered during 2023–24 included:   * Three New Parks project – 391 hectares of land were acquired and transferred to Parks Victoria by February 2024 for clean-up and management. * Sandbelt Parklands – 86 hectares of acquired former landfill is being managed by an environmental consultant. EPA revoked 2 of 5 Environmental Action Notices in May 2024, and the remaining 3 notices are being actively managed as at June 2024. * Co-Managed Parks – the final 2 parkland plans were completed and endorsed by Parkland Partnership Groups for Quarry Hills in August 2023 and marram baba Merri Creek in November 2023. As at June 2024, initial infrastructure works at Cardinia Creek, Jacksons Creek and marram baba Merri Creek are underway or due to commence in early 2024–25. An interactive web-based map for Quarry Hills has been developed and is being tested with stakeholders. * Seaford Wetlands – construction of the bridge over Kananook Creek was completed in May 2024, with signage and facilities upgrades planned for completion by October 2024. * Four projects are being delivered by Parks Victoria: * At Plenty River Trail, cultural heritage assessments were progressed and are expected for completion following the finalisation of Cultural Heritage Management plans in late 2024–25. * At Wattle Park, additional works on heritage-listed trams are planned for completion in mid-2024–25, and a ceremonial space is also being planned with Traditional Owners. * The construction works for the Werribee River Regional Park are due to be finalised in mid-2024–25. * Works at Toolern Creek Regional Park are underway and planned for completion in late 2024–25. * Local Parks - DEECA funded 29 new pocket parks, 14 new off-leash dog parks, 41 park revitalisation projects and 7 Northern Metropolitan Trails. * Of the 29 pocket parks, 27 are completed as at June 2024, with the remaining projects underway. * All 14 dog parks were completed by July 2023. * All 41 parks revitalisation projects are complete as at June 2024. * Six of the 7 trails delivered under the Northern Metropolitan Trails Program have been delivered with the remaining trail project being the Merri Creek Trail Extension currently undergoing final design and cultural heritage planning and approvals, with completion expected by May 2025. |
| Delivering better parks and playgrounds | In August 2023, the Victorian Government approved the Better Parks and Playground Program Guidelines, a delivery implementation approach and associated package of 11 targeted projects that make up the program.  All 11 projects have funding agreements executed between DEECA and the relevant delivery partner. All projects are formally underway as at June 2024, with most projects in planning and approvals, design or community consultation stages. These projects are being communicated on a new [Better Parks and Playgrounds website](https://environment.vic.gov.au/better-parks). |
| Implementing Great Ocean Road Management reforms, visitor infrastructure improvements and erosion preparedness | In 2023–24 key actions delivered through the Implementing Great Ocean Road Management reforms, visitor infrastructure improvements and erosion preparedness budget initiative included:   * The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) was appointed as land manager for 153 land parcels in 2023–24, and 259 land parcels in total; significantly reducing fragmented land management from Point Impossible to Peterborough. * GORCAPA is the dedicated manager for coastal reserves formerly managed by 8 different entities (4 Committees of Management and 4 councils). * GORCAPA progressed program delivery to improve visitor facilities and beach access. * GORCAPA made advancements in erosion preparedness through coastal adaptation scoping studies. * DEECA progressed delivery of technical studies to inform the development of the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan. |
| Protecting our parks, pets and wildlife – dog parks | DEECA developed the Protecting our parks, pets and wildlife – dog parks initiative (referred to as the [New and Upgraded Dog Parks Program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/dog-parks)) during 2023–24. This included preparing program guidelines for the first round of the program, a delivery implementation approach and briefing eligible local councils on the initiative.  This investment will provide funding to specific public land managers to design and deliver the new and upgraded dog parks across Victoria in 2 rounds. This program also supports the continued implementation of the Victorian Government’s [Open Space for Everyone Strategy 2021](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/suburban-parks/open-space-for-everyone).  In May 2024, the Victorian Government announced the package for 19 new and upgraded dog parks to be delivered through the first round of the program.  As at June 2024, all 19 projects are underway and will undergo community consultation before designs are made final. Expected features include designated ball play areas, sand digging pits, agility equipment, drinking fountains, fencing, shelters, bins and shading, as well as other park enhancements such as pathway improvements, landscaping and lighting. |
| VicCoasts: Building a safe, healthier and more resilient marine and coastal environment for the community | During 2023–24, key actions to support a safe, healthier and more resilient marine and coastal environment included:   * Victoria’s first statewide [Marine Biodiversity Values (MBV) Map](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-knowledge/coastkit) was completed in May 2024. The MBV ranks all locations across Victoria’s marine environment for their ability to represent key marine and coastal biodiversity features to support environmental assessments and planning decisions across Victoria’s marine and coastal environment. * [Marine Spatial Planning guidelines](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/681934/MSP-Guidelines-_FINAL.pdf) and [planning areas](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/681935/Victorias-Marine-Planning-Areas_FINAL.pdf) were released in September 2023, to support the marine industry, government, and the community better plan activities in the marine environment, now and into the future. * An [overview of values, uses and activities in Gippsland’s marine environment](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/709821/Overview-of-values,-uses-and-activities-in-Gippslands-marine-environment.pdf) was released in June 2024 to support the offshore renewable energy transition. * Coastal protection works were completed at Phillip Island in August 2023, Point Lonsdale in October 2023, Port Welshpool in December 2023 and Marengo in May 2024. Funding agreements were awarded for works at Bullock Island, Rhyll, Loch Sport, Ocean Grove and Williamstown. * Through the [Coastcare Victoria](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/coastcare-victoria) Program, 77 Summer by the Sea events were delivered attracting more than 2,000 attendees. Six Traditional Owner led Caring for Sea Country workshops were held, building the capacity of volunteers in preserving and caring for Sea Country. * Victoria’s [Resilient Coast program](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-management/victorias-resilient-coast-adapting-for-2100) delivered the Blue Carbon and Sea Country adaptation study in July 2023 and [Coastal Erosion Warning Indicators](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-knowledge/victorian-coastal-monitoring-program/what-are-the-projects) were implemented through the Victorian [Coastal Monitoring Program](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-knowledge/victorian-coastal-monitoring-program) to increase our understanding of coastal processes and aid coastal management policy and planning. * The [Port Phillip Bay Fund](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/grants/port-phillip-bay-fund) delivered $3.38 million to support 27 projects (over 2 years) that protect the health of the Bay and the [Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/port-phillip-bay-coastal-hazard-assessment) was released in January 2024 to facilitate a better understanding of current and future coastal hazards around the Bay. * The [Victorian Coastal Cliff Hazard Assessment](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/701156/VicCoastalCliffAssessmentFinalReport15Sept2023.pdf) was completed in September 2023. |
| Conservation Regulator Delivery | Throughout 2023–24, the Conservation Regulator made progress in its key areas of education, community engagement, compliance monitoring, and enforcement of wildlife and forest laws.  Educational activities over 2023–24 included the launch of a new ‘Visiting Victoria’s parks and forests’ kids’ activity book, an educational resource with a variety of activities designed to help kids and their caretakers learn responsible camping behaviours, such as campfire safety, protecting native wildlife, and the importance of taking rubbish home. In June 2024, the Conservation Regulator ran the joint statewide, coordinated ‘Wildlife Crime: It’s Your Call’ campaign with Crime Stoppers Victoria. The campaign promoted the value of public information in solving wildlife crime and empowered Victorians to report crimes.  To support compliance with the law, the Conservation Regulator produced 33 media releases, facilitated 2 media events and responded to 106 media enquiries. The Conservation Regulator also published 137 social media posts.  Strategic operations provide the opportunity for the regulator to focus on key areas of non-compliance. In 2023–24 the Conservation Regulator undertook 7 strategic operations. This included:   * Operation SoHo – focused on the protection of native hooded plovers during their critical summer breeding season (proposal endorsed in September 2023). * Operation Rivulet – monitored compliance at newly established Crown land water frontage campsites across Victoria (proposal endorsed in July 2023). * Two strategic operations focused on illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife cruelty * Further operations focused on blue gum plantations, illegal offroad driving and monitoring research permits.   Organised criminal behaviour was effectively addressed over 2023–24. This included working cooperatively with Biosecurity Victoria to dismantle a network involved in the illegal trade and possession of exotic animals and native wildlife between July 2023 and March 2024.  Illegal take of timber continued to be a focus with 248 cases relating to illegal take of timber and penalties applied between $660–$5,000.  Wildlife cruelty and illegal trade of wildlife remains the Conservation Regulator’s largest category of non-compliance. In 2023–24, 694 charges were laid relating to wildlife crime. In total, the Conservation Regulator laid 882 charges with several substantial prosecution outcomes including the finalisation of a major investigation into reports of injured and starving koalas at a Cape Bridgewater property in January and February 2020. In addition, 364 infringements and 76 official warnings were issued.  Alongside the Conservation Regulator’s work in regulation, pre-harvest surveys on areas planned for commercial timber harvesting were delivered through the Forest Protection Survey Program. More than 190 surveys at coupes planned for harvest were delivered and over 11,000 observations recorded, resulting in the protection of threatened species from the impacts of timber harvesting. The program also delivered more than 340 additional targeted threatened species surveys to support forest management decision making. |
| Terminate Victoria’s Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) commitments | The cessation of native timber harvesting on 1 January 2024 changed the operating context for Victoria’s forest work program. The Victorian Government notified the Commonwealth Government that all 5 Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) will be terminated on 31 December 2024.  In 2023–24, funding supported the continuation of key commitments under the Victorian RFAs including:   * ongoing listed species and communities risk assessments and implementation of protections and management actions * continuation of forest management planning * continuation of a review of Victoria’s sustainability indicators * completion of research activities around Active Forest Management. |

### Departmental Objective Indicator performance

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

Graph showing Indicator: Level of park visitor satisfaction across the Parks Victoria estate.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 | 2023-24 |
| Average satisfaction rating | 85.2 | 85.3 | 86.3 | 85.9 |

This indicator measures visitor satisfaction through a biennial survey, with satisfaction defined as the perceived quality of parks, facilities and services and met or unmet expectations.

The most recent survey, conducted in 2023–24, indicated that the Parks Victoria estate received an average satisfaction rating of 85.9, indexed out of 100 against a target of 85. The actual result is calculated as the average of responses to a satisfaction question where:

* Fully satisfied = 100
* Very satisfied = 80
* Satisfied = 60
* Dissatisfied = 40
* Very dissatisfied = 20

Completely dissatisfied = 0.

In 2023–24, satisfaction increased for parks where improvement works were completed (such as Braeside Park and Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground) under the $21 million Urban Parks Active Wellbeing program. The Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden also saw a significant increase in satisfaction, coinciding with the opening of the Chelsea Australia Garden at Olinda.

The 2023–24 survey has also provided useful feedback to inform future asset investment and maintenance priorities.

Visitors reported being most satisfied with park landscapes including the natural surroundings, being comfortable and safe in the parks, appreciating the plant, animal and bird life, having places to socialise with friends and family, and being able to find peace and solitude.

Almost all respondents reported mental and physical health benefits from visiting parks, and urban parks were reported as enabling visitors to strengthen their social networks.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Bay and park assets rated in average to excellent condition.
Data in table below.

|  | Park assets | Bay assets |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 86% | 66% |
| 2020-21 | 86% | 67% |
| 2021-22 | 87% | 71% |
| 2022-23 | 90% | 71% |
| 2023-24 | 86% | 76% |

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 2023–24, 86% of park assets were rated in average to excellent condition, against a target of 88%, and 76% of bay assets were rated in average to excellent condition against a target of 80%.

During the year, park asset data accuracy was improved through the implementation of a statewide significant built park asset monitoring program. Parks Victoria conducted a deep dive review of its park assets resulting in some assets having their safety consequence reduced and therefore no longer classified as significant.

The 2023–24 result for built bay assets was lower than the target due to the decline of maritime assets from age and environmental impacts.

Completion of the Altona and Rye pier renewal projects and the removal of the old Hampton and Mornington Fishermans piers mitigated overall asset condition decline. Various minor maintenance works at Black Rock, Frankston and Portsea also contributed towards a slight improvement in overall condition.

Capital projects to replace St Kilda, Mornington Fishermans, Hampton, Warneet and Williamstown Workshops piers are expected to lead to a further improvement in 2024–25.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA’s progress in enabling self-determination.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 50% | 60% | 65% |

In 2023–24, an overall improvement in the positive level of satisfaction of Traditional Owners with the department’s progress in enabling self-determination was observed, reaching 65%. This overall increase in satisfaction was accompanied by an increase in survey participation.

Progress during 2023–24 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:

* a continued increase of cultural burns on public land from 4 burns in 2018–19, to 15 in 2021–22, 20 in 2022–23 and 29 in 2023–24

a significant increase in the number of formal partnership agreements between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies, which rose from 236 in 2021–22 to 257 in 2022–23.

Further examples of actions delivered by DEECA over 2023–24 to enable self-determination are included on page 11.

### 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, and incorporates management of public land in partnership with statutory agencies, Committees of Management and local government.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annual visitation to Zoos Victoria | number (million) | 2.77 | 2.85 | (3) | 2 |
| Crown land leases directly managed by the Department | number | 633 | 666 | (4.95) | 2 |
| Crown land licenses directly managed by the Department | number | 46 455 | 45 000 | 3 | 1 |
| Native Title and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 agreements being implemented by the Department | number | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| Native Title and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 negotiations the Department supports with data and information services  *Performance is above target due to the commencement of negotiations for the Gunditjmara Part C Native Title claim and Dhudhuroa, Waywurru and Ngurai Illium Native Title claim, and the recommencement of negotiations for the Eastern Maar Recognised Settlement Agreement, all of which the department is supporting with data and information services.* | number | 9 | 6 | 50 | 1 |
| Participants in Coastcare activities | number | 7 519 | 7 500 | 0.3 | 1 |
| Specimens curated in the State Botanical Collection  *Performance is above target due to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria prioritising a large donation of marine algae specimens at high risk of damage and dissociation. This collection required minimal physical preparation and was accompanied by straightforward collection data, enabling faster curation than other specimens.* | number | 29 120 | 20 000 | 46 | 1 |
| Suburban pocket parks completed  *Performance is below target due to significant land contamination challenges and remediation at one site and a complex road closure at another. Both parks are expected to be delivered in 2024–25.* | number | 7 | 9 | (22) | 3 |
| Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and Cranbourne  *Performance is below target due to above average rainfall and poor weather at both sites, extensive roadworks affecting access to the Cranbourne Gardens and increased competition for the annual ticketed Lightscape festival from other events.* | number (million) | 1.7 | 2.3–2.5 | (26) | 3 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Publicly elected Committees of Management that have a current statutory appointment | per cent | 88 | 90 | (2.2) | 2 |
| Recreational facilities in state forests maintained to have a life expectancy greater than five years | per cent | 77 | 75 | 3 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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 three years | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Rent reviews of Department managed Crown land leases undertaken within specified time frames | per cent | 96 | 95 | 1 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding for Timber Harvesting Transition Support, funding to address the lasting financial and operational impacts of COVID-19 on portfolio entities and supporting the Suburban Parks Program to align with the key delivery milestones.* | **$ million** | **367.8** | **259.7** | **41.6** | **3** |

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.

### 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 Victoria’s park assets are managed efficiently and effectively.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Area treated to minimise the impact of pest plants, pest animals and over abundant native animals in parks managed by Parks Victoria  *Performance is above target due to supplementary external funding enabling additional activity, and a more complete dataset with improved capture of the Good Neighbour program and upgraded data capture methods.* | hectares (000) | 1 996 | 1 600 | 25 | 1 |
| Total area of estate managed by Parks Victoria | hectares (000) | 4 120 | 4 120 | 0 | 1 |
| Visits to national, state, urban and other terrestrial parks  *Not measured in 2023–24. Results for this measure are captured every 2 years.* | number (million) | N/A | 83 | N/A | N/A |
| Visits to piers and jetties  *Not measured in 2023–24. Results for this measure are captured every 2 years.* | number (million) | N/A | 38 | N/A | N/A |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Significant built bay assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition  *Performance is below target due to the decline of maritime assets from age and environment. Maintenance and capital works at multiple sites are expected to improve overall bay asset condition in 2024–25.* | per cent | 76 | 80 | (5) | 1 |
| Significant built park assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition | per cent | 86 | 88 | (2) | 2 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The lower than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the reprofiling of the output allocation of funding from the Parks Victoria output to the Fire and Emergency Management and Management of Public Lands and Forests outputs to align expenditure with departmental objectives. The lower than budgeted output cost is also due to changes in how revenue is collected for fees associated with Werribee Mansion which are now recorded under the Parks Victoria legislation provision for cost recovery.* | **$ million** | **187.7** | **215.1** | **(12.7)** | **3** |

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. The department partners with water corporations, Catchment Management Authorities (CMA), government agencies, industry, Traditional Owners and the community to balance the economic, environmental and social values of water. This helps to deliver secure water supplies, greener and liveable cities, and towns, as well as ensuring sustainable irrigation and agriculture, healthy waterways, catchments and Country.

The Victorian Government invested $693.9 million over 4 years (2020 - 2024) to deliver on Water for Victoria and other strategic commitments. Through these programs the government is managing our water resources, while supporting a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and thriving communities.

The table below outlines some key actions DEECA is taking to create a modern and efficient, future-focused and affordable water system.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Activating Tarago Reservoir for on-water recreation | DEECA continued to provide oversight of inter-agency activities on the implementation planning and delivery of the Victorian Government’s commitment to open Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation.  Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water commenced work in 2023–24 to enable new and additional UV treatment to be installed at their water treatment plants, which source drinking water from the Tarago Reservoir. These upgrades, due to be completed by mid-2025, will allow management of water quality risks associated with introducing boating for non-petrol-powered boats. DEECA provides grant funding and administrative oversight for this work.  In April 2024, Melbourne Water engaged an external service provider to undertake a risk assessment and subsequent feasibility study to identify risks to drinking water quality posed by allowing vessels with petrol motors on Tarago Reservoir.  The suitability of sites for the location of the new boat ramp is currently being assessed by Better Boating Victoria. Community engagement will be undertaken jointly by Better Boating Victoria and Melbourne Water, with support from DEECA once information is available from this analysis. |
| Building Flood Resilience in Victoria | Year 4 of the Building Flood Resilience in Victoria initiative provided $2.9 million in funding towards 13 successful funding applications for flood studies. Applicants and their delivery partners co-contributed a total of $1.181 million.  Projects funded in 2023–24 included: flood studies for the Mallee Catchment Management Authority region, Corangamite Shire Council and Mansfield Shire Council, a demountable levee system for Donald, and an assessment of flood mitigation options for Avoca Recreation Reserve. The Building Flood Resilience in Victoria initiative has allocated more than $4.297 million to a total of 42 projects through the Risk and Resilience program since the initiative was announced in the 2020–21 State Budget.  In May 2022, the Victorian Government announced a $10 million commitment over 5 years to fast-track development of flood studies for around 32 towns.  The second year of the program rolled out in 2023–24 funded 13 projects across the state for a total Victorian government investment of $2.788 million.  These projects will be managed by local councils with catchment management authorities providing technical input and support. A similar level of investment is forecast for years 3, 4 and 5 of the program. |
| Delivering community benefits through implementation of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy | Key highlights from the Diversifying Water Resources Program’s 18 integrated water management projects funded by the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy include:   * The Wonthaggi Stormwater Harvesting and the Fit-for-Purpose Water for Irrigating Recreation Reserves in Morwell projects were both completed in November 2023. * The Greening Trafalgar Recreation Reserve feasibility project to design a wetland and stormwater harvesting scheme was completed in July 2023, enabling the lead organisation to secure funding for the project’s construction phase. * The hydraulic model for Dingley Reticulation Network commenced in September 2023 and has been updated to reflect customer water demands, allowing the completion of pipe sizing for the network.   In September 2023, the new non-residential water efficiency program, WaterSmart, was launched as part of the Increasing Water Efficiency Program. As at 30 June 2024, WaterSmart was assisting 429 Central and Gippsland region sites across businesses, councils and other organisations, with digital water use monitoring and water efficiency audits to help find leaks, inefficient equipment and opportunities to reduce or substitute potable water use where appropriate.  The $1.87 million CMA [Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/building-victorias-climate-resilience/our-commitment-to-adapt-to-climate-change/water-cycle-adaptation-action-plan) program was finalised in June 2024 for delivery over 2.5 years. This program will deliver 5–10 priority catchment management and place-based adaptation projects with clear water cycle and natural environment climate adaptation benefits. |
| Delivering community benefits through implementation of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (continued) | Implementation highlights for other Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS) projects during 2023–24 include:   * Returning water to Traditional Owners for self-determined use. Significant progress was made on actions to return a share of water in the Latrobe System and Moorabool Yuluk (Moorabool River) to the relevant Traditional Owner group as well as other parties. * In addition, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation completed a project in February 2024, trialling water delivery in the Moorabool Yuluk using water transferred from Barwon Water and Central Highlands Water. Further information on the trial water delivery can be found on the [Central Highlands Water website](https://053de3ec-6a5c-48af-86bc-dcd57b05b79d.usrfiles.com/ugd/053de3_e0c573a3b10f4f68bbdc5fc5132be819.pdf). * Continuing to support the environmental water reserve across the region, including progress on projects on the Moorabool River, Painkalac Creek, Gellibrand River and Werribee River.   The first annual [CGRSWS Progress Report](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0039/689691/central-gipps-sws-2023-progress-report.pdf) was published in November 2023. It includes 9 actions that have been achieved and 76 actions that have been started or partly achieved. The second annual progress report is expected to be available by September 2024. |
| Iconic Urban Waterways Program | Implementation of *Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo*, the *Yarra Strategic Plan* (YSP) is progressing. The [YSP Implementation Plan 2023–2025](https://www.melbournewater.com.au/media/22996/download), approved in December 2023, will coordinate the actions of DEECA and other responsible public entities in partnership with Traditional Owners over the implementation period. The Implementation Plan addresses the findings of the Birrarung Council’s first annual reports, and commitments and frameworks outlined in the YSP itself.  In June 2023, $1.65 million has been committed for transformative projects identified by the Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC). These projects, transforming management of the Birrarung’s parklands and maximising the benefits of investment in revegetation, will be delivered over 2023–24 and 2024–25. In 2023–24, the YCC approved project governance and budget allocations, and procurement processes are underway. As part of the Birrarung Parklands project, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung will be undertaking cultural mapping across the river corridor, a self-determined project that will provide foundational knowledge for cultural input into this and many future projects along the Birrarung.  Melbourne Water, as lead agency, and the Birrarung Council have both completed their second year of annual reporting. Both reports were tabled in Parliament in November 2023.  By 30 June 2024, all short-term actions for the Waterways of the West and Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yulluk) Action Plans have either been delivered or are on-going in nature. They are either being guided by Traditional Owner self-determined priorities or linked to overarching policy, such as the Healthy Waterways Strategy. Many longer-term actions have now also commenced.  The Kitjarra-dja-bul Bullarto langi-ut (Barwon Rivers Parklands) masterplan was finalised in December 2023. Development of the masterplan and some early implementation actions have been funded by DEECA and led by Corangamite CMA, partnering with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and multiple agencies in the region.  Also supporting the community visions for Barre Warre Yulluk, the Moorabool River Reserve Masterplan 2023–2032, funded through the Iconic Urban Waterways Grants program, was approved by the Golden Plains Shire Council in October 2023.  In July 2023, Melton City Council finalised the Arnolds Creek – Coming Back to Life Improvement Plan, funded through an Iconic Urban Waterways grant in 2022. This will drive the revitalisation of a key urban waterway in Melbourne’s outer west. |
| Improving the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments in the face of escalating impacts of climate change | The [Victorian Waterway Management Program](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways/victorian-waterway-management-program) continues to fund CMAs to deliver core water statutory functions, on-ground works (including Flagship Waterway projects), community engagement and Ramsar site management projects. Key highlights for 2023–24 include:   * Flagship Waterways program: * Goulburn Broken CMA commenced a Waterwatch-based citizen science volunteer program to monitor water quality at priority locations on Seven, Hughes and King Parrot creeks. * West Gippsland CMA completed riparian protection works along 86% of the length of the Agnes River, providing essential downstream protection to the Corner Inlet Flagship site. * Wimmera CMA partnered with Barengi Gadjin Land Council to finalise designs for a pipeline to provide long-term watering to ‘The Ranch’ billabong in Dimboola. * East Gippsland CMA is overseeing the renewal of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan, with public consultation concluding in January 2024 to inform the final plan, due to be completed in mid-2024–25. * Victoria’s obligations for wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands have been met, including through on-ground works and monitoring activities to address key threats as identified in Ramsar Site Management Plans. This included completion of infrastructure works at Beach Road within the Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay Ramsar Site by Glenelg Hopkins CMA in June 2024, which has restored fish passage between the estuary and wetland areas. * Delivery of popular citizen science programs including EstuaryWatch and River Detectives continued throughout 2023–24. * A new Victorian Waterway Management Strategy is being developed to guide how Victoria’s rivers, estuaries and wetlands are managed into the future, with initial drafting completed. Governance forums have been established to test the draft with project partners and key stakeholders, prior to public consultation in 2024–25. * Completion of the Kynmer Creek regulator in the Goulburn Broken CMA region in May 2024. * Our Catchments Our Communities program: * East Gippsland CMA adopted a regional partnership model to deliver on-ground projects, which included 130 people planting 450 plants at a National Tree Day event on the Mitchell River Walking Track, and local Landcare Groups planting over 1,000 seedlings, 4,200 tube stock and conducting frog and bird surveys in and around local wetlands * The Goulburn Broken Taking Care of Country project worked with landholders to complete 17 hectares of revegetation following 80 hectares of protection from pest plants and animals. Taungurung Land and Waters Council Biik Cultural Land Management completed a total of 182 hectares of weed control and fauna assessments, |
| Improving the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments in the face of escalating impacts of climate change (continued) | * North Central CMA’s Healthy Coliban Catchment project included working with 20 landholders to deliver 12.76 kilometres of fencing, 27 hectares of revegetation and 41 hectares of weed control. * Mallee CMA, with the First Peoples Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation and the private landholder of the significant B16 Cultural Heritage site completed riparian protection works including 33 hectares of weed and animal control, 4.1 hectares of revegetation planting and 3.4 hectares of irrigation installation. |
| Protecting waterways so our wildlife can thrive | The [Green Links grants program](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants) is providing $10 million in grants over 3 years from 2023–24 for revegetation works on urban rivers and creeks.  Following a competitive assessment process, 23 successful applications, awarded a combined $6 million in funding, were announced in February 2024. A further round will be opened in the second half of 2024–25. Green Links works will be undertaken between 2023–24 and 2025–26. |
| Urban Water Security – Augmentation readiness to improve urban water security and enable water returns to the environment and Traditional Owners | DEECA is working with urban water corporations to produce an inaugural Water Grid Plan, which will identify potential future urban water supply options and guide incremental readiness investments in climate-resilient water supplies. It will also ensure that work is completed to identify opportunities to enable a proportion of substituted water entitlements to be returned to the environment and Traditional Owners on the completion of projects.  An Executive Advisory Committee supports collaboration on, and implementation of, the Water Grid Planning Framework and alignment across the water sector on the options, roles and governance for regionally significant new water supplies. In 2023–24 work included the creation of reference groups for updating resource modelling, water efficiency options analysis and integrated water management options analysis.  Environmental water and Traditional Owner working groups were established in the first half of 2023–24 to provide ongoing advice to support decisions around projects that return water to the environment and/or Traditional Owners, or where there is an expected impact on the environment or Traditional Owners.  As part of the South-Central Reform program all bulk entitlement holders in the connected Melbourne Supply System have provided in-principle support to a preferred reform direction to create a south-central pooled resource and appropriate supporting entitlement arrangements. |
| Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project | Since March 2023, the [VMFRP](https://www.vmfrp.com.au/home/) has been operating with limited resources and a reduced work program to manage time and cost impacts that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, complex regulatory approvals processes, 2022 floods and negotiations with the Commonwealth Government to assist with additional funding to manage the time and cost impacts. Despite these challenges, the project has progressed with key milestones achieved.  Achievements for 2023–24 include:   * The Minister for Planning’s assessments of 5 sites have been received, with 4 sites (Hattah Lakes, Belsar-Yungera, Nyah and Vinifera) demonstrating that the projects can provide net benefits and results in improvement in biodiversity. * Submission of the Planning Scheme Amendment and approvals for Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 requirements for Hattah Lakes and Belsar-Yungera.   Negotiations with the Commonwealth Government are underway to provide further funding to finalise all VMFRP stage 1 (planning and approvals) activities for all sites and commence work to validate Stage 2 construction funding. |

### Departmental Objective Indicator performance

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

Graph showing 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.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 88.0% | 96.0% | 92.5% | 95.9% | 98.8% |

In 2023–24, 98.8% of intended properties were connected to a modernised irrigation delivery system. During the year, work continued to progress water infrastructure projects including the Goulburn-Murray Water’s 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 project works are complete.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Number of river reaches/wetlands with maintained or improved environmental condition.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 365 | 30 | 33 | 331 | 386 |

In 2023–24, on-ground works and watering programs were undertaken at 386 river reaches and wetlands to maintain or improve their environmental condition. This included 11,166 hectares of waterway vegetation works such as tree planting, weed control and fencing alongside waterways, and the completion of 83% of planned environmental watering actions.

### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Area of active stewardship to improve catchment health and resilience through broadacre management | hectares | 19 500 | 19 500 | 0 | 1 |
| Area of waterway vegetation works undertaken to improve the health and resilience of waterways  *Performance is above target due to catchment management authorities increasing vegetation works in the final year of the program, in line with standard practice for a multi-year natural resource management program where initial years are characterised by planning and engagement and the final years focus on implementation. Strong performance in 2023–24 counters lower than expected performance in 2022–23, when widespread flooding made many project sites inaccessible and/or unsuitable for works for several months.* | hectares | 11 166 | 9 050 | 23 | 1 |
| Climate and hydrology research activities underway that focus specifically on Victoria  *Performance is below target as 2 activities were completed ahead of schedule in 2022–23.* | number | 9 | 11 | (18) | 3 |
| Cumulative water savings (permanent reduction in irrigation distribution system delivery losses) realised through water recovery projects | megalitres | 920 179 | 945 039 | (3) | 2 |
| Environmental watering actions achieved at planned sites  *Performance is below target due to high rainfall events. Many sites experienced wet conditions during 2023–24, which resulted in natural fills and flooding in some areas. Environmental water deliveries were either not possible due to the operational conditions or were not necessary as they were achieved with natural flows and/or spill releases.* | per cent | 83 | 90 | (8) | 3 |
| Households or community housing assisted in the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit Program  *Performance is above target due to the average rebate expenditure per customer being lower than initially estimated. This allowed water corporations to offer rebates to more customers to meet demand.* | number | 2 174 | 1 040 | 107 | 1 |
| Long-term water monitoring site parameters maintained | number | 1 559 | 1 567 | (1) | 2 |
| New flood studies funded to ensure communities understand flood risk and to inform investment in flood warning and mitigation measures  *Performance is above target due to the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy pre-planning process, which allowed local councils to take advantage of available funding in 2023–24 to commence flood studies.* | number | 13 | 6 | 117 | 1 |
| Place-based plans and actions underway for healthier communities and environments that encompass multiple values (Aboriginal, social, environmental and economic) | number | 9 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| Schools signed up to Schools Water Efficiency program (SWEP)  *Performance is below target due to other competing school priorities (energy, waste and other day to day operations) and the residual impacts of COVID-19 on school participation.* | number | 1 452 | 1 800 | (19) | 3 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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 | 98.8 | 95 | 4 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Water market information products published annually to ensure water users can make informed decisions | date | Dec 2023 | Dec 2023 | 0 | 1 |
| Waterway licenses and permits processed within statutory timeframes  *Performance is above target reflecting catchment management authorities’ organisational capability and resourcing capacity to successfully process new waterway licences and permits, development applications and approvals referred by local councils within the statutory timeframes.* | per cent | 97 | 90 | 8 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The lower than budgeted output cost is due to the profile of Commonwealth contributions for the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program.* | **$ million** | **296.7** | **503.1** | **(41)** | **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.

## Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies

12: Responsible Production and Consumption

8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

### Progress towards achieving this objective

#### Context

DEECA is one of several Victorian Government departments and agencies with responsibilities for emergency management. DEECA’s responsibilities span all phases of emergency management: mitigation, response, and recovery. DEECA’s approach to reducing the impact of emergencies is informed by a number of strategies, policies and guidelines. Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy guides DEECA’s integrated approach to reducing the risk of bushfires and the protection of people, property and the environment. The Strategy is supported by Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy Implementation Plan (2024–27) and a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework. The Strategy builds on the ongoing work of the Safer Together Program that the department delivers in partnership with the sector and communities to reduce the impact of major bushfires.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Bolstering the forest firefighting workforce | Every fire season, project firefighters are employed as a surge workforce to assist with fuel reduction activities and respond to bushfires on public land. With Victoria’s climate changing and extreme weather events becoming more frequent, year-round efforts are necessary to maintain access routes, reduce hazardous fuel levels, and work with affected communities.  In July 2023, DEECA transitioned 50 seasonal contract roles into full-time ongoing Forest and Fire Operations Officer (FFOO) roles, bolstering the firefighting workforce to better protect forests and neighbouring communities. A further 54 fixed term contract FFOO roles will also transition into ongoing roles in 2024–25. |
| Delivering the Fire Reform Program, including Safer Together | [Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-bushfire-management-strategy), which sets the 10-year vision and strategic outcomes for bushfire management in Victoria, was released in May 2024. The Strategy was accompanied by a Strategy Implementation Plan and Victoria’s Bushfire Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework, which will enable monitoring and transparent public reporting on progress towards Strategy outcomes.  The review of DEECA’s fuel management target for reducing risk to human life and residential property is progressing alongside the development of new ecosystem resilience outcomes targets. This work is occurring alongside the development of a Roadmap for Future Bushfire Risk Management Targets, which will establish the pathway to expanding measures and targets to other agencies, land tenures and bushfire risk management activities. The targets and a first phase of the Roadmap focusing primarily on fuel management are expected to be delivered in December 2024, with a proposed second phase of the Roadmap focusing on broader bushfire risk management to follow.  The Safer Together program continues to create opportunities to improve the way the bushfire management sector works together and with communities to manage bushfire risk. Key highlights for 2023–24 included awarding $1.66 million in grants to support councils to deliver initiatives with local communities to manage bushfire risk; and new investment in bushfire risk and fire ecology research to continue strengthening the evidence-base underpinning bushfire management in Victoria. |
| Coordinating and delivering high quality works including those under DEECA’s recovery program and the Roading and Bridges program, including the Thurra Bridge Project | During 2023–24, a total of 2,082 kilometres of roads were improved and 10 new bridges were completed. These upgrades improve the roads for all vehicles and provide better access and egress for heavy vehicles and equipment responding to bushfire.  The Thurra Bridge replacement project advanced to the contract management phase, with the contract awarded in January 2024 and the contractor inducted in March 2024. The site has been established and the demolition of the old bridge was completed in May 2024, with the new bridge scheduled for completion in December 2025. |
| Delivering the Fuel Management, Strategic Fuel Breaks, and other fire related programs. | During 2023–24, the fuel management program delivered 316 burns with a total of 138,454 hectares of land treated. This includes 16,163 hectares of non-burn fuel treatments (including mowing, slashing, mulching and rolling) and 122,291 hectares of planned burning (all burn types).  The Strategic Fuel Breaks program was finalised in December 2023. The 2023–24 target of 34 kilometres of new strategic fuel breaks constructed was exceeded with 37 kilometres delivered.  During 2023–24, 941 kilometres of strategic fuel breaks were maintained, which exceeded the target of 900 kilometres. There were delays to delivery over spring and summer caused by wet weather conditions, which restricted the use of plant and machinery to conduct maintenance work. These were offset by additional works planned and carried out by the regions in autumn and winter. |
| Flood Recovery | DEECA continues to undertake land and biodiversity management programs to support communities and the Victorian environment to recover from the October 2022 floods. Key outcomes from recovery programs in 2023–24 include:   * 45 additional grants to support Committees of Management on Crown land reserves to assist with remediation of flood impacts * environmental assessment of 29 contaminated land sites * over 700 threatened species assessments, more than 2,000 hectares of terrestrial weed control in flood-affected areas, and over 580,000 native fish stocked in waterways in northern Victoria reopening more than 920 kilometres of public land roads and over 200 recreation sites on public land * protection and restoration of cultural places and heritage listed assets including Mudgegonga Rock Art Site * partnerships with Traditional Owner groups to restore country and build the cultural capability of emergency management staff * repair of critical water infrastructure including 95 water gauges and 144 other essential water and wastewater asset site assessments. |

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

Graph showing Indicator: Percentage of bushfires contained at first attack and/or under five hectares to suppress bushfires promptly, keep bushfires small and minimise loss.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| Per cent | 93 | 97 | 93 | 92 | 92 |
| Target line | 80 | 80 | 80 | 80 | 80 |

During the 2023–24 bushfire season, the department responded to 1,179 fires impacting 50,890 hectares of public land. Of these fires 92.4% were contained at less than five hectares in size (against a target of 80%) and 96% of fires were contained at ‘first attack’ or by 8am the day after detection (against a target of 80%). Performance was significantly above the target of 80% due to the wet conditions experienced, which reduced fire danger conditions throughout most of the bushfire season.

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

Graph showing Indicator: Area treated through planned burning and other treatments to maintain the statewide bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| Area of public land treated through planned burning and other treatments Hectares (000) | 48.4 | 152.1 | 78.3 | 92.6 | 138.5 |
| Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target of 70 per cent | 64 | 63 | 62 | 65 | 66 |

Notes on the data:

• The statewide fuel driven bushfire risk for 2023–24 is a provisional figure.

During 2023–24, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) undertook planned burning and other bushfire risk-reduction activities covering 138,454 hectares of Victoria. This comprised delivering 316 burns (including delivery of 138 out of 214 identified priority burns) covering 122,291 hectares. Additionally, 16,163 hectares of non-burn fuel treatments were undertaken, including 279 hectares of storm debris area that was mechanically treated.

During 2023–24, FFMVic also supported the delivery of 29 Traditional Owner burns.

Weather conditions in 2023–24 varied considerably across the year. Favourable weather conditions started in late March 2024, enabling significant burning and mechanical fuel management activity. In early April 2024, persistent cool southerly airflows and rainfall limited planned burning opportunities. Weather conditions improved from mid-April to May 2024 which saw planned burning activity increase.

The provisional statewide fuel-driven bushfire risk as at 30 June 2024 was 66%, within the state’s target to maintain risk at or below 70% of maximum levels. The provisional figure does not fully account for the area of public land treated through planned burning and other treatments delivered throughout 2023–24. The final figure will be reported in late 2024 via [Victoria’s Bushfire Risk Management Report](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-bushfire-risk-management-report-2022-2023), published by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management.

The result for this indicator 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

Graph showing Indicator: Percentage of agreed departmental emergency management obligations met on time and to standard.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 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 included partnering with research institutions to support the development of new research projects including expansion of risk modelling capabilities, continued enhancement of predictive services and smoke modelling, and building capability across the bushfire management sector.

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 2023–24 included:

* delivering a targeted program of fuel treatment, including planned burning, mechanical fuel treatment and creating and upgrading strategic fuel breaks
* building the capability and capacity of land and fire managers to support Traditional Owners to reintroduce cultural fire on Country
* 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 $1.66 million in grants 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

investment in the development of new modelling frameworks to inform the design of programs that improve ecosystem resilience outcomes.

#### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bridges or crossings on the strategic fire access road network replaced or upgraded | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| New Strategic fuel breaks constructed  *Performance is above target due to favourable weather conditions allowing construction of additional fuel breaks.* | km | 37 | 34 | 9 | 1 |
| Personnel with accreditation in a fire and emergency management role  *Performance is above target due to a continued proactive approach at ensuring staff progress to accreditation as soon as practicable, strong engagement in the training programs and an intake of seasonal Project Fire Fighters and fixed term Forest Fire Operations Officers.* | number | 2 949 | 2 450 | 20 | 1 |
| Stakeholder and community forums on bushfire management and planned burning held  *Performance is above target due to increased engagement associated with the fire reform program.* | number | 14 | 12 | 17 | 1 |
| 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  *The final result will be published in Victoria's Bushfire Risk Management Report 2023–24. Performance is expected to be better than the target due to the targeted delivery of Forest Fire Management Victoria’s bushfire risk reduction program in key areas of higher bushfire risk.* | per cent | 66 (estimate) | 70 | 6 | 1 |
| Strategic fire access roads improved | km | 2 082 | 2 000 | 4 | 1 |
| Strategic fuel breaks maintained | km | 941 | 900 | 4.6 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fires contained at less than five hectares to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact  *Performance is above target due to reduced fire danger conditions resulting from tropical moisture, rapid response from fire crews to the majority of new fire starts and a large number of unattended campfires extinguished by Forest Fire Management Victoria. These incidents were addressed promptly due to the less active bushfire season, which allowed for increased personnel on patrols.* | per cent | 92.4 | 80 | 16 | 1 |
| Personnel accredited to serve in a senior capacity (level 2 or 3) in a fire and emergency management role | number | 352 | 340 | 4 | 1 |
| Proportion of Community-Based Bushfire Management partnerships rated as high functioning | per cent | 80 | 80 | 0 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| 100 per cent of burns identified in the current year of the Joint Fuel Management Program ready for on ground delivery  *Performance is below target due to above average rainfall during December 2023 and January 2024, and resource impacts from bushfire response and storm damage in February 2024, which led to a 2 month delay in the preparation and planning of burns identified in the Joint Fuel Management Program.* | date | Apr 2024 | Feb 2024 | (17) | 3 |
| Assessment of model of cover completed to assess resource requirements and availability | date | Dec 2023 | Dec 2023 | 0 | 1 |
| Fires contained at first attack to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact  *Performance is above target due to reduced fire danger conditions resulting from tropical moisture, rapid response from fire crews to the majority of new fire starts and a large number of unattended campfires extinguished by Forest Fire Management Victoria. These incidents were addressed promptly due to the less active bushfire season, which allowed for increased personnel on patrols.* | per cent | 96 | 80 | 20 | 1 |
| Readiness and response plans completed prior to the upcoming fire season | date | Oct 2023 | Oct 2023 | 0 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding received to support coordinating efforts for storm and flood emergency works in response to the October 2022 floods and bushfire emergency management preparation and recovery activities.* | **$ million** | **656.3** | **431.5** | **52.1** | **3** |

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 Well-being

13: Climate Action

15: Life on Land

12: Responsible Consumption and Production

8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

### Progress towards achieving this objective

#### Context

DEECA collaborates with partners, local communities and industry to support a more productive, globally competitive, sustainable and jobs-rich agriculture, food and fibre, and resources sectors.

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.

| Initiative | 2023–24 progress |
| --- | --- |
| Backing Victoria’s world-class producers to grow | Programs to support the agriculture sector and promote opportunities in the food and beverage industry progressed during 2023–24, including:   * Partnerships against Pests: Program grant applications were open to the public from 29 November 2023 to 19 February 2024. 56 applications were received, with 21 grants approved to 20 recipients. * Farming Safe and Well: Projects supporting farm safety for targeted cohorts commenced, including the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) agriculture workforce project. Analysis of safety risks that farms face from natural disasters have been drafted, with plans for further targeted responses to be completed by December 2024. * National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) Core funding: Funding was provided to the NCFH to deliver preventative programs to improve farmer physical and mental health, improve workplace safety and conduct research. Throughout 2023–24 more than 210 health checks were provided to farmers and more than 50 training sessions and events have been provided to health care providers and students. * Vic Grown Program: the Vic Grown website profiles 31 producers as at June 2024. It was promoted at the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival 2024 to increase awareness of the platform and the producers that it showcases. * Regional Activation Grant Program (RAGP): The RAGP opened on 4 January 2024 and closed on 8 March 2024. 17 activations were selected to progress to next stage assessments with activation events commencing in 2024–25. Activations will support additional producer profiles to be added to the Vic Grown website. * Victorian Wine Strategy: $0.5 million is committed to a new Victorian Wine Strategy to provide strategic direction to the industry from 2025 to 2030. An industry steering committee was appointed in December 2023 to guide strategy development. A cross-agency group has also been formed to provide co-ordination among government agencies. * Use of 1080: From April to June 2024 Agriculture Victoria facilitated a survey of all authorised 1080 users in Victoria (about 5,600 people) to understand pest animal control practices. The survey will provide insights into the current use of 1080 and alternatives, providing an evidence base for future considerations. |
| Implementing animal welfare commitments | The findings of the Pet Census were released in January 2024, following receipt of 37,588 responses. Further research was undertaken in February and March 2024 based on the results of the Pet Census. Data and insights from the Pet Census will be used to inform policy development and other programs and activities across Animal Welfare Victoria.  A long-term draft Cat Management Strategy for Victoria was released on Engage Victoria for public feedback between March and April 2024. The Cat Management Strategy was developed in consultation with councils, animal welfare organisations, land managers, conservation groups and veterinary professionals. More than 2,000 survey responses and submissions were received on the draft strategy. Feedback will inform development of the Final Cat Management Strategy, planned for release in late 2024–25.  The first phase of stakeholder engagement for the Rehoming Pets Reforms project was completed in July 2023, with 488 sector, research and teaching organisations invited to workshops. Policy options for a regulatory framework for the sector were developed for consultation with stakeholders. A further phase of engagement is planned in 2025. |
| Deliver an emergency animal disease preparedness program | The Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Interdepartmental Committee continued to provide leadership on the delivery of the EAD Preparedness program, with progress in 2023–24 including:   * the update and release of the revised State EAD Response Plan in May 2024 * the Biosecurity Legislation Amendment (Incident Response) (BLAIR) Bill 2024 that received Royal Assent in February 2024, amending the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010 and Plant Biosecurity Act 2010 to enhance the Victorian Government’s capability to manage biosecurity incidents, prepare for, respond and recover from an EAD, or plant pest or disease, detection or outbreak * amendments to the Livestock Disease Control Regulations 2017 that were made in February 2024 * continued industry engagement and training program delivery via the Backyard Biosecurity campaign * the commissioning of a new mobile laboratory van to enable safe sample collection * installation of real-time scanning technology at 26 priority saleyards and abattoir sites (launched August 2023) * the procurement and fit out of 2 mobile incident command centres * establishment of the Emergency Veterinary Response Team with additional veterinarians ready to support EAD responses. Agriculture Victoria utilised its Emergency Veterinary Response Team to support vaccination of cattle during the Anthrax outbreak in northern Victoria in February 2024 and to support the current avian influenza response. * work commenced to revise the [State Emergency Management Plan Animal, Marine, Plant and Environmental Biosecurity Sub-Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-management-plan-sub-plans/semp-animal-plant-marine-and-environmental-biosecurity-sub-plan#:~:text=The%20Animal%2C%20Plant%2C%20Marine%20and,and%20contains%20information%20on%20biosecurity). The updated plan was released in August 2024. |
| Accelerate action by the agriculture sector to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change | Programs and activities to support and accelerate climate action in the agriculture sector progressed during 2023–24, including:   * continued delivery of research trials examining the impact and effectiveness of methane-inhibiting technologies and products, including a full lactation study to evaluate the long-term mitigation potential of an Asparagopsis (seaweed) product, which highlighted prolonged and significant methane mitigation * development of an interactive [Agriculture and Climate Spatial Tool](https://acst.spatialvision.com.au/#/acstdev/map?lat=145.49839&lon=-36.686569471133375&z=6.293153147068049&bm=msg&l=) prototype that provides projections of future growing conditions and production scenarios * partnering with external service providers to deliver more than 60 on-farm emissions action plans across dairy, beef, sheep, pig and poultry, grains and horticulture industries, as part of the On-Farm Emissions Action Plan Pilot * supporting farmers to act in emissions calculation, emissions reduction, carbon sequestration, climate adaption and seasonal risk management through a regular schedule of climate webinars, which reached approximately 2,000 farmers, supply chains, services providers and industry organisations * the Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Council (the Council) engaged with a range of key stakeholders, private sector organisations and other climate change experts to inform advice to the Victorian Government. Members of the Council were appointed for a second term in June 2024. * all commonwealth, state and territory agriculture ministers delivered a shared National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture in July 2023 and agreed on an updated National Drought Agreement, which came into effect in May 2024. |
| Develop and deliver high impact, outcomes focused research and innovation programs | An external impact evaluation was completed in October 2023 for Agriculture Victoria Research 5-year Business Plans (2017–2022). The results showed strong endorsement of the industry co-designed and co-invested research programs, highlighting:   * net benefits for grains research were estimated at $1.8 billion over 30 years (from 2017 onwards), with a benefit cost ratio of 12:1. * net benefits for biosecurity research were estimated at $489 million over 30 years (from 2017 onwards), with a benefit cost ratio of 8.2:1. * net benefits for horticulture research were estimated at $202 million over 30 years (from 2017 onwards), with a benefit cost ratio of 6.6:1. * net benefits for agriculture resources research were estimated at $79 million over 30 years (from 2017 onwards), with a benefit cost ratio of 4.7:1.   New technologies have been established and extended at the 5 regional Agriculture Victoria Research SmartFarms to deliver and demonstrate cutting edge research to industry, including:   * installation of methane and carbon dioxide sensors was completed during the fourth quarter of 2023–24 at the Ellinbank SmartFarm to enable measurement of greenhouse gas emissions emitted from individual dairy cows * the Free Air Temperature Extreme facility (FATE) completed a $1 million expansion including a doubling of the field trial footprint. FATE is globally unique and is used to demonstrate and improve crop adaptation to heat stress events. |
| Develop and deliver high impact, outcomes focused research and innovation programs (continued) | Research collaborations and partnerships continued to be established in 2023–24 with AgTech providers to deliver benefits to growers through digital farming.   * In conjunction with Inspired Ag, auto retractable netting was established as a research and demonstration tool at the Tatura SmartFarm, to be used to protect orchards from sun and hail damage. * In conjunction with the University of Queensland, digital twins were completed for the apple, pear, cherry, plum and nectarine orchards at Tatura SmartFarm to provide a virtual model and visualisation of the orchard, allowing real-time sensor data to be used to monitor orchard operations and identify areas for improvement.   Agriculture Victoria Research continued the development of biocontrol agents, diagnostic and surveillance tools to improve Victoria’s and Australia’s preparedness for agricultural pests and diseases, including:  Collaborative research with Fundación para el Estudio de Especies Invasivas (FuEDEI) in Argentina identified the Aceria mite in the first quarter of 2023–24 as a promising new biological control agent for silverleaf nightshade. Silverleaf nightshade is a serious weed of cropping and grazing industries in south-eastern Australia that is difficult and costly to control with herbicides.  An innovative $800,000, 2-year project co-funded with the Australian Research Data Commons is focused on revolutionising beehive health and traceability within apiarist and horticulture communities.  Agriculture Victoria Research and industry commenced a 4-year, $4.8 million industry co-invested project in December 2023 to assist Australian pulse breeders to develop varieties with the correct quality attributes for their intended market and facilitate Australian growers to produce pulse varieties for these markets.  The Get into AgSTEM program continues to promote agriculture as a future career opportunity to students, with more than 1,050 participants involved in 65 workshops conducted across regional and metropolitan Victoria during 2023–24. |
| Deliver biosecurity regulatory services | Biosecurity regulatory services are delivered to reduce harm within an extensive state, national and international system. Regulatory functions include biosecurity, livestock animal welfare, product integrity and traceability, food safety and agricultural and veterinary chemicals. Delivery progress during 2023–24 included:   * 93% (3,000 of 3,216) of Plant Health Certificates were issued within 45 minutes at the Melbourne Markets * 1,921 property inspections were completed for the control of invasive plant and animal priority species * 1,985 Agriculture Chemical User Permits were processed and issued * 4,235 animal health certificates were issued * 97% of animal welfare complaints were triaged within 24 hours. A total of 1,738 animal welfare complaints were received over 2023–24.   The Agriculture Victoria Connect client portal went live in April 2024, completing the transition to self-service functionality for Agricultural chemical permits.  A new Governor in Council Order was made declaring a range of plant pests and diseases as exotic under the Plant Biosecurity Act 2010. This included 76 additional plants and diseases, most not found in Australia, and enables controls to be introduced if required to prevent the entry of these pests and diseases. |
| Strengthening diversity and inclusion through skills in the Agriculture workforce | Programs and activities to strengthen diversity and inclusion through skills in the Agriculture workforce progressed during 2023–24, including:   * AgriFutures Victorian Rural Women’s 2024 Award: Victoria’s 2024 Rural Women’s Award Winner was Grace Larson, a paediatric nurse. Grace represented Victoria at the national awards in Canberra in August 2024. * Garinga djimbayang program: This program is part of the Agricultural College Modernisation Program and will be delivered through to June 2026, via 2 workstreams: * Communications project: An Aboriginal services provider has been contracted (following a competitive tender process) to work with First Nations people to share their stories through case studies, videos and images. The communication products created will be used to support and attract more First Nations peoples to train for careers and work in Victorian agriculture. * Grant program: The garinga djimbayang grant program was launched in June 2024 to support partnerships between TAFEs and Registered Aboriginal Parties to embed Aboriginal traditional knowledge and practices into design and delivery of elements of accredited agriculture training. It is expected that grant funding for successful applicants will be allocated by December 2024 for delivery through to May 2026. * Rural Women’s Network: The network’s flagship Leadership and Mentoring programs were successfully run in 2023–24. Eight women were awarded up to $10,000 to participate in the Leadership program and 12 women were placed in the mentoring program, where they were paired in peer-to-peer mentoring with a focus on skills and experience exchange. * Young Farmers: A new 10-person Young Farmers Advisory Council was appointed in August 2023. The Council focuses on issues impacting those new or trying to enter farming. Round 10 of the Upskill and Invest – Young Farmer Scholarships opened on 27 May 2024. The program aims to provide 12-14 scholarships valued at up to $10,000 for participants aged 18–35 to upskill and invest in agriculture. |
| Reform Victoria’s animal welfare laws | A suite of internal and external engagement was completed throughout 2023–24 to support finalisation of the draft Animal Care and Protection Bill:   * A draft Bill was released for public consultation in 2023, with an exposure draft released for consultation from 15 December 2023 to 25 March 2024 via Engage Victoria. A parallel feedback process also allowed government stakeholders a final opportunity to provide a response. * 603 written submissions were received as part of the public consultation, including 90 from groups and organisations (such as advocacy, industry, veterinarian, legal, commercial and research bodies). * A preliminary scoping survey about topics related to [regulations](https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/new-animal-welfare-act-victoria/page/regulations-survey) was also made available to the public, alongside consultation on the draft Bill. A total of 208 responses to the survey were received.   All feedback received on the draft Bill is being considered and will help to finalise the Animal Care and Protection Bill before introduction to Parliament. |
| Support agriculture recovery from floods and storms | Agriculture Victoria continued to provide tailored technical advice and decision-making support services to flood and storm affected farmers to inform farm business recovery.  During 2023–24 Agriculture Victoria delivered 143 events, engaging 1,506 farmers. Events since December 2023 have focused on planning and building resilience to future natural disasters.  Since the statewide flooding event in October 2022, Agriculture Victoria delivered a total of 477 recovery activities, engaging 4,611 impacted farmers.  The Victorian Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, activated a range of financial support programs for primary producers to support recovery from the October 2022 flood and storm event.  Agriculture Victoria continues to prepare the agricultural sector for future natural disasters, through a strong on-ground presence in farming communities across Victoria, tailoring technical information and decision-making support and continued social connection.  The Rural Financial Counselling Service provided case-managed business planning support for impacted farmers who are experiencing financial difficulty. This service is co funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments. |
| Timber industry support | Under the [Forestry Transition Program](https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry/forestry-transition-program) (previously the Victorian Forestry Plan), support programs were released during 2023–24 to assist Victoria’s native timber industry transition, following the cessation of native timber harvesting on 1 January 2024.  Transition packages for sawmills, harvest and haulage contractors, community forestry operators and other forestry businesses were released and are being implemented. The transition packages have enabled timber businesses to make important commercial decisions to retain workers or even grow and diversify their business. Many businesses have taken time to assess their future and applications were staggered throughout 2023–24. This is reflected in the different stages of assessment as the financial year closed.  As at 30 June 2024, applications were received, processed and approved for the following:   * Sawmill Transition Support Package: 11 applications received, with 10 of these approved * Harvest and Haulage Support Package: 25 applications received, with 17 of these approved * Community Forestry Support Package: 43 applications received, with 27 of these approved * Forestry Business Support Package: 31 applications received, with one of these approved.   Programs were also released to support the transition, growth and attraction of businesses. As at 30 June 2024, expressions of interest and applications were received and approved for the following:   * Across Round 1 and 2 of the Timber Innovation Fund: 61 applications received, with 47 projects approved. The third funding round opened in May 2024 and one application has been received. * Forestry Transition Fund: 24 applications received, with 10 projects approved. |
| Timber worker support | With the ending of native timber harvesting, holistic support has been provided during 2023–24 to impacted workers and their families through the Worker Support Program, which provides personalised supports including: 1 to 1 case management; training; employment assistance services; and mental health and wellbeing support.  As at 30 June 2024, 1,392 workers and family members have received support and 286 payments were made to impacted workers.  A dedicated Opal Worker Support Service is also being provided by ForestWorks and expanded through the Latrobe Valley Authority and Gippsland Trades and Labour Council, following Opal Australian Paper announcing its exit from white paper production. As at 30 June 2024:   * 112 workers have secured new employment, including 4 who were provided relocation support * 54 workers are being supported by employment service providers, as part of this they are undertaking exploratory short-term work engagements and trialling different industries and opportunities. * 33 workers and family members have been supported to obtain higher levels of education. |
| Manage the transition away from native timber harvesting, supporting timber communities | Long-term programs to support local economies transition to new, sustainable industries continue. Wellington Shire Council and Orbost Chamber of Commerce are finalising economic development projects approved in 2023–24.  During 2023–24, further applications to the Community Development Fund were approved, including to:   * Baw Baw Shire Council for the implementation of Local Development Strategy priority projects in renewable energy, the visitor economy and education * Murrindindi Shire Council to undertake community capability building activities to support small business development and community leadership * Heyfield Community Resource Centre for a grant to lead the execution of Local Development Strategy priority projects in the visitor economy, advanced manufacturing, new energy and health and aged care opportunities.   To support the expansion of Victoria’s plantation timber estate as part of the managed transition from native timber harvesting, DEECA continues to deliver the $120 million Gippsland Plantations Investment Program (GPIP) as part of Victoria’s Plantation Strategy.  Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP) successfully acquitted the final GPIP grant agreement condition precedent in November 2023, enabling them to commence plantation development activities. Since then, HVP has acquired approximately 1,500 hectares of land for planting and has planted approximately 1 million seedlings as part of the 2024 winter planting program which ended on 16 July 2024. HVP also lodged 2 carbon projects with the Clean Energy Regulator that will facilitate the creation of Australian Carbon Credit Units. |
| Enabling a more streamlined approach to resources decision-making | The change to a risk-based regulatory framework for mining and quarrying activities in Victoria commences 1 July 2027 as per the amendments to the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, passed by Parliament in August 2023. To support the transition to the new framework, the following was achieved during 2023–24:   * created 3 Stakeholder Reference Groups * commenced work on a Traditional Owner Partnership strategic plan * worked with the Department of Transport and Planning in relation to Victorian Planning Provisions and Planning Scheme Amendments * progressed work on concept design of the regulatory instruments that will sit under the Act, such as the principal regulations, standards, and codes of conduct.   The Resources Victoria Approvals Coordination (RVAC) function, established in August 2023, aims to reduce approval times by case-managing resource development applications.  To meet future demand and reduce prices, RVAC has increased approvals for new quarries resulting in the ratio for every one tonne of quarry material currently being produced, 4 new tonnes are approved for development (approximately 300 million tonnes approved in 2023–24). Quarry approvals include Holcim Warrnambool, Boral Montrose and Fulton Hogan Tynong. This enables the supply of quarry materials for wind turbine construction, for Level Crossing Removal projects on the Lilydale-Belgrave and Pakenham-Cranbourne lines and for the North-East Link construction project. |
| Reform to Perform: Resources sector support to achieve Net Zero and the Big Build | The [Resources Victoria Strategy (Towards 2030)](https://resources.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/1015150/Resources-Victoria-Strategy.pdf) was released in March 2024. The strategy highlights the key priorities and areas of focus for Resources Victoria including increasing investment, building confidence and securing the supply of quarry materials essential for new infrastructure and construction, while supporting Victoria’s transition to net zero by 2045.  The Geological Survey of Victoria in collaboration with Geoscience Australia completed the Shepparton-Numurkah Regional Ground Gravity Survey in May 2024. The 9-month project measured the Earth’s gravity at more than 23,000 locations along 80,000 kilometres of public roads and tracks between Seymour, Echuca and Wodonga, covering an area of about 17,000 square kilometres. This information will inform local resource and land management decisions and the mapping of geological structures adds to the state’s geological database vital for highlighting new exploration opportunities including critical minerals.  The [Extractive Resources Supply and Demand Study 2022–2030](https://resources.vic.gov.au/projects/extractive-resources-strategy/extractive-resources-supply-and-demand-study#:~:text=Extractive%20Resources%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Study%202022%2D2030,63.7%20million%20in%202020%2D2021.) was released in August 2023. This study investigated whether Victoria has the supply of extractive resources to meet demand between 2021–22 and 2029–30. The study concluded that the forecast supply/demand outlook for extractive materials in Victoria will tighten with the forecast demand for extractive resources in 2030 rising to 79.5 million tonnes, up from 63.7 million in 2020–21. |
| Developing Victoria’s critical minerals | The Critical Minerals work program progressed during 2023–24 with the following highlights:   * Resources Victoria staff attended the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto in March 2024, the largest conference of its type in the world, promoting Victoria’s critical minerals prospectivity to approximately 70 companies and delegations from across the world. * An assessment of the development of mineral sands in north-west Victora was completed in February 2024, capturing new opportunities for the state.   A new [geoscientific report](http://earthresources.efirst.com.au/product.asp?pID=1342&cID=70) was published on the prospectivity/presence of sedimentary copper in eastern Victoria in May 2024, aimed at highlighting the state’s potential for critical minerals. |
| Securing Victoria’s extractive resources | The Extractive Industry Interest Area (EIIA) Refresh program was completed in October 2023. Contemporary new geoscience data of all EIIAs in metropolitan Melbourne has been modelled, deepening the knowledge about the quality and availability of extractive resources. This provides the evidence for introducing State Resource Overlay across resources close to demand centres through the Strategic Extractive Resource Area (SERA) program.  Development of Tranche 1 of the SERA program progressed during 2023–24. Work included development of draft planning provisions in readiness for public consultation for 3 priority SERAs – Lang Lang, Oakland’s Junction and Trafalgar. The 3 SERAs collectively secure more than 920 million tonnes of hard rock and sand resources vital for the quarry materials needed to support future infrastructure development. Development of the planning provisions involved significant engagement with Traditional Owners, industry, local councils and other authorities. The next step will be formal public consultation in early 2024–25.  As part of processing quarry regulatory approvals, a Quarry Approvals team was created within the Earth Resources Regulator in January 2024 to review stalled applications. This team has worked with more than 100 licence holders to identify and address barriers to approvals for quarries across the state. |
| Earth Resources Regulation | An underground incident occurred at the Ballarat Gold Mine on 13 March 2024, where one worker tragically lost their life. The Earth Resources Regulator has supported WorkSafe as part of the investigation into this incident.  In August 2023, the Earth Resources Regulator released a Code of Practice for the construction, operation and decommissioning of petroleum wells in Victoria. The code provides information to industry about minimising and managing risks associated with onshore petroleum wells during all stages of the petroleum well lifecycle.  The Earth Resources Regulator also released a draft Code of Practice for Common Risk Management Techniques for Quarries for public consultation over September to October 2023. Following extensive consultation and industry feedback, the format and style of the code is being reviewed to provide industry with a clear and easy to use guide to good practice.  To help unlock Victoria’s resource potential and reduce requirements to industry, the Earth Resources Regulator is waiving the need for licensees to progressively reduce their exploration area. Between 1 April 2024 until 30 June 2025 the waiver will automatically be granted to licensees meeting their licence requirements.  The Mine Remediation Works program, focused on the rehabilitation of 3 former mine sites, progressed including:   * Benambra: On-site sampling and investigations were completed prior to the site closure period for winter. Sampling analysis assessed by the contracted environmental assessor will inform the detailed site investigation report for the next phase of work * Kralcopic Bendigo Mines: Woodvale drill core removal works were completed in April 2024 and all on-site sampling for the detailed site investigations were completed. The Eaglehawk site has been rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the Crown land manager and handover has been completed. * Red Robin: The EPA-accredited auditor has assessed the provisional detailed site investigation reports, and this will inform the development of rehabilitation options. |

## Departmental Objective Indicator performance

Indicator: Value of Victorian agriculture production

**Gross value of Victorian agriculture production**

Graph showing Indicator: Value of Victorian agriculture production.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017-18 $billion | 2018-19 $billion | 2019-20 $billion | 2020-21 $billion | 2021-22 $billion |
| 14.9 | 15.9 | 17.8 | 17.5 | 20.2 |

Notes on the data:

• The data for this indicator is reported 2 years in arrears, with the 2022–23 result expected in December 2024 and 2023–24 result expected in late 2025. This delay is expected to reduce as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) progresses its agriculture statistics modernisation program.

• In June 2024, ABS released data for 2022–23, incorporating new sources and methods. However, this new data does not cover the value of certain agricultural commodities like hay, silage, and eggs. DEECA is working to address these gaps to better determine the overall gross value of Victoria's agricultural production.

Based on the most recently available data, in 2021–22, the gross value of agricultural production in Victoria was $20.2 billion, a 15% increase from 2020–21. During the 5 years up to 2021–22, the gross value of agricultural production in Victoria increased by 36%, rising from $14.9 billion in 2017–18 to $20.2 billion in 2021–22. Ranked by value, the most valuable commodities were grains ($4.2 billion), horticulture ($3.9 billion), milk ($3.0 billion), beef ($2.9 billion), and sheep ($2.2 billion).

The high value of production during recent years has been sustained despite several challenges, including high input prices, repeated extreme weather events, and disruptions to overseas markets and supply chains arising from COVID-19 and geopolitical developments. Recent years’ positive performance reflects favourable seasonal conditions and mostly strong commodity prices among other factors. Commodity prices have been supported by the diversification of Victoria’s international markets. Farmers continue to adapt to new conditions and circumstances by adopting new processes and technologies, such as crop and price forecasting, robotics, crop and soil monitoring, intelligent spraying and trough and tank sensors.

Parts of Victoria have experienced repeated extreme weather in recent years, including major floods and storms during late 2022, and repeated storms during late 2023 and early 2024. This caused major losses and hardship for some producers. During 2023–24 farm input prices remained high while seasonal conditions deteriorated, and commodity prices declined in many cases. Forecasts suggest average farm profitability and possibly the gross value of production will decline by 2023–24.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Indicator: Value of Victorian food and fibre exports

Graph showing Indicator: Value of Victorian food and fibre exports.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2018-19 $billion | 2019-20 $billion | 2020-21 $billion | 2021-22 $billion | 2022-23 $billion |
| 14.7 | 14.9 | 14.3 | 18.2 | 19.6 |

Notes on the data:

• Historical data may differ slightly from data published in prior annual reports. This reflects revisions in the source data from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

Victorian food and fibre exports performed strongly in 2022–23, reaching a record high of $19.6 billion, a 7% increase from the previous year. Victoria’s exports represented 24% of the national total, continuing Victoria’s position 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 ($5.6 billion), meat ($4.5 billion), dairy ($2.5 billion) and animal fibre ($2.1 billion) were Victoria’s most valuable export products in 2022–23. Victoria’s top 6 food and fibre exports grew in export value during 2022–23, most notably grains (up 26%), animal fibre (up 13%), horticulture (up 13%) and prepared foods (up 10%). Growth in grain exports accounted for over 85% of the net increase in Victorian food and fibre export value in 2022–23.

By market, China ($4.7 billion), Japan ($1.7 billion), the United States ($1.6 billion), and New Zealand ($1.1 billion) were the most valuable export destinations in 2022–23. The value of Victoria’s food and fibre exports saw significant increases in most of Victoria’s key markets. Notably, exports to Singapore increased (up 57% to $994 million), the United Arab Emirates (up 36% to $693 million), South Korea (up 22% to $810 million), and Indonesia (up 21% to $1 billion).

Comparing 2018–19 to 2022–23, the value of Victorian food and fibre exports into markets outside of the top 5 has grown from 41% to 48%, indicating a strong global appetite for Victorian food and fibre and an increase in international market diversification.

The 7% growth in export value compared to 2021–22 achieved by food and fibre producers, is a testament to their resilience and the ongoing global demand for their premium products.

As the journey towards global recovery from the COVID‑19 pandemic continues, Victoria’s global standing as a provider of high-quality food and fibre products continues to protect the sector from severe economic consequences.

Indicator: Metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria

Graph showing Indicator: Metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-2022 | 2022-23 |
| Meters | 337,654 | 388,662 | 467,585 | 528,175 | 425,433 |

Notes on the data:

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

• Source: Geological Survey of Victoria, audited reports for mineral exploration.

The number of metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria during 2022–23 was 425,433 metres. This represents a reduction of 102,742 metres or 19.5% compared to 2021–22.

The lower level of metres drilled in 2022–23 is mainly due to a 30.3% decrease in mineral exploration associated with exploration licences, with 164,435 metres drilled in 2022–23 compared to 235,767 in 2021–22. Exploration activity was impacted by broader economic drivers including higher interest rates and geopolitical tensions creating uncertain economic conditions. The decrease in minerals exploration in Victoria is consistent with the trend globally.

Metres drilled associated with mining licences totalled 191,219 metres, a 13.6% decrease compared to 2021–22 (221,293 metres). The drilling on retention licences largely remained steady, with 69,779 metres drilled (1.9% less than 2021–22).

Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives

Graph showing Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 Ounces | 2019-20  Ounces | 2020-21  Ounces | 2021-22  Ounces | 2022-23  Ounces |
| Annual production of gold | 567,501 | 790,054 | 722,239 | 627,016 | 491,425 |

Notes on the data:

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

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

• Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2022–23 Statistical Report](https://resources.vic.gov.au/legislation-and-regulations/regulator-performance-reporting/annual-statistical-reports)

The volume of gold production in Victoria in 2022–23 was 491,425 ounces. This represents a reduction of 135,591 ounces or 21.6% from 2021–22. This was mainly driven by lower production from the Fosterville Gold Mine located near Bendigo (the largest gold producer in Victoria) reflecting lower gold grades and primary ventilation operating restrictions related to low frequency noise constraints.

Graph showing Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 Million tonnes | 2019-20  Million tonnes | 2020-21  Million tonnes | 2021-22  Million tonnes | 2022-23  Million tonnes |
| Annual production of extractives | 63.04 | 64.71 | 67.23 | 71.91 | 72.29 |

Notes on the data:

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

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

• Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2022–23 Statistical Report](https://resources.vic.gov.au/legislation-and-regulations/regulator-performance-reporting/annual-statistical-reports)

During 2022–23 extractives production increased to 72.29 million tonnes (an increase of 0.5% from 2021–22). The increase was driven by higher hard rock production (48.5 million tonnes produced, a 7.2% increase) partly offset by lower soft rock production (23.79 million tonnes produced, a 10.8% decrease). Victoria’s Big Build continued to drive new investment in critical infrastructure covering major construction and transport initiatives. This continues to grow the demand for extractives material (sand, stone, and gravel) that is projected to grow to in excess of 100 million tonnes by 2050.

Graph showing Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 1,000 tonnes | 2019-20  1,000 tonnes | 2020-21  1,000 tonnes | 2021-22  1,000 tonnes | 2022-23  1,000 tonnes |
| Annual production of brown coal | 42,256 | 40,372 | 42,263 | 39,126 | 38,596 |

Notes on the data:

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

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

• Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2022–23 Statistical Report](https://resources.vic.gov.au/legislation-and-regulations/regulator-performance-reporting/annual-statistical-reports)

Brown coal production decreased by 1.4% during 2022–23 to 38.6 million tonnes. Brown coal production will continue to 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. Yallourn Power Station and Loy Yang A Power Station are scheduled to close in mid-2028 and 2035 respectively.

Graph showing Indicator: Level of production of minerals and extractives.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018-19 tonnes | 2019-20  tonnes | 2020-21  tonnes | 2021-22  tonnes | 2022-23  tonnes |
| Annual production of antimony | 2,016 | 3,141 | 3,551 | 2,896 | 2,144 |

Notes on the data:

• Data for this indicator is reported one year in arrears.

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

• Source: [Earth Resources Regulation Annual 2022–23 Statistical Report](https://resources.vic.gov.au/legislation-and-regulations/regulator-performance-reporting/annual-statistical-reports)

Antimony is produced from Australia’s only antimony mine at Costerfield in central Victoria. Production decreased to 2,144 tonnes in 2022–23 from 2,896 tonnes in 2021–22 (a reduction of 26%). The lower level of production reflects the impact of lower grades of antimony and supply chain issues impacting operational performance.

### 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.

This output 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Farms and related small businesses facing significant adjustment pressures supported to make better-informed decisions by the Rural Financial Counselling Service  *Performance is above target due to the ongoing impact of the 2022 floods and storms, resulting in a higher number of farms and related small businesses being supported through the program. Additionally, reduced commodity prices and increased input costs have led to financial stress for farmers, further increasing requests for assistance.* | number | 2 279 | 1 700 | 34 | 1 |
| Inspections or audits of scientific establishments undertaken to provide assurance of compliance with relevant industry standards for animal welfare  *Performance is above target due to the anticipated fluctuations during the year. This performance measure comprises audits set by the department (scheduled audits) as well as inspections (ad hoc) triggered by applications received from licence holders.* | number | 27 | 25 | 8 | 1 |
| 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  *Performance is below target as the Responsible Pet Ownership program continues to rebuild following COVID-19, which saw a significant loss of pet educators and suitability-tested dogs. COVIDSafe settings led to many puppies and dogs missing out on critical socialisation and training. As a result, fewer dogs have passed the program’s suitability tests in recent years.* | number | 2 580 | 3 100 | (17) | 3 |
| Young farmer scholarships awarded  *Performance is above target as 14 scholarships were able to be awarded within the allocated annual budget for this program. When applications are received for less than the maximum scholarship allowable, additional scholarships are able to be awarded.* | number | 14 | 12 | 17 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grant recipients who met or exceeded agreed milestones | per cent | 75 | 75 | 0 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Performance and grant agreements acquitted within timeframes specified in the funding agreement | per cent | 90 | 90 | 0 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The lower than budgeted output costs is predominantly due to the reprofiling of funding from 2022–23 to 2023–24 for the Animal care and protection initiative.* | **$ million** | **142.5** | **152.7** | **(7)** | **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.

#### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Applications for intellectual property protection  *Performance is below target due to a rescope of the program. The number of applications reflects the revised scope.* | number | 14 | 16 | (13) | 3 |
| Commercial technology licence agreements finalised  *Performance is below target due to a rescope of the program. The number of agreements finalised reflects the revised scope.* | number | 15 | 16 | (6) | 3 |
| 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 | 63 | 65 | (3) | 2 |
| Value of co-investment from external (non-state) funding sources attracted to the Department’s research projects that support productive agriculture  *Performance is below target due to a rescope of the program, resulting in reduced external co-investment. Industry co-investment levels remain consistent at 50% or above.* | $ million | 37.6 | 41 | (8) | 3 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Satisfaction rating of industry investors in agriculture productivity research and development  *Performance is above target due to strong alignment with industry strategy and research goals, and reputation for delivering research.* | scale 1-10 | 8 | 7 | 14 | 1 |
| Scientific and technical publications subjected to independent peer review in international and national journals that promote productive agriculture  *Performance is below target due to a rescope of the program. The number of publications reflects the revised scope.* | number | 235 | 260 | (10) | 3 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Provision of technical advice, diagnostic identification tests on pests and diseases including suspected exotics within agreed timeframes | per cent | 87.6 | 85 | 3 | 1 |
| Research project milestones and reports completed on time | per cent | 93.6 | 90 | 4 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The lower than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the reprofiling of the output allocation of the Agriculture sub outputs (Agriculture Industry and Development Regulation, Agriculture Research and Biosecurity and Agriculture Services) as a result of the Machinery of Government transfer in 2022–23.* | **$ million** | **110.3** | **119.4** | **(7.6)** | **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.

#### 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.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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 | ü |
| Client interactions with land health services | number | 1 726 | 1 700 | 2 | ü |
| Clients engaged with agriculture productivity services | number | 4 099 | 3 910 | 4.8 | ü |
| Improved agricultural services, programs and products developed | number | 10 | 10 | 0 | ü |
| Known state prohibited weed sites monitored and treated in line with the relevant weed action plan | per cent | 98 | 95 | 3 | ü |
| 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 | ü |
| Properties inspected for invasive plant and animal priority species  *Performance is below target due to the redirection of resources to higher priority activities. This includes emergency responses such as Avian Influenza and Varroa Mite, and surveillance programs in response to Brown Marmorated Stink Bug.* | number | 1 921 | 2 700 | (29) | n |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Client satisfaction rating of agricultural services  *Performance is above target due to prioritising the design of client focussed services.* | scale 1-10 | 8.9 | 8 | 11 | ü |
| National biosecurity, agriculture/veterinary chemical use and animal welfare programs implemented in accordance with agreed plans | per cent | 100 | 96 | 4 | ü |
| 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 | ü |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Animal health certificates issued within specified timeframes to support international market access | per cent | 98 | 95 | 3 | ü |
| Commence action within specified timeframes on new or amended accreditations to restore or enable trade | per cent | 100 | 96 | 4 | ü |
| 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 | ü |
| Plant health certificates issued within specified timeframes at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market to support domestic market access | per cent | 93 | 95 | (2) | ¡ |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total output cost  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding received for biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies and the reprofiling of the output allocation of the Agriculture sub outputs (Agriculture Industry and Development Regulation, Agriculture Research and Biosecurity and Agriculture Services) as a result of the Machinery of Government transfer in 2022–23.* | $ million | 168.7 | 120.2 | 40.3 | n |

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.

#### Sustainably manage forest resources

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Key statutory obligations relevant to VicForests complied with (tabling annual reports, audits, corporate plan and board appointments) | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Facilitate the delivery of the Victorian Forestry Plan in line with key project milestones | per cent | 100 | 100 | 0 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to additional funding for the Native Timber Harvesting Transition, Forestry Transition Program and Timber Harvesting Transition Support initiatives.* | **$ million** | **311.2** | **112.6** | **176.4** | **3** |

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.

#### Resources

This output develops and delivers 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.

The department acquires and provides access to high-quality geoscience data and knowledge to inform government decision making and attract new investment and jobs to the Victoria. It develops and implements legislative and regulatory reforms in the earth resources sector to improve outcomes for all stakeholders.

Supporting investment in resources and low emission technologies, the department fosters innovation, productivity, jobs and trade in the state’s earth resources sector. Through strategic resource and related land use planning, new opportunities are able to be identified for Victoria’s earth resources, along with supporting major infrastructure development in the state.

DEECA also regulates the earth resources sector through transparent, consistent and timely regulatory processes that provide industry with confidence to invest and have regard to the needs of communities and minimise impacts to the environment.

| Performance measures | Unit of measure | 2023–24 actual | 2023–24 target | Performance variation (%) | Result |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quantity |  |  |  |  |  |
| Community and stakeholder engagement information forums  *Performance is above target as additional community and stakeholder engagement was required to address matters such as mine remediation and acquisition of quarry materials to support infrastructure development.* | number | 62 | 55 | 13 | 1 |
| Quality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exploration and mining licences which are active | per cent | 84.6 | 82.5 | 3 | 1 |
| Timeliness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Extractive Industries Work Authority work plans processed within regulatory timeframes  *Performance is below target due to the short-term impact of clearing a backlog of complex and voluminous applications.* | per cent | 86.8 | 95 | (9) | 3 |
| Facilitate the delivery of resources projects in line with grant agreements and project milestones | per cent | 96.8 | 100 | (3) | 2 |
| 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  *Performance is below target due to a large number of complex work plan submissions received over a short period of time, creating a backlog of applications.* | per cent | 87 | 95 | (8) | 3 |
| Regulatory audits completed within agreed timelines | per cent | 98.4 | 98 | 0 | 1 |
| Cost |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total output cost**  *The higher than budgeted output cost is predominantly due to the reprofiling of funding from 2022–23 to 2023–24 for the Resources for Recovery: Securing the Resources for Victoria’s economic recovery initiative.* | **$ million** | **52.2** | **48.5** | **7.5** | **3** |

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.

## Discontinued measures for 2023–24

Following assessment by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, the performance measures listed below were discontinued for 2023–24.

| Output group | Performance measure name |
| --- | --- |
| Environment and Biodiversity | Hours volunteered across all government funded environmental volunteering programs |
| Energy | Total renewable electricity generation capacity from the Victorian Renewable Energy Target 2017 Auction projects |
| Energy | Microgrids established |
| Energy | Relative reduction in statewide powerline related bushfire risk |
| Solar Victoria | Applications for Solar PV rebates for owner occupied and rental households approved |
| Solar Victoria | Applications for home battery rebates approved |
| Solar Victoria | Applications for Solar PV rebates for small businesses approved |
| Solar Victoria | Applications for Home Heating and Cooling Upgrade rebates for reverse cycle air conditioning units to replace inefficient heating systems approved |
| Solar Victoria | Applications for Zero Emissions Vehicle subsidies approved |
| Management of Public Land and Forests | Contaminated Crown land sites assessed/prepared for remediation |
| Management of Public Land and Forests | Off-leash dog parks completed |
| Effective Water Management and Supply | Interactions with Water Markets reporting and transparency information, including visits to the Water Register webpage and other digital information, per month |
| Fire and Emergency Management | Strategic fuel breaks built or upgraded |
| Fire and Emergency Management | 100 per cent of burns identified in the Joint Fuel Management Program prepared for delivery |
| Agriculture | Number of small scale local and craft producers attending workshops/mentoring programs |
| Agriculture | New or amended Interstate Certificate Assurance (ICA) or other market access accreditations developed to restore or enable trade |

## Discontinued departmental objective indicators for 2023–24

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Objective | Departmental Objective Indicator |
| Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment | Participation in community-based environmental programs |

## Discontinued operations

There were no discontinued operations for 2023–24 under the department’s output structure.

# Our people

5: Gender Equality

10: Reduced Inequalities

16: 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.

On 30 June 2024, DEECA employed 5,809 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, with a total headcount of 6,071.

Figure 1. Staff distribution by age (headcount)

Graph showing Staff distribution by age (headcount).
Data in table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Age | Headcount |
| 15-24 | 204 |
| 25-34 | 1,428 |
| 35-44 | 1,770 |
| 45-54 | 1,587 |
| 55-64 | 887 |
| 65+ | 195 |

The largest age cohort is staff between 35–44 years of age, accounting for 29% of total staff. The next largest is the 45–54 year age cohort, accounting for 26% of staff.

Figure 1.1 Staff distribution by work status (headcount)

Graph showing Staff distribution by work status (headcount).
Data in table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Work Status | Headcount |
| Casual | 0.26% |
| Fixed Term | 23.41% |
| Ongoing | 76.33% |

There were 4,634 staff in ongoing roles, representing 76% of all staff.

Figure 1.2 Ongoing staff distribution by working arrangement (headcount)

Graph showing Figure 1.2 Ongoing staff distribution by working arrangement (headcount).
Data in table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Working Arrangement | Headcount |
| Part Time | 17% |
| Full Time | 83% |

Reflecting the availability of flexible working arrangements, 786 (17%) of 4,634 ongoing staff utilise part-time working arrangements.

Figure 2. Staff distribution by classification (headcount)

Graph showing Staff distribution by classification (headcount).
Data in table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Classification | Headcount |
| VPS 1 | 2 |
| VPS 2 | 225 |
| VPS 3 | 690 |
| VPS 4 | 1331 |
| VPS 5 | 1484 |
| VPS 6 | 829 |
| Science Adaptives | 564 |
| Legal Adaptives | 20 |
| STS | 37 |
| PS | 13 |
| Executives | 173 |
| Field Staff | 683 |
| Other | 20 |

Figure 2.1 Distribution of women by classification (headcount)

Graph showing Distribution of women by classification (headcount).
Data in table below.

| Classification | Headcount |
| --- | --- |
| VPS 2 | 67% |
| VPS 3 | 57% |
| VPS 4 | 59% |
| VPS 5 | 56% |
| VPS 6 | 49% |
| Science Adaptives | 53% |
| Legal Adaptives | 65% |
| STS | 32% |
| PS | 38% |
| Executives | 56% |
| Field Staff | 19% |

In the 2 classifications with the largest number of staff, VPS Grade 4 and VPS Grade 5, the representation of women is: 59% of 1,331 VPS Grade 4 staff and 56% of 1,484 VPS Grade 5 staff.

Figure 3. Staff distribution by region (headcount)

Graph showing Staff distribution by region (headcount).
Data in table below.

| Region | Headcount |
| --- | --- |
| Port Phillip | 870 |
| Loddon Mallee | 401 |
| Hume | 546 |
| Grampians | 496 |
| Gippsland | 715 |
| Barwon South West | 368 |
| CBD | 2,675 |

DEECA is geographically dispersed across 86 locations across Victoria, with 44% of staff based in the Melbourne central business district (CBD) and 14% in the Port Phillip region (which covers the rest of the Greater Melbourne area), with the remaining 42% in regional Victoria. The largest regional staff population is in Gippsland where 12%of staff are based. In 2023–24, most office-based staff worked under hybrid working arrangements.

## DEECA’s Workforce

### How do we compare to the Victorian population?

Victorian population statistics were extracted from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 census data, and DEECA statistics were derived from the People Matter Survey results.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | DEECA | VIC |
| Identify as LGBTIQA+ | 10% | 6% |
| Are a carer | 80% | 39% |
| Percentage of Women | 48% | 51% |
| Transgender, Non-Binary or Gender Diverse | 1% |  |
| Religious Affiliation | 25% | 31% |
| Disability | 8% | 17% |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 2% | 1% |
| Language (Speak a language other than English at home) | 13% | 30% |

Graph showing Age breakdown.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age breakdown | DEECA | VIC |
| 15-34 | 26 | 27 |
| 35-54 | 51 | 27 |
| 55-75 | 13 | 21 |

DEECA has a diverse workforce according to the department’s 2023 People Matter Survey results. Notably DEECA compromises 10% of staff who identify as LGTBIQA+, 80% are carers, 8% are people with disability, 13% speak a language at home other than English.

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

### Our culture and values

How we work and interact with each other, and with our ministers, stakeholders and the community is critically important to achieving better outcomes for Victoria. As we go about our work, we are guided by the VPS values and the DEECA Leadership Model.

### VPS values

The Victorian Public Sector (VPS) values are:

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

human rights.

These values reflect the way we work as individuals and team members. The values and the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector employees provide the foundation of the integrity and accountability framework for all VPS employees.

Together with the DEECA Leadership Model, these values articulate the attitudes and behaviours required to build a culture that supports our people to successfully deliver for our community, the environment and sustainable industries.

### The DEECA Leadership Model

In addition to the VPS values, we use the DEECA Leadership Model to shape the way we work. The DEECA Leadership Model, launched in August 2023, provides a set of simple principles and habits that remind us of what we need to focus on, and that guides our daily interactions and decisions as we deliver our work.

The Leadership Model comprises 3 key principles – ‘Work Together’, ‘Do What Matters’ and ‘Make a Difference’ – and 9 underpinning habits, as outlined below.

The commitment of our leaders to model these essential behaviours will help put our people at the centre of everything we do, strengthen our organisational culture, and deliver better outcomes for the community we serve.

Graphic showing DEECA Leadership Model.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Work Together | Do What Matters | Make a Difference |
| Connect with others  We work across team boundaries to solve challenges and work successfully as one DEECA.  Develop our people  We nurture everyone’s potential to thrive at DEECA by providing opportunities for people to develop. We actively support people’s growth through coaching and mentoring.  Keep everyone safe  We create an inclusive, physically and psychologically safe environment for all. We promote overall wellbeing and high performance. | Create clarity  We consistently identify and communicate priorities on what matters most. We provide clarity to people on their roles and our expectations. We make clear decisions on allocation of limited resources.  Own it  We take accountability for the success and learnings of a project, process or task through to decision or completion. We empower our people to do the same.  Deliver for community, environment and sustainable industries  We constantly focus on prioritising outcomes, always seeking to further the purpose of creating thriving environments, communities and sustainable industries. | Seek new ways  We look for alternative ways to respond to challenges and promote a mindset of continuous learning for ourselves and others.  Speak up  We speak up to suggest a new idea or to challenger behaviour. We empower our teams to do the same without fear or retribution.  Take action  We encourage a culture of action and decision making. We embrace challenges, and we take action in order to build a better Victoria for everyone. |

### People Matter Survey

The 2023 People Matter Survey was open for responses between 29 May and 23 June 2023. DEECA had a response rate of 77%, with 4,329 staff completing the survey, which was an increase from the 72% response rate of the former DELWP in 2022. The results of the survey provided valuable insights into what our people are thinking and experiencing in the workplace, and informed actions to drive improvements in our workplace culture and staff wellbeing.

In the 2023 People Matter Survey, DEECA’s employee satisfaction was 69% compared to 72%the previous year. While there was a slight decline in staff engagement of 3 index points, DEECA’s results were generally higher than comparable VPS departments. Our people told us that they were particularly satisfied with:

* our workplace flexibility (an average of 90% responded positively to questions about flexible working)
* the leadership from our managers (an average of 90% responded positively to questions about the leadership of our managers)
* our meaningful work (an average of 88% responded positively to questions about how worthwhile their work contribution is)

the support from the people they work with (an average of 84% responded positively to questions about how well people work together and support each other).

Positively, a high number of people consider their managers to be supportive, with 93% reporting their managers support working flexibly, and 89% feeling heard by their managers.

Levels of work-related stress remained unchanged from the 2022 results with 25% of people reporting high to severe stress. A total of 91% of respondents experienced some form of work-related stress ranging from mild to severe, which an increase from 89% respondents in 2022. Of the 3,939 survey respondents who reported work-related stress, 45% selected workload as one of the causal factors of their stress (a reduction from 50% in 2022), noting that respondents were able to select multiple causal factors. Time pressure was selected as a causal factor by 41%of respondents (a reduction from 47% in 2022), Job security by 22% (an increase from 14% in 2022) and the impact of organisation or workplace change was selected by 17% (an increase from 9% in 2022).

As workload and time pressure continue to be key drivers of work-related stress for DEECA employees, the department focused on workload sustainability, implementing a plan to create a culture of open and ongoing communication about workload, capacity and wellbeing across the department. This work is ongoing and remains a high priority.

In 2023, bullying continued to be the highest reported negative behaviour with 9% (398 people) reporting they had experienced bullying in the last 12 months, consistent with 2022 results. Reported rates of discrimination (5%), violence and aggression (5%) and sexual harassment (3%) also remained unchanged from 2022.

Implementing the DEECA Leadership Model, delivering Safe and Respectful Workplaces training, and preparing to implement the Psychological Health Regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, demonstrate the department’s ongoing commitment to, and focus on, addressing negative workplace behaviours.

### Capability development

During 2023–24, DEECA delivered 10,399 instructor led training sessions (4,899 corporate training and 5,500 safety and wellbeing training sessions). Additionally, 5,028 staff completed a total of 32,616 DEECA eLearning courses.

In November 2023, DEECA implemented the first phase of a new Success Factors Learning Management System, a platform designed to provide DEECA staff a simple, streamlined way to access professional development, safety and wellbeing, and accreditation training.

### Enterprise bargaining

During 2023–24, the department negotiated a new departmental appendix for the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024, which amalgamated the emergency specific terms and conditions of employment for DEECA staff. The department also commenced negotiations with the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU) for a new enterprise agreement for field staff and wild dog controllers. The department has constructive working relationships with both the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the AWU. The department recorded nil time lost through industrial disputes in 2023–24.

## Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing

DEECA is committed to creating and maintaining a physically and psychologically safe workplace. We have systems in place to manage all known hazards and we continue to improve our safety and wellbeing culture by reviewing and continually improving 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. DEECA’s consultative structure was reviewed and consulted on in 2023–24 to ensure it remained fit for purpose and best reflected the needs of DEECA groups and regions; a new consultative structure will be in effect for 2024–25 and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to strengthening safety and wellbeing consultation and collaboration across the department
* 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 a Regional Safety and Wellbeing Consultative Committee, and a deputy secretary chairing the 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 an internal assurance strategy, 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 health, safety and wellbeing

During 2023–24, the department completed a review of its Safety and Wellbeing Operating Model and 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 involvement of the Secretary and Workplace Services Branch Director in safety and wellbeing programs within the public sector, including participation in the Public Sector Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Leadership Group and the interdepartmental OHS Executive Group, and the Safety Manager participating in the Australasian Fire Authorities Council Workplace Health and Safety Working Group
* delivering a voucher-based influenza vaccination program, allowing employees to choose a vaccination time and location that suited them, resulting in 1,473 employees (at a rate of 25.4 per 100 FTE) redeeming a voucher with a further 148 vaccination reimbursements claimed
* delivering 50 Q fever vaccinations for Forest Fire Management Victoria emergency workers to support Agriculture Victoria in responding to emergency animal diseases
* delivering 2,077 Fit for Emergency medical assessments for Forest Fire Management Victoria employees to support safe emergency deployments across the state
* supporting the completion of 330 Emergency Management Medical Questionnaires for Agriculture Victoria staff to ensure emergency roles and capabilities are appropriately aligned
* continued delivery of a virtual safety and wellbeing noticeboard to provide staff with access to safety and wellbeing advice, whether they are working remotely or at DEECA sites
* continuing to destigmatise mental health and wellbeing by supporting national wellbeing initiatives and delivering mental health and wellbeing literacy training to 759 employees
* conducting 149 site and field safety assurance reviews across Victoria (at a rate of 2.6 reviews per 100 FTE). This represents an increase of 59 reviews since 2022–23, due to the resumption of site visits after the prolonged impact of COVID Safe settings and the filling of staff vacancies. These reviews led to 169 corrective actions (a 33% decrease on corrective actions required in 2022–23) and resulted in safety improvements targeting the greatest risk areas across the department
* continued promotion and improvement of the 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 to ensure escalation and emergency response assistance are provided in a timely manner
* launching a Family Connect and Support program in November 2023 to better support the mental health and wellbeing of our people and their families. The program includes guidance material, a wellbeing support guide and videos containing personal stories and tips.
* continuing to embed the key actions from the WorkWell project into ongoing practises to improve the mental health of firefighters
* completion of 2,502 safety and wellbeing induction eLearning courses by DEECA staff
* delivery of 5 virtual interactive training sessions on the new incident and hazard management and reporting system, SafeWell, 2 of which were specifically for peer supporters
* continued delivery of online training modules for Appropriate Workplace Behaviour, Sexual Harassment, Occupational Health and Safety Induction and Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace. These modules remain a key component of staff mandatory training.

delivery of quarterly health and safety representative forums for all 198 health and safety representatives (HSRs) and 54 deputy HSRs at DEECA, focusing on fostering consultation and collaboration.

### Avian influenza response

In 2023–24, DEECA supported the emergency response to avian influenza in the state, including the establishment of a Local Control Centre (LCC) in Ballarat and dedicating resources to the response. Throughout the response, safety officers from the department ensured the continued prioritisation of health and safety, including providing senior safety leadership and direction to the Incident Controller and other functional leaders, conducting safety briefings, providing oversight of safety administration systems, conducting on-site safety assurance reviews, providing operational staff with safety information, ensuring compliance with safety systems and ensuring completion of required safety reporting to the regulator and implementing any corrective actions identified. Additional occupational health and safety supports have also been provided through investigations into safety-related incidents and the development of guidelines and job safety related documents to assist in safety compliance.

### Wellbeing services

During 2023–24, there was a total of 1,129 new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referrals, providing 2,662 hours of support throughout the year. Overall, the annual utilisation rate for the department was 19.4% which is higher than the average rate of 11.3% for the government and public administration sector. Promotion of the EAP focused on proactive and early engagement with the services for support.

Specialist, targeted and tailored support through the EAP continued to be provided for staff impacted by changes following the establishment of DEECA and the integration of Parks Victoria, changes to the native timber harvesting industry, forestry transition and integration of VicForests, and the inquiry into the 2022 flood event. Yarning Circles continued to be available for our First Nations people participating in or impacted by the Yoorrook Justice Commission process.

A total of 2,014 hours of dedicated support was provided through the Regional EAP Coordinators (RECs) in response to organisational change processes, the Grampians bushfires and the avian influenza emergency response. In addition, RECs were used to provide targeted support in response to emerging issues impacting individual or team wellbeing, and to employees following safety incidents.

As at 30 June 2024, DEECA’s Peer Support Program had 91 peer supporters providing local support to staff with a range of work and personal needs. During 2023–24, a major focus was the ongoing learning and development of peer supporters to build capability and confidence, ensuring best practice support for our staff. Throughout the year, peer supporters engaged in around 1,070 conversations across the organisation, providing wellbeing-focused support and guidance for our people.

In addition to direct engagement, peer supporters participated in additional activities including coordinating RUOK day events and providing telephone-based psychological first aid to staff through the Reach Out program. Through the Reach Out program, peer supporters conducted proactive post-deployment check-in calls for staff deployed to the Canadian bushfires and those impacted by the forestry transition, providing support to110 employees. The Reach Out program also provided 113 new referrals in 2023–24, with peer supporters delivering telephone-based psychological first aid Referrals to the Reach Out program in 2023–24 included support following an employee’s passing (29), work-related events such as exposure to emotional events (23), and personal issues impacting work or performance (16).

Through the 6 trained Family Violence Contact Officers, the department directly supported 22 staff experiencing violence, enabling access to 205 special leave days to support people in managing the actions and distress associated with family and domestic violence.

Over 2023–24, DEECA partnered with Aware Super to deliver the following financial wellbeing sessions:

* 1 session on Planning for Retirement, attended by 142 people
* 2 sessions on Navigating Redundancy, attended by 48 people
* 1 session on Better Money Habits, attended by 59 people

1 session on Understanding Investments, attended by 50 people.

### Incident management

A review of DEECA’s Safety Operating Model was undertaken in 2022–23, resulting in improvements to strengthen capacity and resourcing. This includes the development of a Safety Assurance Framework and annual assurance strategies to target key foundational activities each year, which will be informed by incident trends from DEECA’s new SafeWell system.

SafeWell improves the accessibility and clarity of reporting and allows users to report on psychological incidents and hazards in the workplace. The implementation of the SafeWell system included targeted communications to uplift understanding of what, when and how to report incidents, hazards and near misses. This has predictably increased engagement with incident and hazard reporting and has led to an increase in reporting since its introduction.

The number of health and safety incidents and near misses reported across the department (excluding COVID-19 reports) increased to 1,127 in 2023–24 from 655 in 2022–23, representing an increase of 472 incidents, or 72%. This also represents an increase in reports per 100 FTE from 15.4 reports in 2022–23 to 19.4 reports in 2023–24. Of the 1,127 incidents reported in 2023–24, 89% had a management plan and associated actions, with 81% of these closed as at 30 June 2024. This reflects that the majority of incidents and near misses were able to be addressed through the application of administrative controls and local actions, as a result of foundational safety systems, policies and procedures.

As displayed in Figure 1, overall incidents remained consistent throughout the first quarter of 2023–24, with a notable spike throughout an extended fire response and planned burning period (November 2023 to May 2024) that was not seen in the previous 2 years. Incidents tracked similarly to 2022–23 with the number of reports peaking in February and March and remaining low throughout the remainder of the year.

Vehicle related incidents remained elevated in 2023–24, where there were 198 vehicle incidents recorded (3.41 incidents per 100 FTE), 73 more than the previous year (125 incidents in total, at 2.93 incidents per 100 FTE). In response to this, DEECA’s vehicle related incidents data has been reviewed and analysed, and actions to support driver and fleet management and safety will be implemented in 2024–25.

There were also 97 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:

* 33 resulting from the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing – 17 of these incidents impacted staff, vehicles or plant, 9 incidents involved trees/branches falling in the vicinity of staff members and 7 were unrelated to trees/branches
* 25 relating to a person needing immediate medical treatment for one of the WorkSafe identified injuries; these include fractures, lacerations, allergic reactions, injuries in the eye area, confirmed snake bite and suspected snake bites, and non-work-related injuries
* 22 resulting from an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of any substance - 10 relating to herbicide of which 8 resulted in staff members being impacted, 10 relating to fuel, diesel, burn mix, brake/hydraulic fluid of which 3 impacted staff members
* 10 notifications relating to an implosion, explosion, or fire – 2 of these were related to burn overs during emergency response, 5 related to fire in components of plant/vehicles
* 5 relating to the collapse, overturning, failure, or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant, including 4 vehicle-related incidents
* 1 notification relating to electric shock occurring to a contractor

1 notification regarding dangerous goods, which is currently under investigation.

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

Line graph showing Number of health and safety reported incidents by month (excluding COVID-19 incidents).
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| July | 26 | 16 | 28 |
| August | 40 | 32 | 28 |
| September | 26 | 26 | 29 |
| October | 41 | 55 | 97 |
| November | 58 | 61 | 116 |
| December | 53 | 81 | 104 |
| January | 75 | 79 | 133 |
| February | 82 | 96 | 164 |
| March | 102 | 81 | 158 |
| April | 90 | 48 | 96 |
| May | 67 | 50 | 106 |
| June | 26 | 30 | 68 |

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

Line graph showing Number of health and safety reported Incidents and Rate per 100 FTE (excluding COVID-19 incidents).
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Incidents | Per 100 FTE |
| 2021-22 | 686 | 13.23098 |
| 2022-23 | 655 | 15.37054 |
| 2023-24 | 1127 | 19.40026 |

### WorkCover claims

A total of 86 standard claims were lodged with DEECA’s WorkCover insurer in 2023–24, with 56 claims (65%) involving lost time. This is an increase in standard claims, compared to 60 standard claims in 2022–23, however there was a considerable decrease in claims costs in 2023–24. Additionally, there was a significant decrease in the number of mental injury claims received, from 20 claims (14 accepted) in 2022–23 down to 10 claims in 2023–24 (6 accepted). This is attributed to the proactive early intervention and return to work efforts undertaken by the Injury Management Team, supporting employees to return to work early into their recovery. These positive factors resulted in an improved WorkCover employer performance rating for DEECA in 2023–24.

The 56 claims involving lost time resulted in 1,340 days lost because of workplace injuries. As of 30 June 2024, over half of the 56 claimants (35) have had a full return to work, with 5 claimants having a partial return to work and 16 having no capacity to return. While injuries that led to claims occurred throughout the year, most injuries were sustained during planned burning and bushfire responses. The majority of these injuries were physical (slips, trips, falls and other) (93.1%), with a small proportion of claims for mental injury (6.9%).

Five claims were received on behalf of Forest Fire Management Victoria under the Presumptive Rights legislation. DEECA continues to support the implementation of the Presumptive Rights legislation, which provides a presumption to claims compensation for both male and female forest firefighters for specific cancers.

Figure 3. Number of standard Workcover claims against number of lost time claims[[4]](#footnote-4)

Graph showing Number of standard Workcover claims against number of lost time claims.
Data in table below.

|  | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Standard Claims | 58 | 60 | 86 |
| Number of Lost Time Claims | 51 | 50 | 56 |

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

Line graph showing Number of Standard Workcover Claims and Rate per 100 FTE.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of Standard Claims | Rate per 100 FTE |
| 2021-22 | 58 | 1.157 |
| 2022-23 | 60 | 1.384 |
| 2023-24 | 86 | 1.48 |

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

Line graph showing Accepted Lost Time Mental Injury Claims vs. Non-Mental Injury Workcover Claims.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Non-Mental Injury | Mental Injury |
| 2021-22 | 49 | 11 |
| 2022-23 | 50 | 9 |
| 2023-24 | 80 | 6 |

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

Line graph showing Number of Workcover Claims Exceeding 13 Weeks and Rate per 100 FTE.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Claims > 13 Weeks | Rate per 100 FTE |
| 2021-22 | 9 | 0.173584 |
| 2022-23 | 11 | 0.258131 |
| 2023-24 | 7 | 0.12 |

Figure 7. DEECA Workcover premium rate

Line graph showing DEECA Workcover premium rate.
Data in table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Workcover Premium Rate |
| 2021-22 | 1.0975 |
| 2022-23 | 1.1 |
| 2023-24 | 1.4 |

Figures 1–7: Reporting for 2021–22 captures data for the former Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

### Upcoming Psychological Health Regulations

WorkSafe Victoria’s proposed Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Psychological Health) Regulations are expected to be introduced in late 2024. The proposed regulations aim to strengthen the occupational health and safety framework by recognising that psychological health hazards are no less harmful to employees’ safety and wellbeing than physical hazards and promoting the importance of psychological health and safety in the working environment. The introduction of the proposed regulations will require DEECA to identify and control hazards, and review reporting requirements, including the introduction of Prevention Plans for high-risk psychosocial hazards. Planning for the introduction of the proposed regulations has 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 proposed regulations.

The focus of activity for 2023–24 included: the establishment of a psychological health collaborative working group; strengthening of existing governance arrangements; the ongoing development of an awareness campaign that includes an animated video and poster series; introduction of a psychological health incident and hazard reporting workflow through SafeWell; commencement of a psychosocial hazards risk management pilot and the development of a supporting toolkit for staff and managers.

### 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 2023–24, our staff-led networks played a significant part in capturing the lived experiences of our people, strengthening intersectionality, diversity and inclusion. The 2023 People Matter Survey (PMS) showed that 81% of surveyed staff responded positively to questions about inclusion in the organisation.

### 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 maintaining genuine partnerships with Traditional Owners and Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The fourth year of the implementation action plan for Pupangarli Marnmarnepu was completed in 2023–24. Actions taken highlight DEECA’s strength in collaborating across the department to continue our journey to embed true self-determination for Traditional Owners 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 a Traditional Owner Corporation Exchange program, where staff are placed in Traditional Owner Corporation roles for up to 12 months. In a number of its Groups DEECA has revised existing position descriptions for Designated Aboriginal Positions and Identified roles, as well as ensuring increasing opportunities for Aboriginal representation on interview panels. DEECA has also reestablished the Aboriginal Staff Network and introduced a fortnightly staff bulletin dedicated to First Nations staff engagement.

### Aboriginal Cultural Safety

The department’s Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework ‘Our Culture is in our Country, and Our Country is our Culture’ supports and promotes self-determination by building Aboriginal cultural capability among our people. The Framework intends to ensure staff across DEECA have the foundational knowledge, behaviour, and skills to meet our commitments with Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians. DEECA is developing an implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation framework to progress the work of the Cultural Safety Framework, which is expected to be completed in October 2024.

During 2023–24, 45 DEECA-wide Cultural Safety training courses were delivered, completed by more than 900 staff members. As at 30 June 2024, Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training was completed by 50% of our people leaders. DEECA has 93 managers of Aboriginal staff and 45% of these managers have completed Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training.

Cultural safety, awareness and capability training were delivered on Country across DEECA regions, and will continue in 2024–25. Additionally, a statewide Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training program will be launched in 2024–25.

### Programs supporting Aboriginal employment

As at 30 June 2024, 1.89% of DEECA’s workforce identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander DEECA’s Aboriginal Staff Network has 142 active members and one gathering was held during 2023–24 to provide opportunities for First Nations staff to connect, build on the foundations of the network and participate in cultural and professional development activities.

DEECA understands that there are challenges in 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 own self-determination. The department has focused on building a sustainable talent pipeline, while listening to the needs of Traditional Owners, so that we are working in partnership to build capacity to learn and grow together.

Key initiatives to attract Aboriginal talent and grow our Aboriginal staff numbers include:

* Aboriginal Talent Pool – DEECA’s First Peoples' Talent Pool provides 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. A refresh of the program was completed in 2023–24 to better recruit, retain, develop and support Aboriginal staff.
* Work Shadowing program – the Work Shadowing program allows participants to ‘shadow’ another staff member in a different business area of DEECA to explore new opportunities and experiences, to support the career aspirations of the Aboriginal Staff Network members. As a result of internal promotion of the program, the Conservation Regulator provided secondments to 3 Aboriginal staff members in 2023–24.
* DEECA continues to partner with the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) in providing opportunities for First Nations staff within the department through the Barring Djinang Aboriginal employment strategy as follows:
* Internships – in partnership with CareerTrackers, DEECA offers 3-month internship placements to Aboriginal students through VPSC’s internship program, building a talent pipeline for future graduates within the department. In 2024, DEECA welcomed 4 interns.
* Leadership and Development Programs – 13 First Nations staff participated in career development, leadership and graduate programs during 2023–24.
* Traditional Owner Corporation (TOC) and DEECA Exchange Policy – 6 DEECA staff participated in the exchange program in TOC roles during 2023–24, to build capability and understanding of the importance of working with TOCs, ensuring self-determination is a priority for all the work we do at DEECA.

DEECA also acknowledged Aboriginal days of significance, including Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week through Secretary messages to all staff; facilitated on-Country cultural tours; and celebrated NAIDOC Week through virtual and in-person events. This year’s NAIDOC Week event held in Naarm attracted approximately 120 guests, including First Nations staff and community and allies. Many regional events were also well attended. DEECA continues to support and encourage acknowledgement of First Nations days of significance at all levels of the department.

### Our commitment to access and inclusion

Work continues across the department to deliver 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

A key commitment in the [Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–2025](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Getting-to-work.pdf) is achieving a 12% Victorian public sector disability employment target by 2025.

A total of 8% of DEECA’s respondents to the 2023 People Matter Survey identified as being a person with a disability (342 people). The percentage of respondents in this category has increased by 1 percentage point year on year since 2021. Around 54% of respondents who reported (through the People Matter Survey) that they are living with disability have shared their disability information with the organisation.

Staff with disability scored lower across measures of wellbeing, engagement and satisfaction compared to those not living with a disability. While employees with disability scored lower in these areas, 79% agreed with the statement that DEECA encourages respectful workplace behaviours. Workplace flexibility was also rated positively with 87% of staff who identified as a person with a disability reporting that their manager supports flexible working.

### Inclusive workplace culture and capability

In 2023–24, DEECA progressed several key initiatives from our Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–24. 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.

The department delivered on internal review recommendations relating to inclusive recruitment capability. These recommendations aim to advance the department’s maturity and approach to recruitment by incorporating candidate-centric practices that are both inclusive and aligned to the organisational values. The new Navigating Recruitment eLearning course was developed and launched in April 2024 for staff involved in recruitment. As at 30 June 2024, 80 staff have completed the course.

A range of resources has been developed to support inclusive recruitment practices, including Tailored Disability Confidence and Inclusive Recruitment Training for operational recruitment staff. 22 staff completed this training during 2023–24.

DEECA also supports our neurodivergent employees through services offered by the VPS Neurodiverse Confident Services Support program. In 2023–24, employees with neurodivergence accessed the support program and engaged in counselling and coaching services to enable them to perform at their best. Managers and colleagues of neurodivergent employees also 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 and building the disability confidence of our staff. Through collaboration between key departmental stakeholders and the staff led All Abilities Network (AAN), DEECA employees celebrated several days of significance, including a week of events across the VPS to recognise International Day of People with Disability on Tuesday 3 December 2023. Of note was the VPS-wide town hall event hosted by DEECA’s AAN. The event, ‘Psychological Safety – a neurodiverse approach: how to be curious and not judgemental’, brought together staff from across the department and the wider VPS to hear an insightful panel discussion about neurodiversity and exploring the theme, ‘United in action to rescue and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for, with and by persons with disability’.

### 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](https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/our-department/diversity-and-inclusion) as well as [Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–26)](https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan).

### Gender equality

DEECA recognises that a workplace that fosters gender equality is crucial to building a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves. The department prides itself as a safe and inclusive employer within the Victorian Government, focusing on our people’s sense of belonging by addressing gender discrimination and inequality. The department aims for gender balance across cohorts. In 2023–24 the department comprised of 51% women. The department’s executive cohort comprised 56% women, an increase from 53.5% the previous year.

We have also aimed to increase women’s participation in the workforce, including by implementing flexible work. In 2023–24, 75% of women worked full time, increased from 74% in the previous year. Increased participation in the workforce also has positive effects on the gender pay gap.

The department is committed to reducing the gender pay gap and performs a gender pay gap audit annually, with a target of less than 2%. In 2023–24, the gender pay gap was 0%, for the third consecutive year.

DEECA also continues to actively support government commitments to ensure that no less than 50% of appointments to portfolio entity boards are women. At 30 June 2024, women comprised 56% of appointees to DEECA’s portfolio entity boards.

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

DEECA’s Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is our inaugural response to the Gender Equality Act 2020 and has been assessed as fully compliant by the Victorian Gender Equality Commissioner. It provides a critical platform to shift the culture of our organisation and elevate our commitment to gender equality.

DEECA acknowledges that people with intersectional identities can experience increased gender discrimination. That is, the department understands that a person’s characteristics can expose them to compounding inequalities. DEECA has adopted a holistic and intersectional strategy lens to develop synergistic actions that 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 7 indicators of workplace gender equality outlined in the Gender Equality Act 2020.

As part of the delivery of our GEAP, gender inclusive leadership training was delivered to over 70 emerging professionals. This training prepared our emerging leaders for decision-making, leadership roles, embedding the key principles of intersectionality and gender inclusivity in their everyday practices.

To further progress gender equality, the department delivered several live coaching events, aimed at providing women with the tools they need for financial success and career acceleration. Across 7 events, over 1,100 staff attended. This contributed to an action in our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021–22 – 2025–26 and contributes to [Victoria’s Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan](https://www.vic.gov.au/our-equal-state-victorias-gender-equality-strategy-and-action-plan-2023-2027) in advancing the economic empowerment of women.

### Gender Impact Assessments

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, the department is obligated to complete Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) when developing and reviewing public-facing programs, policies or services that have a direct and/or significant impact on the community.

To streamline the process and to support staff in completing GIAs, DEECA developed and launched in January 2024 a GIA tool that streamlines 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. To supplement the launch, the department partnered with gender equality experts to build capacity in conducting GIAs among staff and leaders.

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.

### Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) – Equity in emergency management

DEECA continues to actively address gender-based bias and challenge stereotypes in fire and emergency management roles through actions such as:

* local marketing to attract more applications from women for the annual seasonal firefighter intake, with a focus on districts where women are under-represented
* promoting emergency management as a career to young women through the [Girls on Fire program](https://girlsonfire.org.au/)
* delivering unconscious bias training to over 300 leaders (as at 30 June 2024) across FFMVic
* implementing initiatives to increase the number of women within Senior Duty Officer roles, with a goal of 30–50% representation by the 2026–27 season

supporting staff participation in a 12-month multi-agency program that pairs women with well-connected senior leaders from across the emergency management sector, providing opportunities to assist with their development and exposure beyond their existing networks. In 2023–24, 10 staff participated in the program.

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

DEECA continues to be a workplace that strives to create inclusion and belonging for our LGBTIQA+ employees. In the 2023 People Matter Survey, 9% of staff self-identified as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual or pansexual, with 1% of participants self-identifying as trans, non-binary or gender diverse and a further 10% preferring not to disclose.

As at 30 June 2024, the department’s Place of Pride employee-led network consisted of 288 active members and has 10 dedicated employees volunteering on its steering committee, creating a sense of community at DEECA. The Place of Pride network has led several LGBTIQA+ events to celebrate all things queer, including DEECA having a visible presence at the Midsumma Festival 2024 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 Place of Pride network continues to deliver LGBTIQA+ Awareness Training. Six sessions were delivered in 2023–24, with a focus on regional staff. The training aims to raise awareness and understanding of the LGBTIQA+ community and 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 2023 People Matter Survey results, we know that 23% of staff were not born in Australia, 26% 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, 26% of staff identified as having a faith.

DEECA is committed to elevating the lived experience of staff and seeks to increase the participation of multicultural women and women of colour in leadership positions. The department is proud to support the Multicultural Network and Women of Colour Network. These active staff-led networks have more than 80 members and engaged leadership teams, which together 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 support 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, and contributes to an action in the department’s Gender Equality Action Plan, 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 successfully connected 14 mentees with executive mentors during 2023–24.

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 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

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is embedded in our employment programs and pathways, which provide meaningful opportunities for new and emerging talent. These programs reflect the importance DEECA places on building a more inclusive workforce through strong, sustainable talent pipelines and are a key avenue for creating and supporting opportunities for underrepresented groups.

The employment programs offered by the department provide dedicated pathways for students living with disability, those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and those with refugee and asylum seeker status. These pathways are provided through several initiatives, including:

* the Victorian Government Graduate Program
* the Barring Djinang internship program
* the Australian Disability Network’s Stepping into Internship program

the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Summer Internships.

During 2023–24, these programs assisted 94 participants in entering the workforce and contributed to a diverse and inclusive Victorian public sector, with a focus on intersectional representation throughout many of the programs. Of the participants, 6.4% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Additionally, 9.4% of participants identified as living with disability, reflecting our inclusive hiring practices and the support offered. Women made up 52.1% of participants, showcasing our commitment to gender equality, while 7.3% of our participants identify as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) (this statistic is based on limited data and is likely higher).

Employment programs present an important opportunity to deliver on the employment targets and talent pipelines outlined in the 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, are supported through the workplace adjustments policy and procedure.

DEECA continues to invest in and support its vision for a more equitable future by providing meaningful opportunities to new and emerging talent.

DEECA’s Science Graduate program attracts highly motivated and skilled candidates from the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sectors, embedding science into policy, planning and decision-making across our portfolio areas and ensuring new thinking and diverse perspectives shape our strategies for the future. In 2023–24, the 2-year program supported 39 participants at various program stages, with 58.9% of participants being women. The program has earned recognition as an industry leader and has a proven track record of success, attracting top talent and also nurturing participants’ long-term career growth in DEECA, with more than 80% of past participants remaining employed with the department for at least a decade.

The department also supported the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) which aims to increase entry-level roles for young people aged 15 to 29 and provide fixed term career pathways for those facing employment barriers. DEECA recruited and supported 7 staff through this pathway during 2023–24, with over 40% of participants from priority cohorts such as rural and remote residents and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. All participants engaged in workplace learning, while obtaining a certificate qualification, improving their future employability within government and beyond.

DEECA maintained a strong face-to-face and virtual presence at careers expos, forums, professional practice and learning and development sessions, and 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.

### Safe and Respectful Workplaces Program

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

The delivery methods for educating staff on Safe and Respectful Workplace principles continue to evolve, based on evaluations and participant feedback. Several changes were made to our training programs in 2023–24, including:

* **Safe and Respectful Workplaces workshops –** This workshop is aimed at all staff and incorporates policy and procedure information, People Matter Survey data and practical active bystander actions. The program content was refreshed and updated, and the duration increased to 2.5 hours to enable more focussed discussions and active participation. In 2023–24, 11 online open sessions and 13 dedicated team-based in-person workshops were delivered to 394 participants.
* **Safe and Respectful Workplaces First Responders –** This training is based on the Safe and Respectful Workplaces policy and procedure and assists people leaders in understanding their obligations and options in managing disclosures of harmful behaviours, while supporting individuals and their teams if a disclosure occurs. These sessions are delivered to key departmental staff, managers and field-based leaders in locations and work environments that present a heightened risk of negative behaviours. The First Responder course was redeveloped as the ‘Leading Safe and Respectful Teams’ course with refreshed content and offered as a suite of learning options to provide more flexibility to management teams. During 2023–24, a one-hour webinar and 2 full 3-hour sessions were delivered to 25 people leaders.
* **Safe and Respectful Workplaces Champions Network –** This is a staff network of active bystanders, which aims to have representation across all divisions, VPS levels and work centres. A bi-monthly internal bulletin for champions and their local networks links and further supports and educates staff, as well as providing a place to share important messages from related work across DEECA. As at 30 June 2024, 12 editions have been distributed since its launch. Supporting arrangements for the Safe and Respectful Workplaces Champions Network are being refreshed to better reflect DEECA’s future needs with targeted recruitment to encourage membership from all DEECA groups and divisions and work centres, and to ensure lived-experience representation from different diversity groups across DEECA. As at 30 June 2024, the number of Safe and Respectful Workplace Champions stands at 361.

**Safe and Respectful Workplaces Lunchbox/Promos –** This new initiative delivers short presentations on the Safe and Respectful Workplaces framework and program components such as training, resources and networking opportunities. Presentations are given at Lunch and Learn events by a guest speaker at team forums and to executive leadership groups. Seven sessions were delivered in 2023–24 to over 200 participants.

# Financial review

Table 1. Five-year financial summary(i): Departmental (controlled) activities

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | DEECA 2024  $’000 | DEECA 2023 $’000(v) | DELWP 2022  $’000 | DELWP  2021  $’000 | DELWP 2020  $’000(iv)(vi) |
| Income from government(ii) | 2,564,008 | 3,420,474 | 2,373,698 | 2,477,285 | 2,168,943 |
| Total income from transactions | 3,498,001 | 4,370,800 | 3,246,486 | 3,157,203 | 2,782,305 |
| Total expenses from transactions | 3,311,189 | 4,114,619 | 3,114,827 | 3,184,016 | 2,785,079 |
| Net result from transactions(iii) | 186,812 | 256,181 | 131,659 | (26,813) | (2,774) |
| Net result for the period | 180,599 | (81,783) | 613,586 | 769,765 | (97,689) |
| Net cash flow from operating activities | 228,869 | 408,385 | 215,478 | (31,678) | 69,824 |
| **Total assets** | **12,888,431** | **12,807,741** | **12,210,155** | **10,344,722** | **8,487,868** |
| **Total liabilities** | **1,313,987** | **1,411,951** | **894,127** | **740,993** | **430,920** |

Due to Machinery of Government changes and other administrative changes, which impact the make-up of functions/outputs delivered by the department, the amounts disclosed across the 5-year financial summary are not directly comparable. Refer to the notes below.

Notes:

(i) The five-year financial summary differs to the Budget Portfolio outcomes. The variations relate to the inclusion of entities such as the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability and exclusion of the Rural Assistance Commissioner in Budget Portfolio outcomes reporting.

(ii) Income from government includes both output and special appropriations.

(iii) The ‘net result from transactions’ is identical to the ‘net operating balance’ for the general government sector.

(iv) From 1 July 2020, the local government output function was transferred to the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

(v) From 1 January 2023, the planning and land services output functions were transferred to the Department of Transport and Planning and the agriculture and resources output functions transferred to DEECA from the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. Additionally from 1 January 2023, the department’s results consolidate the below entities under section 53(1)(b) of the Financial Management Act 1994:

• Rural Assistance Commission

• Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

(vi) 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

### Financial performance and business review

The department’s net result from transactions for the financial year ending 30 June 2024 is a surplus of $186.8 million, compared with a surplus of $256.1 million in 2023. With the inclusion of other economic outflows of $6.2 million, the net result for the year is a surplus of $180.6 million, compared with a deficit of $81.8 million in 2023.

Overall, the department’s 2023–24 income from transactions decreased by 20% predominantly as a result of a reduction in appropriation revenue, due to the conclusion of the Power Saving Bonus program in August 2023 and the full year impact of no longer receiving special appropriations relating to planning functions (which were transferred to the Department of Transport and Planning on 1 January 2023). These reductions were offset by increases in appropriation funding relating to new programs in 2023–24 including those in forestry transition and energy as well as additional funding to support emergency management and response efforts for bushfire and other emergencies.

The department’s 2023–24 expenses from transactions also decreased by 20%, predominantly as a result of a reduction in grants, mainly due to the end of the Power Saving Bonus program in August 2023 and a moderate decrease in supplies and services expenditure. These decreases were partially offset by increases in salaries and wages (due to new programs and the transfer of staff into DEECA as well as additional overtime payments for emergency response and planned burn activities) and increases in depreciation and interest reflecting the full year of holding a share in the public private partnerships for the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds and AgriBio Research Centre.

Other economic flows amounted to an outflow of $6.2 million for 2023–24, compared to an outflow of $338.0 million for 2022–23. The $331.8 million difference was due to significant losses in 2022–23 from non-financial assets (including the write-off of a duplicated asset transferred to DEECA as part of MoG changes) and financial assets (including the reduction in value of the Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) financial derivatives due to settlement and decrease in value from changing wholesale electricity prices).

### Financial position – balance sheet

DEECA’s net assets as at 30 June 2024 were $11.6 billion, comprising total assets of $12.9 billion and total liabilities of $1.3 billion.

Total assets increased by $80.7 million to $12.9 billion, mainly as a result of increases in cash and cash deposits of $199.2 million in trust balances for Parks and Reserves and the Sustainability Fund, being partially offset by a decrease in derivative financial instruments ($78.2 million due to the settlement of the derivatives and a reduction in their fair value at 30 June 2024) and a decrease in prepayments ($20.8 million due to the lower uptake of Solar Home loans).

Total liabilities decreased by $98.0 million to $1.3 billion in 2023–24. The decrease mainly reflects a decrease in payables of $85.5 million (lower accrued grants due to an overall reduction in grants paid/payable by the department) and decreased borrowings of $20.5 million resulting from the repayment of loans provided by the Rural Assistance Commissioner. These decreases were partly offset by an increase in employee provisions of $14.8 million mainly arising from staff transferred to DEECA.

### Cash flows

DEECA’s cash and deposits as at 30 June 2024 was $1.5 billion, an increase of $200 million from 1 July 2023. This is mainly due to $228.9 million in net cash inflows from operating activities being offset by investing and financing activities. Cash inflows from operating activities result from changes in receivables, payables and provisions, mainly arising from the timing of cash receipts and payments.

### Subsequent events

A number of events occurred after the reporting period of 2023–24 and before the date the financial statements were authorised for issue. These are considered to be non-adjusting, meaning their financial impact is not reflected in the 2023–24 financial statements but they are disclosed for information purposes.

* On 1 July 2024, the following legislation was proclaimed, abolishing the respective entities and transferring their remaining assets, liabilities and commitments to the department:
* The Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Act 2024 abolished VicForests. Its remaining assets, liabilities and commitments were transferred to DEECA via contributed capital in accordance with FRD 119.
* The State Electricity Commission Amendment Act 2023 abolished the legacy entity State Electricity Commission of Victoria. Its remaining assets, liabilities and commitments were transferred to DEECA via contributed capital in accordance with FRD 119.
* The Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024 (Agreement) was formally approved by the Fair Work Commission on 12 August 2024. The agreement has a nominal expiry date of 9 April 2028. Following approval of the agreement, all VPS staff employed at DEECA are entitled to a:
* 3% salary increase backdated to 1 May 2024, with an estimated cost of $3.0 million for the period 1 May 2024 to 30 June 2024
* Once off cost of living lump sum payment of $5,600 per full time employee and prorated for part-time employees, who were employed at the department on 28 June 2024. The estimated cost is $29.1 million.

On 2 August 2024, Marinus Link Pty Limited, a company where DEECA administers the state’s 33.3% equity interest, signed a contract with Italian company Prysmian for the supply of high-voltage direct current (HVDC) cables. The contract covers the design, manufacture, supply and installations for Stage 1 of the Marinus Link interconnector project, a 750-megawatt HVDC cable system. Awarding the contract to Prysmian provides greater certainty around the targeted construction start date in 2026. See note 4.2.3 (b) for more information on the arrangement.

### 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 4 years for financial delegations to be maintained. Governance and integrity training is available online and compulsory for all staff.

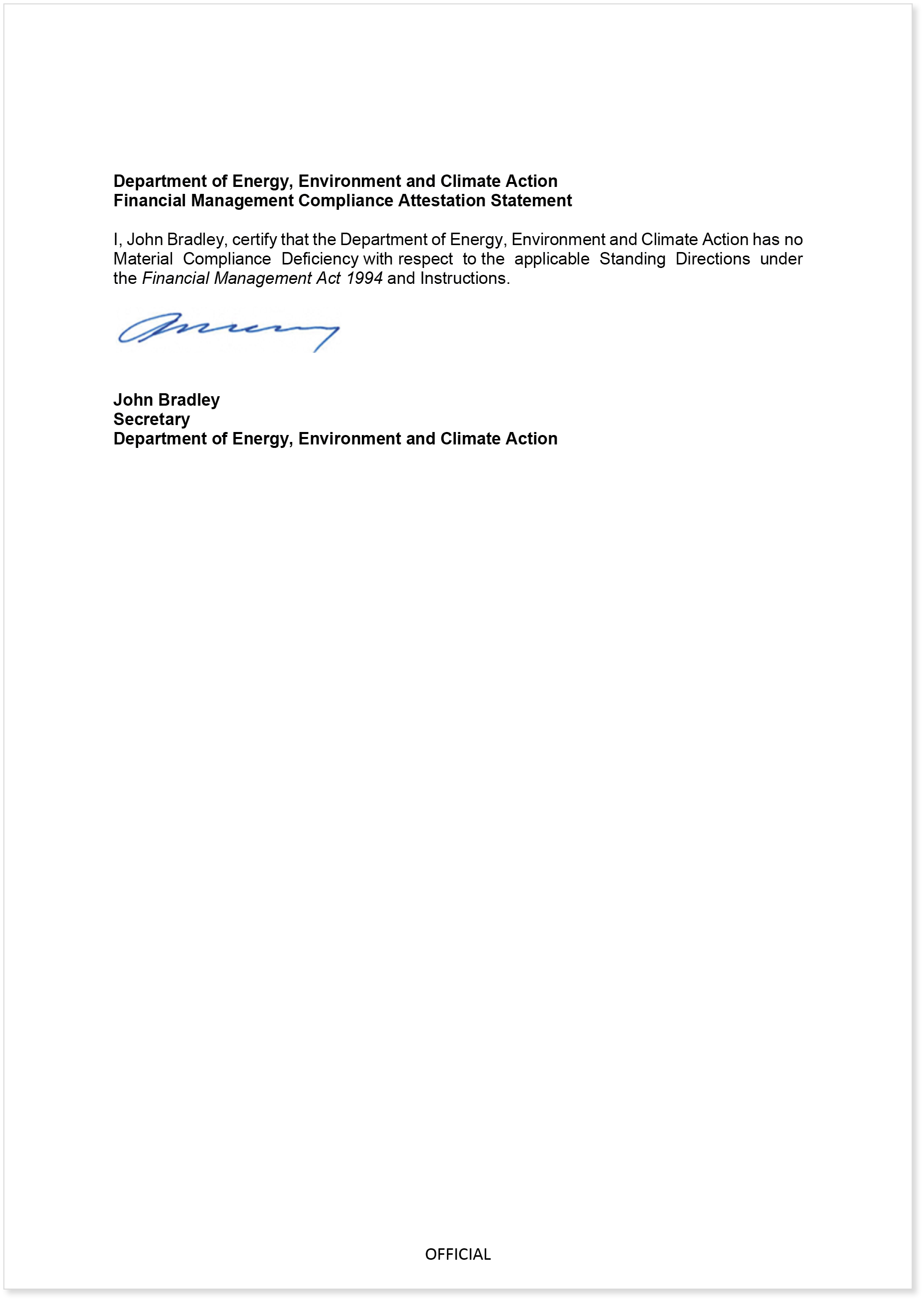
Leadership teams throughout the department actively participate in financial management. Financial compliance continues to be embedded into work practices. Regular communication of the requirements will continue through financial forums and daily work practices.

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 2023–24 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



# Climate-related risk disclosure statement

13: Climate Action

This statement summarises DEECA’s response to climate-related risks and opportunities across its operations.

Climate change has the potential to directly and indirectly impact the services and programs that DEECA delivers on behalf of the Victorian Government. This requires ongoing effort to understand and manage climate-related risks and opportunities and build resilience to impacts.

Victoria is affected by a range of climate hazards, including floods, heatwaves, drought, bushfires and sea-level rise, which are changing under a warming climate. These hazards pose risks, which may include damage to buildings and infrastructure, impacts to biodiversity, coastal erosion, and additional strain on energy systems and emergency services.

DEECA has a role in managing climate-related risks to its own assets and operations across portfolios with our functions in emergency management, productive and effective land management, natural management of the public land estate, securing and delivering water, energy and waste and resource recovery services and protecting biodiversity.

To address these challenges, management of climate risks is integrated in DEECA operations. This includes approaches to monitoring maturity of DEECA’s climate risk management, conducting risk assessments, and planning for adaptation.

DEECA’s climate risk management approach focuses on:

* evaluating and managing climate risks to assets and services
* reducing greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations and portfolio responsibilities
* incorporating adaptation strategies into planning and reporting
* updating policies and guidance to incorporate climate change considerations
* coordinating efforts to protect state assets managed by DEECA

undertaking research and development to create sustainable innovations to support climate transitions.

DEECA also leads the Victorian Government response to climate change and delivers initiatives aimed at achieving a net zero emission, climate ready economy and community. As such, there are areas of overlap between DEECA’s role in understanding, managing and monitoring climate-related risks and opportunities for its own assets and operations, and how these are managed for Victoria.

## Climate-related risk governance

The DEECA Executive Board (the Board) is accountable for 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[[5]](#footnote-5) and opportunities, including those relating to our departmental objectives:

* delivering government commitments to achieve net-zero emissions and a climate-ready economy, environment and community
* reducing the impact of major bushfires, floods, biosecurity, 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

supporting productive and sustainably used natural resources and sustainable development of Victoria’s earth resources.

The Board monitors risks through quarterly risk management reports, which include mitigation activity updates and briefings on strategic risk assessment workshops undertaken by subject matter experts. The Board is supported in managing and monitoring climate-related risks by stewardship 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:

* Biodiversity Committee, which oversees the delivery of the 5-year business/implementation plan for Biodiversity 2037
* Distributed Energy Resources Committee, which oversees the intersections in energy programs and initiatives and identifies opportunities and needs for alignment and coordination
* Emergency Management Committee, which 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
* Energy Transition Stewardship Committee, which provides strategic policy direction for multiple government objectives

Recycling Victoria Stewardship Committee, which oversees Recycling Victoria as a self-sustaining operation.

The DEECA Risk and Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the Secretary that the department’s risk management and controls are 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.

## Climate-related risk strategy

Climate change has a direct impact on the services and programs that DEECA delivers on behalf of the Victorian Government, and requires sustained action to manage the risks, maximise opportunities and build resilience.

In 2023–24, climate-related risks were identified and their effect on service delivery, asset management, and business operations evaluated through the department’s climate risk attestation process. The attestation process formalises the integration of climate risk into business planning and supports the development of targeted actions and strategies to mitigate climate-related risk.

DEECA is monitoring and managing several key strategic climate-related risks across its assets, operations and objectives, informed by the Victorian Climate Science Report and Victoria’s Future Climate Tool. These include:

| Climate-related risk | Strategic Actions |
| --- | --- |
| Victoria’s marine and coastal environment including DEECA’s 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. | To address climate-related risk to Victoria’s marine and coastal environment, DEECA is:   * embedding climate change adaptation and strategic management of coastal hazards into a long-term statewide approach for managing coastal protection assets. This approach identifies priority assets for maintenance, replacement or adaptation. In 2023–24, this informed delivery of coastal protection works at Phillip Island, Point Lonsdale, Port Welshpool and Marengo. * delivering priority actions in the [Marine and Coastal Strategy](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-management/marine-and-coastal-strategy) and directions of the Marine and Coastal Policy for managing coastal hazard risk through [Victoria’s Resilient Coast program](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-management/victorias-resilient-coast-adapting-for-2100). Under the program, the Blue Carbon and Sea Country adaptation study was completed in July 2023, and support and capacity building sessions provided to land managers. * improving our understanding of coastal processes and hazards. In 2023–24, [Coastal Erosion Warning Indicators](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-knowledge/victorian-coastal-monitoring-program/what-are-the-projects) were implemented through the [Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-and-coastal-knowledge/victorian-coastal-monitoring-program) to increase our understanding of coastal processes and aid coastal management policy and planning. |
| Extreme weather from climate change is a significant long-term risk to energy security, increasingly affecting Victoria’s power systems. | To improve energy network resilience to climate change, DEECA is:   * delivering the $7.5 million [Energy Resilience Solutions program](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/microgrids) to install 26 back-up power systems at community hubs in 24 high-risk towns * installing back up power systems at essential services sites, local businesses and households in Mallacoota, Omeo and Corryong through the $7 million [Community Microgrids and Sustainable Energy program](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/microgrids). The program is also delivering a town-scale ‘islandable’ microgrid in Corryong in partnership with the Commonwealth Government and AusNet which will provide back-up power to the township for up to 5 days in the event of a prolonged power outage. |
| Climate change is impacting our water cycle, increasing the threat of natural disasters, and lowering average rainfall. | To address climate related risk to Victoria’s natural water supply, DEECA is leading implementation of the [Water Cycle Adaptation Action Plan 2022–2026](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/558421/WaterCycleAdaptationActionPlan.pdf). This includes actions such as:   * supporting the built environment to reflect fit-for-purpose flood risk data across relevant planning mechanisms. In 2023–24, DEECA allocated funding for 13 new flood studies. These studies, supported by government funding, are required under the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy to consider climate change sensitivity. * increasing capacity and capability of water cycle managers and supporting delivery of priority place-based adaptation projects. In 2023–24, DEECA committed $2.5 million for adaptation projects including $70,000 to Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to trial the watering of the Durdiwarrah Wetland, to restore wetland health and improve climate resilience. |
| Climate change is a key driver of increasingly extreme weather conditions leading to new bushfire behaviour and permanent changes to Victoria’s ecosystems. | Released in May 2024, [Victoria’s Bushfire Management Strategy](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-bushfire-management-strategy) guides bushfire management for safer communities and healthier ecosystems in a changing climate. It sets the direction for fire agencies to embed climate change considerations into their bushfire management programs and activities. This includes the following approaches to mitigate and adapt to climate change:   * supporting decision-making through refining data and improving modelling to better understand how climate change impacts bushfire risk, and to support the analysis of bushfire and fire management activities under various future climate change scenarios * building community resilience by increasing awareness and understanding of climate change and its effects on bushfire risks * applying an adaptation lens to all phases of bushfire management, in line with Victoria’s 7 Adaptation Action Plans * strengthening sector capacity and capability to address the challenges posed by climate change. |
| As the climate becomes warmer and drier, it threatens the productivity and sustainability of the agriculture sector. Climate change will affect water availability and the state can expect more extreme events such as heatwaves, storms, bushfires, droughts and flood. These will increasingly test the resilience of the primary production sector. | To grow and secure Victoria’s agriculture in the face of climate change, DEECA is:   * supporting farmers in climate adaption and seasonal risk management through a regular schedule of climate webinars, which reached approximately 2,000 farmers, supply chains, services providers and industry organisations in 2023–24 * supporting the Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Council, which provides independent, expert 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 action agenda as it relates to the agriculture sector. |

Efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change present opportunities for DEECA including:

| Climate adaptation action | Opportunity |
| --- | --- |
| Native timber harvesting in Victoria’s state forests ended on 1 January 2024, with positive impact on biodiversity, protected and vulnerable species, bushfire prevention and management, and the effects of climate change. | The transition to exit native timber harvesting 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. |
| DEECA is committed to ‘building back better’, to ensure that infrastructure, communities and the environment are resilient to future emergency events in the face of a changing climate. | By integrating climate sensitive design into bridge and crossing infrastructure projects since 2008, including 51 new concrete bridges since 2018, DEECA 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. |
| DEECA has committed to achieving net zero emissions from its operations by 2030 with actions in place such as:   * a standard requirement for new builds and significant rebuilds to have LED lighting and solar installation be built to both 6-star NABERS ratings and Green Star principles * discontinuing gas assets through lifecycle management of existing infrastructure * a minimum 30% solar generation capacity and battery storage for new capital builds. | Sustainable building design and the shift to all-electric presents opportunities to reduce annual energy costs and enhance energy security in the event of potential future gas supply shortages in Australia. |

DEECA is also investing in research and innovation to better understand and respond to climate-related risks. Examples include:

* Research to support climate adapted fire management
* DEECA is investing in research to enhance understanding of how fuel accumulation is affected by environmental changes, which links with research examining the effectiveness of fuel reduction activities under varying weather and fuel conditions. This research will improve our ability to refine our fuel reduction program to ensure it remains effective in a changing climate.
* DEECA is leading new research aimed at developing tools and approaches for measuring the effectiveness of fire management approaches. This research aims to reduce the impact of future bushfires on ecosystem resilience by considering different climate scenarios.
* Research to support climate change adaptation in the primary production sector
* In conjunction with Inspired Ag, auto retractable netting was established as a research and demonstration tool at the Tatura SmartFarm to protect orchards from sun and hail damage.
* Under the Victorian Dairy Innovation Agreement, Dairy Australia, Gardiner Foundation, and DEECA are jointly investing $97.5 million in the DairyBio and DairyFeedbase research programs. These programs are dedicated to breeding cow and pastures that are more resilient to climate change, and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from enteric methane and synthetic fertilisers.
* The Grains Research Development Corporation has committed $30 million to a 5-year co-funded partnership with DEECA to establish and maintain the Australian Grains Genebank (AGG) at the Horsham SmartFarm. The AGG investment will accelerate the development of climate resilient, high yielding and high value grain crops. This investment will ensure the Australian grains industry has access to essential plant genetic resources to meet future climate challenges.

## Climate-related risk management

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 the impacts of climate change, and assess risks and opportunities so that risks are managed in line with the department’s risk appetite. Climate-related risks are assessed and managed at the strategic, operational and program or project levels.

As required by DEECA’s risk management framework, all risks are assessed for potential impacts on the environment, with impacts of extreme harm 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.

## Climate-related metrics and targets

DEECA is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions across its operations. To achieve uplift in organisational climate risk maturity, the department is developing performance metrics and targets for managing existing climate-related risks.

DEECA has also committed to a range of actions to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, including:

* a Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) first policy to transition the department’s shared passenger vehicle fleet to ZEVs by 2027. DEECA now has 74 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.
* increased Green Power purchasing across all DEECA managed sites, in advance of the Victorian Government commitment to transition its operations to 100% renewable energy by July 2025

an audit of gas assets across DEECA sites to establish when these assets will reach end of life, to identify opportunities for these assets to be replaced with zero emissions alternatives at that time.

More information on these measures and reporting on climate-related metrics in line with requirements under Financial Reporting Direction 24 is provided under Environmental Performance on the next page.

## Leading climate action for Victoria

DEECA leads the Victorian Government’s action on climate change and emissions reduction.

The [Victorian Government Climate-related risk disclosure 2022](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/Victorian%20Government%20Climate-related%20Risk%20Disclosure%20Statement%202022.pdf) communicates understanding about the climate-related risks and opportunities that are relevant to Victoria, and the actions the Victorian Government is taking to manage risk and capitalise on opportunities.

# Environmental performance

6: Ocean Water and Sanitation

7: Affordable and Clean Energy

11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

12: Responsible Consumption and Production

13: Climate Action

## DEECA achieving net zero emissions

In 2023–24 the DEECA Board endorsed a net zero transition plan with a commitment for the department to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 through a range of actions including:

* a Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) First policy to transition the department’s shared passenger vehicle fleet to ZEVs by 2027
* increased Green Power purchasing across all DEECA managed sites, in advance of the Victoria Government commitment to transition its operations to 100% renewable energy by July 2025

measures to support gas substitution in DEECA including processes to replace gas assets with zero emissions alternatives when they reach end of life. This action supports the Victorian Government Gas Substitution Roadmap.

The commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 allows time to transition to longer term and ongoing net zero emissions alternatives, rather than incurring annual costs to purchase Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) to achieve a net zero status. 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.

The information in this report provides greater transparency to the Victorian community of the environmental impacts of public services and illustrates how they are being responsibly managed. The following disclosure is a mix of quantitative and qualitative data presenting the department’s environmental performance over 2023–24.

## 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 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 managing both environmental performance and environmental compliance. All Victorian Government departments are required to adopt an EMS that is aligned to International Standard ISO 14001 and report annually on their environmental performance under FRD 24. DEECA’s EMS was externally audited in September 2023.

## Reporting boundary for environmental data

DEECA was established on 1 January 2023 through Machinery of Government changes. DEECA tracks environmental data from 1 April to 31 March to allow for a full reporting year and provide greater accuracy for the annual report. This is the second report for DEECA, with the 2022–23 report setting 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.

Under FRD 24 reporting requirements, consumption indicators require breakdown by site type. To address this requirement, the following site categorisation has been established and used throughout this report. The full time equivalent (FTE) staff figure from the end of June 2024 used for this report is 5,809.

| Site category | Number of locations | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Offices | 25 | DEECA office sites |
| Mixed use sites | 39 | DEECA office sites with depots or warehouses attached |
| Research centres | 12 | Agriculture Victoria research centres |
| Other | 50 | Airbases, depots, farms, fire towers, radio towers and warehouses |

## Greenhouse gas emissions

Total greenhouse gas emissions for DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 25,348 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tonnes CO2-e), which is comparable with emissions for the 2022–23 baseline reporting year. Under FRD 24 reporting, emissions are categorised into 3 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.

The increase in Scope 1 emissions for 2023–24 is due to the DEECA approach of transitioning to net zero alternatives rather than the annual purchase of ACCUs to ultimately achieve a net zero status. Despite this, there has been a reduction in scope 1 emissions associated with shared passenger vehicles due to the transition of 74 zero emissions vehicles to the fleet.

The reduction in Scope 2 electricity reported emissions was achieved through the additional Green Power purchasing commitment made by Agriculture Victoria from September 2023.

Graph showing G1-G3. Total reported emissions by scope (tonnes CO2-e)
Data in table below.

Graph showing G1-G3. Total reported emissions by category (tonnes CO2-e).
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total reported greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **25,348** | **25,439(i)** |
| **G1. Scope 1: Direct emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **14,242** | **8,363(i)** |
| Gas/LPG reported emissions | 2,961 | 1,504(i) (ii) |
| Shared passenger vehicle emissions | 426 | 480 |
| Operational vehicle reported emissions(iii) | 8,194 | 3,943(ii) |
| Operational aviation emissions(iii) | 2,661 | 2,436 |
| Carbon Dioxide CO2 | 14,149 | 8,307(i) |
| Methane CH4 | 8 | 4 |
| Nitrous Oxide N2O | 85 | 52 |
| **G2. Scope 2: Electricity reported emissions (tonnes CO2-e)** | **10,986(iv)** | **16,613(i)** |
| **G3. Scope 3: Other greenhouse gas emissions associated with commercial air travel and waste disposal (tonnes CO2-e)** | **120** | **462** |

Explanatory notes:

i. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

ii. The former DELWP purchased ACCUs in 2022 to be used towards reducing departmental emissions. For 2022–23, 5,508 of these ACCUs were used by DEECA for the baseline reporting year. ACCUs have not been purchased since 1 January 2023, with DEECA prioritising the transition to zero emissions alternatives. Gas / LPG emissions would have been 3,069 tonnes in 2022–23, but 1,565 tonnes were offset using ACCUs.

iii. DEECA emissions from operational vehicles and operational aviation are directly linked to the level of emergency response activity required each year.

iv. There has been a reduction in emissions because of increased Green Power purchasing. The transition of DEECA managed Agriculture Victoria electricity accounts to 100% Green Power purchasing was completed in September 2023. This transition excludes Agri Bio, which is anticipated to transition to 100% renewable electricity from July 2025 in line with the Victorian Government commitment.

## Electricity production and consumption

Total electricity consumption for DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 30,576 megawatt hours (MWh) which is comparable with consumption for the 2022–23 baseline reporting year. All new builds and significant rebuilds have LED lighting and solar installation as a standard requirement and are built to a 6-star NABERS rating incorporating Green Star principles.

All DEECA-managed electricity accounts now have 100% Green Power applied. The DEECA-managed Agriculture Victoria electricity accounts transitioned to 100% Green Power purchasing from September 2023. This excludes Agri Bio, which is anticipated to transition to 100% renewable electricity from July 2025, in line with the Victorian Government commitment.

Graph showing EL1. Total electricity consumption (grid and solar) (MWh).
Data in table below.

Graph showing G2. Reported electricity emissions (tonnes CO2-e).
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **EL1. Total electricity consumption (MWh)** | **30,576** | **30,304(i)** |
| Purchased electricity | 29,285 | 29,113(i) |
| Generated electricity (consumed) | 1,291 | 1,191(i) |
| Offices | 4,812 | 4,735(i) |
| Mixed use sites | 5,052 | 5,079(i) |
| Research centres | 20,265 | 20,066(i) |
| Other | 447 | 424(i) |
| **EL2. On-site electricity generated (MWh)(ii)** | **1,753** | **1,456(i)** |
| Generated electricity (consumed) | 1,291 | 1,191(i) |
| Generated electricity (exported) | 462 | 265(i) |
| **EL3. On site Solar Photo-Voltaic (PV) installed generation capacity (Megawatts)** | **1.645** | **1.550(iii)** |
| **EL4. Green power purchased (MWh)** | **14,756** | **9,568(i)** |
| **G2. Reported scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions from electricity consumption (tonnes CO2-e)** | **10,986** | **16,613(i)** |
| Electricity emissions (excluding Green Power) | 23,135 | 24,746(i) |
| Electricity emissions offset through the purchasing of Green Power | 12,149(iv) | 8,133(i) |

Explanatory notes:

i. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

ii. Some older Solar PV installations do not have the capability to be tracked. Estimations are included where actual data is unavailable.

iii. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include all solar at Agriculture Victoria sites.

iv. This figure includes the remaining 492 ACCUs that were purchased by the former DELWP in 2022.

## Stationary fuel use

Total stationary fuel consumption for DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 56,791,838 megajoules (MJs), which represents a 3.6% reduction on the 2022–23 baseline year. DEECA is implementing measures to support gas substitution across the department including processes to replace gas assets with zero emissions alternatives when they reach end of life. This action supports the Victorian Government Gas Substitution Roadmap.

F1. Total fuels used in buildings (MJ).
Data in table below.

Graph showing F2/Ga Reported stationary fuel emissions (tonnes CO2-e)
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **F1. Total fuels used in buildings (MJ)** | **56,791,838** | **58,922,148(i)** |
| Natural Gas | 53,027,636 | 55,233,309(i) |
| Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)(ii) | 3,764,202 | 3,688,839 |
| Offices | 7,298,685(iii) | 5,852,610(i) |
| Mixed use sites | 4,509,576 | 5,617,577 |
| Research centres | 44,916,737 | 47,376,100(i) |
| Other | 66,840 | 75,861 |
| **F2/G1. Reported scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption (tonnes CO2-e)** | **2,961** | **1,504(i)** |
| Natural Gas | 2,733 | 2,845(i) |
| Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) | 228 | 224 |
| Stationary fuel consumption emissions (excluding ACCUs) | 2,961 | 3,069(i) |
| Stationary fuel consumption emissions offset through the purchasing of ACCUs(iv) | 0 | 1,565 |

Explanatory notes:

i. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

ii. 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.

iii. Gas consumption in offices has increased in 2023–24 due to the new tenancy at the Bendigo GovHub and increases at the leased Traralgon site.

iv. The former DELWP purchased ACCUs in 2022 to be used towards reducing departmental emissions. For 2022–23, 1,565 of these ACCUs were used by DEECA for the baseline reporting year. DEECA will not be purchasing ACCUs at the present time, focusing instead on the transition to zero emissions alternatives.

## Transportation

The total energy used for transport by DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 160,568,506 MJ. This 4% increase on the 2022–23 baseline for the department is due to the increased use of operational vehicles and operational aviation associated with emergency response activity. Operational vehicles and operational aviation account for 96% of DEECA transport emissions.

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 charging infrastructure also being installed at relevant sites to assist with this transition. As at 30 June 2024, there were 74 ZEVs in the shared passenger vehicle fleet, with an additional 31 exemptions granted. The shared passenger vehicle fleet accounts for 4% of DEECA transport emissions.

DEECA’s Bushfire and Forest Services Group (BFSG) has developed a ZEV preparation plan to better understand the state of current and future research and development into zero or low emission utility vehicles, and to better recognise the opportunities and challenges for DEECA in making the transition. DEECA investigated the conversion of 3 existing dual cab utility vehicles to battery electric to trial the concept and socialise the emerging technology with the DEECA workforce. This was scheduled to take place through a trial with ROEV, however, in May 2024 ROEV announced it was terminating its vehicle conversion program. There are no other companies offering scaled conversions of 4WD vehicles at present. The current lack of available options means that DEECA cannot transition to low or zero emission vehicles at present to replace its existing fleet of internal combustion engine vehicles.

Electrification of Agriculture Victoria Smart Farm vehicles is also being explored. While there are currently limited options to reduce emissions from heavy machinery, Agriculture Victoria is exploring options for side-by-side vehicles. As at 30 June 2024, there were 6 ZEVs in this operational farm vehicle fleet.

DEECA is unable to transition operational aviation away from fossil fuels at present due to limited available zero emissions alternatives. However, DEECA is trialling Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (drones), to help address operational aviation emissions.

Graph showing T1. Total energy used in transportation (MJ)
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **T1: Total energy used in transportation (MJ)(i)** | **160,568,506** | **153,799,736** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **6,249,393** | **7,032,115(ii)** |
| Diesel | 1,506,855 | 1,412,714(ii) |
| Unleaded | 2,197,586 | 2,735,923(ii) |
| Hybrid | 2,544,952 | 2,883,478(ii) |
| **Operational vehicles(iii)** | **116,384,676** | **112,005,221** |
| Diesel | 116,085,444 | 111,712,847 |
| Unleaded | 299,232 | 292,374 |
| **Operational aviation(iv)** | **37,934,437** | **34,762,400** |
| Diesel | 36,912,854 | 33,109,308 |
| Kerosene | 1,021,583 | 1,653,092 |

Graph showing T2. Breakdown of the DEECA vehicle fleet.
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| **T2: Number of vehicles in the DEECA fleet** | **1,895** | **1,834** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **270** | **365** |
| Diesel | 36 | 68 |
| Unleaded | 62 | 119 |
| Hybrid | 98 | 140 |
| ZEV(v) | 74 | 38 |
| **Operational vehicles(iii)** | **1,625** | **1,469** |
| Diesel | 1,594 | 1,443 |
| Unleaded | 25 | 23 |
| ZEV | 6 | 3 |

Graph showing T3. Reported transport emissions (tonnes Co2e)
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **T3: Reported scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions from transport (tonnes CO2-e)** | **11,281** | **6,859** |
| **Shared passenger vehicles(i)** | **426** | **480(ii)** |
| Diesel | 105 | 99(ii) |
| Unleaded | 321 | 381(ii) |
| **Reported operational vehicles(iii)** | **8,194** | **3,943** |
| Diesel | 8,174 | 7,866 |
| Unleaded | 20 | 20 |
| Operational vehicle emissions (excluding ACCUs) | 8,194 | 7,886 |
| Operational vehicle emissions offset through the purchasing of ACCUs(vi) | 0 | 3,943 |
| **Operational aviation(iv)** | **2,661** | **2,436** |
| Kerosene | 2,592 | 2,324 |
| Gasoline | 69 | 112 |

Explanatory notes:

i. The shared passenger vehicle fleet includes leased vehicles and departmental use of the vehicle fleet managed by the Department of Government Services. For 2022–23, this data included the vehicles that transferred to the Department of Transport and Planning that were managed under the DEECA system. Energy use linked to ZEVs is captured under building energy from ZEV charging infrastructure. Executive vehicles are not included in the shared passenger vehicle fleet and are not covered under FRD 24 reporting.

ii. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

iii. The BFSG operational vehicle fleet includes all owned and leased utility vehicles, ultralight tankers, heavy tankers, dozers, heavy-duty vehicles, and farm vehicles. In addition to this fleet, BFSG also has access to an additional vehicle fleet under a ‘wet hire’ arrangement where the machine, operator, and fuels are provided by a contractor. Use of this ‘wet hire’ fleet is currently not tracked or reported.

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.

iv. The operational aviation data includes DEECA’s use of a hired fleet for DEECA Forest and Fire Management operations.

v. DEECA has a ‘ZEV First’ policy in place for the shared passenger vehicle fleet.

vi. The former DELWP purchased ACCUs in 2022 to be used towards reducing departmental emissions. For 2022–23, 3,943 of these ACCUs were used by DEECA for the baseline reporting year. ACCUs have not been purchased since 1 January 2023, with DEECA prioritising the transition to zero emissions alternatives.

### Commercial air travel

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **T4. Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (km)** | **3,804,551** | **2,967,028** |
| **G3. Reported scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from commercial air travel (tonnes CO2-e)** | **0** | **331** |
| Commercial air travel emissions offset through the State Purchasing Contract(i) | 760 | 225 |

Explanatory notes:

i. All former DELWP emissions from air travel have been offset since July 2016 through the State Purchasing Contract for travel management services. All DEECA air travel emissions were offset from April 2023 onwards.

## Total energy use

The total energy used by DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 327,435,229 MJ. This includes all energy used in buildings and transportation. This 2% increase on the 2022–23 baseline is through increased operational vehicle use and operational aviation associated with emergency response activity. Increased Green Power purchasing for the department in 2023–24 has resulted in the increased proportion of renewable energy.

Graph showing E3. Total energy used (MJ).
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **E1. Total energy used from fuels (MJ)** | **217,360,344** | **212,721,884(i)** |
| Stationary | 56,791,838 | 58,922,148(i) |
| Transportation | 160,568,506 | 153,799,736(i) |
| **E2. Total energy used from electricity (MJ)** | **110,074,885** | **109,094,510(i)** |
| **E3. Total energy used segmented into renewable and non-renewable sources (MJ)** | **327,435,229** | **321,816,393(i)** |
| Renewable | 57,769,067 | 38,731,461(i) |
| Non-renewable | 269,666,162 | 283,084,932(i) |
| **E4. Units of energy used normalised by FTE (MJ/FTE)** | **56,365** | **57,139(i)** |

Explanatory notes:

i. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

## Sustainable buildings and infrastructure

DEECA will continue to implement sustainable building guidelines to ensure the design and delivery of buildings incorporates 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, be built to 6-star NABERS energy rating standard and incorporate Green Star principles.

For the 2023–24 reporting period, 95 kilowatts of solar PV were installed across 3 sites and LED lighting upgrades undertaken at a further 7 sites.

Accommodation, Carpool and Library Services (ACLS), through the Department of Government Services, manages leases on behalf of DEECA. The ACLS has established Green Lease Schedules at the following 6 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 ACLS managed government office buildings and tenancy fit-outs have required a minimum 5-Star NABERS energy efficiency rating since 2021 and will require a 6-Star rating from 2025. The table below summarises NABERS rating undertaken by landlords through ACLS 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 | 5.0 |
| Melbourne: 150 Lonsdale Street | Office | NABERS – Energy | 4.0 |

## 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’s procurement team provides advice to support and strengthen environmental procurement practices. Departmental templates for tendering and contracting have specific sections 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.

## Water consumption

Total water consumption for DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 109,173 kilolitres (kl), which is comparable with consumption for the 2022–23 baseline reporting year. The department continues to track 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 a 6-star NABERS rating incorporating Green Star principles.

Graph showing W1. Total water consumption (kl).
Data in table below.

| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **W1. Total water consumption (kl)(i)** | **109,173** | **110,850(ii)** |
| Offices | 18,010(iii) | 14,014(ii) |
| Mixed use sites | 11,773 | 13,934(ii) |
| Research centres | 74,524 | 80,578(ii) |
| Other | 4,866 | 2,324(ii) |
| **W2. Units of office water used per FTE (kl /FTE)** | **18.8** | **19.7(ii)** |

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.

ii. The 2022–23 figures have been updated to include actual rather than estimated consumption data.

iii. The increase in office water consumption in 2023–24 is primarily due to the inclusion of staff occupying the Galkangu Gov Hub from September 2023. Water use attributed to DEECA is taken as a proportion of the total building water consumption. There was also an increase in water consumption at 8 Nicholson Street attributed to increased office attendance.

## Waste and recycling

Total waste generation for DEECA over the 2023–24 reporting period was 119,224 kilograms which represents a 5% reduction on the 2022–23 baseline year.

DEECA also collected an additional 210 kilograms of metal, plastics, batteries, mobile phones and stationery through the Green Collect recycling scheme and 5,379 kilograms of redundant IT e-waste 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.

Graph showing WR1/WR4. Waste and recycling (kg).
Data in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | 2023–24 | 2022–23 |
| **WR1. Total units of waste disposed of (kilograms)(i)** | **119,116** | **125,934** |
| Landfill | 65,747 | 71,366 |
| Recycling – comingled | 14,950 | 20,186 |
| Recycling – paper and card | 18,727 | 9,759 |
| Recycling – secure documents | 12,567 | 17,262 |
| Recycling – food and garden organics | 7,125 | 7,361 |
| WR2. Percentage of office sites which are covered by dedicated collection services for:(ii) |  |  |
| E-waste | 23% | 12% |
| Printer cartridges | 43% | 41% |
| Batteries | 32% | 31% |
| Soft plastics | 0% | 0% |
| **WR3. Total units of waste disposed of normalised by FTE** | **20.5** | **22.4** |
| **WR4. Recycling rate percentage** | **45%** | **43%** |
| **WR5/G3. Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from with waste disposal (tonnes CO2-e)** | **120** | **131** |

Explanatory notes:

i. DEECA waste and recycling data is calculated from annual waste audits at 16 locations where 61% of total staff are located.

ii. This indicator includes offices, mixed use sites and research centres. The e-waste collection service is managed by the department. Outside of the Melbourne 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. This waste and recycling data is measured in kitchens and stationery rooms only.

# Legislative and other information

## Major Entities

### Agriculture

Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd (AVS)

Dairy Food Safety Victoria

Dairy Food Safety Victoria Selection Committee

Melbourne Market Authority

Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee

PrimeSafe

PrimeSafe Selection Committee

Phytogene Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of AVS)

Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria

VicForests(i)

Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Council

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Ministerial advisory committees(ii) (various) including:

* Apicultural Industry Advisory Committee
* Cattle Compensation Advisory Committee
* Sheep and Goat Compensation Advisory Committee

Swine Industry Projects Advisory Committee

### Energy and Resources

Electric Line Clearance Consultative Committee

Energy Safe Victoria

Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

Mining Warden/s

Victorian Electrolysis Committee

### State Electricity Commission

State Electricity Commission Victoria

SEC (Victoria) Pty Ltd(iii)

SEC Energy Pty Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of SEC (Victoria) Pty Ltd)

SEC Infrastructure Pty Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of SEC (Victoria) Pty Ltd)

### 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 of 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(iv)

Ministerial advisory committees (various)

### Water

Birrarung Council

Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee

Barwon Region Water Corporation (and Barwon Asset Solutions Pty Ltd, its wholly owned subsidiary)

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

Notes

(i) VicForests was abolished on 30 June 2024 by the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Act 2024.

(ii) Two ministerial advisory committees (the Sheep and Goat Identification Advisory Committee and the National Livestock Identification System Implementation Advisory Committee) were abolished and replaced by the Victorian Livestock Traceability Advisory Committee.

(iii) SEC (Victoria) Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries were each declared to be a ‘state owned company’ under section 66(1) of the State Owned Enterprises Act 1992 on 14 November 2023 by Order published in the Government Gazette.

(iv) In the DEECA portfolio there are approximately 975 committees of management incorporated (or waiting incorporation) under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 and 33 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.

## Administrative offices in relation to the department

VicGrid was established as an administrative office in relation to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action on 1 March 2024 by Order in Council under section 11 of the Public Administration Act 2004.

## 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, the Minister for Outdoor Recreation and the Minister for Water.

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). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health.

Farm Debt Mediation Act 2011

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Certain provisions are 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). The Act is otherwise administered by 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 1974

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 is jointly administered with the Minister for Environment. The Act is otherwise administered by 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\*

(\*This Act was repealed on 1 July 2024 by the *Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Act 2024*). Certain provisions were jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment. Part 2, section 45, Division 1 of Part 6 and Part 8 was only administered by the Minister for Environment. The Act was otherwise administered by the Minister for Agriculture.

Veterinary Practice Act 1997

Wildlife Act 1975

Section 7A in so far as it relates to game (this section is jointly administered with the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation).

Section 7A except in so far as it relates to game (this section is jointly administered with the Minister for Environment). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation.

### 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.

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, the 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) Act 2024

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\*

(\*This Act was repealed on 1 July 2024 by the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Act 2024). Certain provisions were jointly and severally administered with the Minister for Environment. Part 2, section 45, Division 1 of Part 6 and Part 8 was only administered by the Minister for Environment. The Act was 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 game 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). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Climate Action and the Premier.

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). The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Energy and Resources.

Former SEC (Residual Provisions) Act 1958

The Act is 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. The Act is otherwise administered by the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation.

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 Policy (MPSG), which were administered separately up to August 2018.

Departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the Local Jobs First policy (under the Local Jobs First Act 2003) in all projects valued at $3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or 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 and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG 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 2023–24, the department commenced 5 Local Jobs First Standard Projects totalling $19.32 million to which a Local Industry Development Plan (LIDP) was required. Of those projects, 3 were in regional Victoria with an average local content commitment of 66% and 2 occurred statewide with an average local content commitment of 97%. The MPSG applied to none of these projects.

The specific project outcomes expected from the implementation of the Local Jobs First policy to the 5 projects where information was provided, are as follows:

* an average local content commitment of 79%
* a total of 41 jobs (Annualised Employee Equivalent (AEE)), including the creation of 7 new jobs and the retention of 34 existing jobs (AEE)
* a total of 2 positions retained for apprenticeship and traineeship

engagement of 85 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on commenced standard projects.

### Projects completed – Local Jobs First Standard

During 2023–24, the department completed 5 Local Jobs First standard projects, totalling $32.40 million to which a LIDP was required. Of those projects, 3 were in regional Victoria with an average local content commitment of 93%, one in metropolitan Melbourne with an average local content commitment of 0%. One standard project was completed that occurred statewide with local content commitment of 100%. 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 76%
* a total of 60 jobs (AEE), including the creation of 17 new jobs and the retention of 43 existing jobs (AEE)

engagement of 244 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on completed standard projects.

### Projects commenced – Local Jobs First Strategic

During 2023–24, the department commenced 2 Local Jobs First Strategic Projects, valued at $1.06 billion to which a LIDP was required. Both projects occurred statewide with an average local content commitment of 88%. The MPSG applied to one 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 88%
* a total of 50 (AEE) positions were committed, including the creation of 4 new jobs and the retention of 46 existing jobs (AEE)
* a total of 10 positions for apprentices, trainees and cadets, including the creation of three new apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships, and the retention of seven existing apprenticeships and traineeships

engagement of 91 small to medium-sized businesses through the supply chain on commenced strategic projects.

### Projects completed – Local Jobs First Strategic

During 2023–24, the department did not complete any Local Jobs First Strategic Projects.

### Reporting on grants provided

For grants provided during 2023–24, a total of 13 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.

## Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework

[Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework](https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/Victorias-Social-Procurement-Framework.PDF) (SPF) establishes requirements that apply to Victorian Government departments and agencies when they procure goods, services and construction. Under the framework, DEECA is required to provide an aggregate level summary of its social procurement activities in its annual report.

DEECA’s Social Procurement Strategy focusses on the following objectives set in the SPF:

* sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal businesses sectors
* environmentally sustainable outputs
* environmentally sustainable business practices
* opportunities for Victorians with disability

women’s equality and safety.

The strategy outlines the ways the department is progressing to meet its social procurement obligations, namely:

* purchasing from certified Victorian social enterprises
* purchasing from certified Victorian Aboriginal businesses and granting a standing exemption from some procurement processes for direct selection of an Aboriginal business for contract with a value less than $200,000
* incorporating requirements for environmentally sustainable outputs and business practices in DEECA’s requests for tender and quotation documents

promotion of Aboriginal businesses and social benefit suppliers through department-wide information sessions in partnership with Social Traders and Kinaway.

In 2023–24, DEECA spent a total of $3.4 million[[6]](#footnote-6) through direct engagement of 65 social benefit suppliers, including a total of $2.2 million with 35 certified Victorian Aboriginal businesses.

## Disclosure of government advertising expenditure

In 2023–24, there was one advertising campaign with a total media spend of $100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). The details of this campaign is outlined below.

### Details of government advertising expenditure (campaigns with a media spend of $100 000 or greater)

| Name of campaign | Start/ end date | Advertising  (media) expenditure (excl. GST) | Creative and campaign  development  expenditure  (excl. GST) | Research expenditure  (excl. GST) | Post-campaign evaluation expenditure (excl. GST) | Print and collateral expenditure (excl. GST) | Other campaign expenditure (excl. GST) | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ‘Save with solar’ advertising campaign | Jul 2023– Jun 2024 | Approved: $1,000,000  Actual: $600,000 | Planned: $85,000  Actual: $18,110 | Planned: $38,000  Actual: $26,375 | Planned:  $0  Actual:  $0 | Planned: $2,600  Actual: $2,554 | Planned: $3,700  Actual: $3,691 | Planned/ Approved: $1,129,300  Actual: $650,730 |

Campaign summary:

The ‘Save with Solar’ advertising campaign was aimed at increasing consumer access to affordable energy and helping households switch to cheaper, cleaner energy in the home. The advertising campaign ran from 4 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 promoting rebates and interest-free loans available under the Victorian Government’s Solar Homes Program for the installation of solar panels, batteries and energy-efficient hot water systems at Victorian homes and rental properties. The campaign was a continuation of earlier activity in 2022–23 and utilised a range of channels, including cinema, radio, print media, online and social media.

Notes:

**Approved** ‘Advertising (media) expenditure’ is the amount approved for each campaign by the Advertising Approval Group (AAG).

**Planned** campaign expenditure amounts are the amounts included in the Campaign Strategy form submitted to the AAG for review.

## Consultancies

In 2023–24, there were 238 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2023–24 in relation to these consultancies was $56.68 million (exclusive of GST).

In 2023–24, there were 62 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than $10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2023–24 in relation to these consultancies was $0.26 million (exclusive of GST).

Details of individual consultancies where the total fees payable were $10,000 or greater are listed in the DEECA Annual Report 2023–24 – Additional Information document, published on the DEECA website. The full list of all consultancies is available on request, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

## Reviews and studies expenditure

### Details of reviews and studies

During 2023–24, there were 8 major reviews and studies undertaken outside of the department’s business as usual functions with a total cost of $1.9 million.

Major reviews and studies have been defined as those that exceeded $100,000 (exclusive of GST) that result in a published report, in line with the FRD22 Additional information on request guidance note. Note that the department’s enduring research responsibilities in the scientific disciplines of agriculture, ecology and biodiversity, climate science, hydrology, geoscience, forest management, and bushfire science are part of its regular service delivery and are therefore excluded from this disclosure.

Details of the 8 individual reviews and studies are outlined below.

| Name of the review (portfolio(s) and output(s)) | Reasons for review/study | Terms of reference/scope | Anticipated outcomes | Estimated cost for the year (excl. GST) ($ thousand) | Final cost if completed, including costs associated with previous years (excl. GST)  ($ thousand) | Publicly available (Y/N) and URL |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Victorian Pet Census (Agriculture portfolio; Agriculture output) | To gather contemporary data on pet ownership, attitudes, and experiences across Victoria. | Conduct quantitative research with a representative sample of Victorians including opt-in responses from the public. | Informed education, policy, and program initiatives regarding pet ownership across Victoria. | 423 | 436 | Y –  [Animal Welfare Victoria website](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/animal-welfare/victorian-pet-census) |
| Blue Carbon on Sea Country: Opportunities Report (Environment portfolio; Environment and biodiversity output) | To identify opportunities for Traditional Owner leadership and engagement in blue carbon projects. | Explore opportunities relating to education and training, mapping blue carbon, site level assessments, blue carbon projects on private land, natural resource management, nurseries, monitoring restoration, environmental economic accounting and economic empowerment. | Conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems and identification of opportunities for Traditional owner-led adaptation and planning. | 300 | 300 | Y –  [DEECA website](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/700972/Blue-Carbon-and-Sea-Country-Opportunities-Report.pdf) |
| Lake Eildon Technical Assessment (Water portfolio; Effective water management and supply output) | To identify methods to reduce downstream flooding in response to the major flooding event in October 2022. | Assess 6 operating arrangements at Lake Eildon for their potential to improve protection for downstream communities from future flooding. | Evidence to inform flood studies and flood mitigation options. | 250 | 250 | Y –  [DEECA website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/floodplain-management/lake-eildon-operating-arrangements-assessment) |
| Lake Eppalock Technical Assessment (Water portfolio; Effective water management and supply output) | To identify methods to reduce downstream flooding in response to the major flooding event in October 2022. | Assess 5 operating and infrastructure arrangements at Lake Eppalock for their potential to improve protection for downstream communities from future flooding. | Evidence to inform flood studies and flood mitigation options. | 236 | 236 | Y –  [DEECA website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/floodplain-management/lake-eppalock-operating-arrangements-assessment) |
| Review of Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) Plan B report (Energy and Resources portfolio; Energy output) | To independently assess the feasibility and merits of the physical network changes proposed as an alternative to VNI West (referred to as Plan B). | Independently assess the feasibility and merits of the proposal: ‘No Longer Lost in Transmission’ (Aug 2023) prepared by professors Bartlett and Mountain and Darren Edwards. | The review confirmed VNI West as the right solution for Victoria’s energy future. It also found flaws in the analysis and assumptions of the Plan B report. | 208 | 208 | Y –  [Volume 1](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/700863/Plan-B-review.pdf)  and  [Volume 2](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/700864/Plan-B-review-volume-2-information.pdf) |
| Extractive Resources Supply and Demand Study 2022–2030 (Energy and Resources portfolio; Resources output) | To determine whether Victoria has the supply of extractive resources to meet demand between 2021–22 and 2029–30. | Examine the supply and demand forecasts for hard rock, sand and gravel, and for clay and clay shale (clay) in the short- to medium-term. | Evidence to support measures aimed at ensuring the supply of materials meets forecast demand where it is needed in the short to long term. | 200 | 500 | Y – [Resources Victoria website](https://resources.vic.gov.au/projects/extractive-resources-strategy/extractive-resources-supply-and-demand-study#:~:text=Extractive%20Resources%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Study%202022%2D2030,63.7%20million%20in%202020%2D2021.) |
| Victorian Constraints Measures Program – Feasibility Study (Water Portfolio; Effective Water Management and Supply output) | To investigate the feasibility of options to relax river operating rules (constraints) in Northern Victoria. | Conduct technical assessments including bathymetry, hydrological modelling and environmental benefits/risks assessments, with all modelling considering 2050/2070 climate change scenarios for long-term investment viability. | Evidence to inform broader investigations of constraints relaxation across the Southern-Connected Basin. | 189 | 9,800 | Y –  [DEECA website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/murray-darling-basin/victorian-constraints-measures-program) |
| Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program - Coastal Erosion Indicators | To provide high-level coastal erosion indicators that summarise the current state of all sites monitored through the Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program. | Collect and analyse drone data to identify long-term shoreline change, short-term change, ratio of shoreline eroding, ratio of backshore eroding and maximum backshore erosion. | Information to support decision making and adaptation planning. | 100 | 150 | Y – [CoastKit website](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/625352/VCMP_Erosion-Indicators_April_2023.pdf) |

## Information and communication technology 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 2023–24, the department had a total ICT expenditure of $191.89 million (exclusive of GST) with the details shown below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | $’000 |
| Non Business as Usual (non BAU): |  |
| Operational expenditure | 39,751 |
| Capital expenditure | 4,017 |
| Total non BAU | 43,768 |
| Total Business as Usual (BAU) | 148,126 |
| **Total ICT expenditure** | **191,894** |

## Disclosure of major contracts

During 2023–24, the department entered into 3 contracts greater than $10 million in value (inclusive of 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 2023–24, DEECA activated emergency procurement on one occasion in accordance with the requirements of Victorian Government policy and accompanying guidelines. Twenty new contracts, each valued at or more than $100,000 (inclusive of GST), 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 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Avian Influenza (Class 2 Biosecurity) within Victoria | 23 May 2024 | Poultry destruction  Site cleaning  Site decontamination  Waste disposal  Plant/vehicle hire  Labour hire  Personal protective equipment | $7,829,951(a) | 20 |

Note:

(a) This is the total of all expenditure inclusive of GST, including contracts under and over $100,000.

## 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 and a guide to publicly available DEECA documents is available on the [department’s website](https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/doing-business-with-us/freedom-of-information/accessing-deeca-information) under its Part II Information Statement.

The department receives FOI requests for a wide range of documents relating to the many different functions that it performs. 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.

FOI requests relating to a portfolio agency should be made direct to that agency. Contact details of portfolio agencies can be found on the [Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) website](https://ovic.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/find-an-agency/).

Under the Act, the FOI processing time for requests received is 30 calendar days. However, when external consultation is required under ss29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, a 15 day automatic extension applies. The processing time may also be extended by periods of up to 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 OVIC 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@deeca.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 $32.70 applies. Access charges may also be payable.

The department’s FOI Unit can be contacted by email at [FOI Unit DEECA](mailto:foi.unit%40deeca.vic.gov.au).

### FOI statistics and timeliness

For the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, the department received 241 new FOI requests. They came from:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| Individuals | 128 | 53 |
| Members of Parliament | 42 | 17 |
| Lawyers | 33 | 14 |
| Journalists | 10 | 4 |
| Community groups | 23 | 10 |
| Companies | 5 | 2 |
| **Total** | **241** | **100** |

For the same period, the department made decisions on 128 requests. Fifteen of these requests were received during prior financial years. The outcomes were:

|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Full access granted | 41 | 32 |
| Partial access granted | 53 | 41 |
| Access denied | 16 | 13 |
| No relevant documents found | 18 | 14 |
| **Total** | **128** | **100** |

The processing time for the FOI requests is shown below, with an average of 52 days.

|  | Number | Per cent (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Within statutory timelines | 75 | 59 |
| 1–45 days overdue | 37 | 29 |
| 46 days or more overdue | 16 | 12 |
| **Total** | **128** | **100** |

The department closed 16 requests with the outcomes shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Number |
| Request not processed(i) | 11 |
| Unreasonable diversion of resources | 5 |
| **Total** | **16** |

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 65 requests, including 4 received during the previous financial year, with the outcomes shown below:

|  | Number |
| --- | --- |
| Invalid request(i) | 17 |
| Transferred | 48 |
| **Total** | **65** |

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.vic.gov.au/).

## Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

### Reviews

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, OVIC received 22 requests for a review of an FOI decision made by the department.

### Complaints

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, the department was advised by OVIC of 8 complaints made about the processing of FOI requests.

### Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, 3 applications for a review of an FOI decision made by the department were lodged at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

## Compliance with the *Building Act 1993*

### Mechanisms for inspection, reporting, scheduling and carrying out of maintenance works on existing buildings

The Department of Government Services’ Accommodation, Carpool and Library Services (ACLS) Division manages, maintains and reports on the leased and owned accommodation portfolio occupied by the department under the Centralised Accommodation Model. These include buildings within the Central Business District and selected owned accommodation in regional areas.

Further to the above sites, the department also has responsibility for the management of its owned and directly leased portfolio assets via a dedicated in-house facilities team and through an outsourced facilities management service provider: Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). The owned and directly leased portfolio includes offices, combined office/work centre sites, work centres, residences, airbases, fire lookout towers, farms, research facilities and sites identified for land sales no longer required by the department. The role of the facility management teams and JLL is supported by a range of independent audits and regulatory compliance inspections, to ensure the building portfolio, depots and sites remain safe, functional, and compliant.

### Mechanisms to ensure that buildings conform with the building standards

The department engages suitably qualified organisations with relevant experience to assist in meeting requirements of the National Construction Code, Annual Essential Safety Measures Reports (AESMR), Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and Environmental Audit compliance obligations regarding building condition and hazardous material audits in the workplace. Specifically, AESMR are undertaken by the facilities providers 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.

### Major Works Projects

Major works projects (over $50,000) commenced or completed in 2023–24 include:

**Projects commenced:**

* Anglesea depot/work centre development
* Attwood – biosecurity central storage and staging facility
* Attwood – replace tile façade
* Attwood, Ellinbank, Mildura Hamilton, Rutherglen, Maffra, Swan Hill, Kerang, Echuca, Warrnambool – security access upgrades
* Bairnsdale depot/work centre – office and amenities upgrade
* Bairnsdale depot/work centre redevelopment
* Barwon Downs office/depot/work centre trailer shed storage and forklift shed
* Casterton amenities upgrade and meeting room
* Cavendish office/depot/work centre trailer storage
* Dargo depot/work centre – extension of female and unisex changerooms
* Daylesford office/depot/work centre trailer storage
* Edenhope wash bay and workshop extension
* Ellinbank dairy feedlot shed incorporating solar panels and battery installation
* Ellinbank – refurbishment of conference centre
* Ellinbank – walk in freezer
* Ellinbank – water infrastructure upgrades/repairs
* Ellinbank – replacement of decks and front timber steps
* Erica depot/work centre – reseal of driveway
* Gellibrand depot/work centre – vehicle and equipment storage shed
* Hamilton – replace roller doors and exit doors to equipment storage sheds
* Horsham Grains Innovation Park (GIP) – replace potting soil mixer
* Horsham GIP – road replacement
* Horsham GIP – solar panel Installation
* Horsham GIP – town water mains replacement
* Horsham Smart farm – construction of saline evaporation ponds
* Horsham Smart farm – new Irrigation infrastructure
* Horsham Smart farm – new storage shed to house Free to Air Temperature Experiment Facility (FATE) equipment
* Horsham Smart Farm – relocation Generator and Upgrade of Electrical Infrastructure to support FATE
* Horsham Smart farm – reverse osmosis plant (de-salination)
* Knoxfield depot/work centre – fire depot extension
* Mansfield office and depot/work centre (level 3 Incident Control Centre) development
* Noojee hardstand and civil works
* Nowa Nowa depot/work centre – trailer storage shed
* Statewide LED lighting upgrades
* Tatura – greenhouse building electrical wire replacement

Tatura – greenhouse outer lining replacement

**Projects completed:**

* 8 Nicholson Street data centre removal
* Alexandra office/depot, Altona North office/depot, Anglesea 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 – Electrical vehicle charging stations
* Bendoc depot/work centre – Extension of shed and extra drainage to water tanks, including cover for fuel bowser
* Briagolong hardstand and civil works
* Broadford depot/work centre – Civil road works
* Colac – Install kitchenette and lift
* Dargo depot/work centre – dangerous goods and hazardous substances shed upgrade
* Dartmoor depot/work centre development
* Ellinbank – drains and bridges – dairy dam project
* Erica depot/work centre – Amenities upgrade project
* Gellibrand depot/work centre – Deck extension and roof restoration
* Maryborough depot/work centre development
* Mildura – Security boundary fence
* Mitta Valley depot/work centre – Installation of site generator
* Mount Rowan office and depot/work centre (level 3 Incident Control Centre) development
* Orbost North depot/work centre – seal driveway and exit point onto main road

Statewide signage replacement

**Number of building permits, occupancy permits or certificate of final inspection issued in relation to buildings owned by the department**

During 2023–24, there were 8 building permits, 3 occupancy permits and 17 certificates of final inspection issued to the department for capital infrastructure projects completed.

**Number of emergency orders and building orders issued in relation to buildings**

During 2023–24, there were nil emergency orders and building orders issued in relation to buildings.

**Number of buildings that have been brought into conformity with building standards**

During 2023–24, there were nil buildings brought into conformity with building standards.

## Competitive neutrality policy

The department is compliant with the requirements of the Victorian Government’s Competitive Neutrality Policy. Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure that where services compete, or potentially compete, with the private sector, any net advantage arising from government ownership is accounted for if it is not in the public interest.

Government businesses are required to set a competitively neutral price, which accounts for any net advantage that comes from public ownership. 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.

The competitive neutrality policy is integrated into the department’s pricing policy and applied to relevant policy changes, with expertise sought from Better Regulation Victoria as needed.

In 2023–24, there were nil competitive neutrality complaints made against the department.

## Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The Public Interest Disclosures 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 has a Public Interest Disclosures Management Policy and Procedure, as well as integrity training and communications in place to support staff compliance with the Act.

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 DEECA](mailto:disclosures%40deeca.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](www.ibac.vic.gov.au)

### Further Information

The Public Interest Disclosure management guide which outlines the system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the department or any of its employees and/or officers, is available on DEECA’s website.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Public Interest Disclosure | 2023–24 number | 2022–23 number |
| The number of disclosures made by an individual to the department and notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission | 5 | 2 |

## Compliance with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*

DEECA has taken all practical measures to comply with its obligations under the Carers Recognition Act 2012.

The department 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.

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. Our partnership with Grace Papers, experts in workplace gender equality, ensures staff have access to resources, coaching and webinars that support carers in the workplace. Since the start of the partnership to 30 June 2024, there were over 700 registrations for Grace Papers’ career coaching platform.

Carers, as they are defined under the Carers Recognition Act 2012, are included in DEECA’s Workplace Adjustment Policy, which ensures that staff 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 our 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 for carers, staff with disability, and disability allies.

## 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 such as the All-Abilities Staff Network are also important supports in place for employees with disability.

## Disclosure of procurement complaints

Under the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB) Governance Policy, the department must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services.

The department received one formal complaint in 2023–24 relating to a procurement activity to update the STORM Tool, a custom application for stormwater quality assessments, in which the complainant raised concerns on the application of VGPB policies.

An internal review found that all departmental procurement policies had been adhered to and the complaint was referred to VGPB on 15 March 2024, as the complainant was not satisfied with the outcome. The VGPB investigation concluded there had been no breaches of VGPB policies by the department and the complaint was resolved.

## 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.

Released in December 2023, the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Strategic Management Plan outlines the medium term directions for the planning, development and use of the reserve for the purposes of racing, recreation and as a public park. It addresses key areas including:

* the addition of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve to the Victorian Heritage Register
* providing more cost-effective infrastructure solutions

a greater emphasis on sustainability and environmental outcomes.

Significant works were undertaken in 2023–24 at the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve to improve safety, remove legacy horse training infrastructure, improve public accessibility and extend opening hours. Further infrastructure work and planning commenced on enhancements to the public park and recreation spaces across the Reserve including sports fields, pathways, signage and informal recreation amenities.

The past year saw a significant increase in public use of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve with improved access and amenity. The public visit for a range of reasons including the monthly community markets, which have become a popular feature. A Sustainability Working Group was established with community and stakeholder representation, which led to a number of environmental improvements and the identification of more than 34 bird species in the reserve, attracting more visitors to this unique open space in an urban environment.

## 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.

Pursuant to section 40 of the Act, the department is required to include in its annual report:

1. a summary of the implementation of a Marine and Coastal Strategy during that financial year
2. a summary of any product made under a regional and strategic partnership during that financial year, including the status of the implementation of the product
3. a summary of the implementation of any environmental management plans during that financial year
4. a summary of any consents given during that financial year.

The [Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-management/marine-and-coastal-strategy) (the Strategy) addresses the objectives of the Act through 6 actions to improve marine and coastal management and planning across the state from 2022 to 2027. The Strategy puts into practice the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020. Year 2 of the Strategy was implemented over 2023–24.

### Summary of implementation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy (2022) in 2023–24

In 2023–24, significant progress was made in delivering 43 of the 54 activities across the 6 priority actions by DEECA and external partners. Multiple organisations throughout Victoria are leading implementation of these activities, including coastal Registered Aboriginal Parties, Committees of Management, coastal local governments, coastal Catchment Management Authorities, Parks Victoria, Department of Transport and Planning, EPA, Trust for Nature, Better Boating Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, and DEECA.

DEECA provides oversight and coordination for implementation of priority actions in the Strategy and leads key activities within each action. The following section presents highlights from a range of DEECA led or funded activities. Some activities have been progressed by external partners and are therefore not included in DEECA’s annual reporting.

**Action 1 –** **Traditional Owners determine how their rights and obligations are embedded into the planning and management of the marine and coastal environment.** Supported by DEECA’s Sea Country grants program, all 5 activities are progressing. This includes:

i. Developing Sea ranger programs (Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation).

ii. Developing a biocultural land strategy (Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation).

iii. Facilitating cultural exchanges and cultural heritage recording (Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation).

iv. Undertaking cultural mapping and incorporating marine and coastal knowledge in Country Plans (Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation).

**Action 2 – Improve the condition and ecological connectivity of habitats and respect and care for our marine and coastal areas.** 11 of the 12 activities have commenced to deliver this action. Highlights from 2023–24 delivery include:

i. DEECA’s expansion of coastal habitat mapping to include Victorian sites with high potential for blue carbon identified by the CoastKit knowledge management database.

ii. DEECA’s continued exploration of mechanisms to support blue carbon protection and restoration, and enable blue carbon projects in Victoria via its Western Port Blue Carbon Planning Project.

iii. DEECA’s support for projects delivering Blue Carbon outcomes such as Western Port Biosphere restoration project.

iv. Coastcare supported community stewardship activities by building volunteer capability to respond to climate change and protect and rehabilitate marine and coastal sites and values.

v. The delivery of more than $0.35 million into community-driven conservation projects via the Community Grants Program, fostering volunteer efforts to preserve and enhance Victoria’s coastal regions.

vi. Victoria’s coastal land managers continued monitoring and implementing environmental improvements through on ground works by staff and volunteers. This is supported by implementation of strategic plans such as the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority Coastal Vegetation Strategy, the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan, multiple Conservation Action Plans across Parks Victoria managed sites, and updating the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan.

**Action 3 – Adapt to Climate Change.** All 14 activities have commenced to deliver this action. Highlights from 2023–24 delivery include:

i. Continued progress of the Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program and the next Victorian Climate Science Report (expected to be tabled in Parliament in November 2024), which are increasing our understanding of coastal hazards and risks.

ii. Activity leads continuing to identify research opportunities and gaps and sharing emerging climate change science and cultural knowledge.

iii. Coastal Registered Aboriginal Parties partnering with research groups to monitor native species and understand changes as a result of climate change. The Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation commenced the inaugural tagging program of long-finned eel (Anguilla reinhardtii) in partnership with the Arthur Rylah Institute. CSIRO is working with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to monitor grey nurse sharks and their habitats.

iv. The continued consolidation by the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council of the latest science, stakeholder-informed evidence and other knowledge needed to support decision-making for our marine and coastal environments.

v. DEECA’s entrenchment of adaptation as a core component of planning in the marine and coastal environment, through the implementation of the Victoria’s Resilient Coast (VRC) adaptation framework and guidelines. Round 3 of the VRC grant program awarded $1million across 7 adaptation projects in 2023–24. As at 30 June 2024, $2.8 million has been allocated across 25 projects. The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation also received VRC funding to consider opportunities for Traditional Owner led blue carbon restoration on Sea Country.

vi. DEECA’s review and update of the sea level rise planning benchmark based on the latest science in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sixth synthesis report.

**Action 4 – Support sustainable use and development of the marine and coastal environment.** All 12 activities have commenced to deliver this action, including:

i. DEECA’s delivery of Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) Guidelines to support coastal Committees of Management, local government and Parks Victoria to develop and implement CMMPs.

ii. DEECA’s strategic coastal protection asset framework to identify high-risk priority protection assets for maintenance, replacement, or removal, in line with the Victorian Asset Management Accountability Framework. DEECA commissioned 62 technical reports in 2023–24 for high-risk coastal protection assets.

iii. DEECA’s pilot on-ground nature-based treatment project to reduce erosion and inundation risks, via the Commonwealth Government’s Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Grants Program and the delivery of 13 projects to the value of $1 million by coastal land managers, via the Coastal Public Access and Risk Grants program.

iv. The strengthening of coastal infrastructure management through Victorian Government policies and guidance material.

v. Better Boating Victoria’s implementation of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy and allocation of funds to maintain boating infrastructure and monitor waterway safety.

vi. Freight Victoria’s implementation of the Sustainable Local Ports Framework and the Victorian Commercial Ports Strategy 2022 in collaboration with stakeholders, the community, and Traditional Owners.

vii. DEECA’s release of the third Offshore Wind Implementation Statement in 2023, progressing work towards delivering a thriving offshore wind sector in Victoria.

**Action 5 – Implement the Marine Spatial Planning Framework.** Delivery of 4 the 5 activities in this action are in progress, including:

i. The development of mechanisms needed to support Marine Spatial Planning in Victoria such as additional evidence and international research.

ii. DEECA has updated the CoastKit platform to support planning in marine and coastal ecosystems. This includes work on the marine ecosystem classification system, Marine Biodiversity Values Map, Feature Activity Sensitivity Tool (FeAST) and Victoria’s first marine habitat map.

iii. DEECA released 3 documents to provide guidance and tools to support marine spatial planning in Victoria: Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines and Victoria’s Marine Planning Areas (both published in September 2023); and an overview of values, uses and activities in Gippsland’s marine environment (published July 2024). Representatives from Victoria’s coastal Registered Aboriginal Parties have been involved throughout implementation of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework, ensuring that knowledge and assertions for Sea Country are highlighted and embedded across all outputs.

**Action 6 – Identify resource needs for sustainable marine and coastal management.** One of the 6 activities in this action is in progress. DEECA continues to progress long-term investment planning for implementation of the Strategy as outlined in Action 6 and based on the principles outlined in the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020.

### Regional and Strategic Partnerships

Under the Act, the Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership (RASP) 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 in 2023–24](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/cape-to-cape-resilience-project), in preparation for final public consultation and plan completion. The plan provides long-term coastal hazard resilience and strategic adaptation planning to enable the Cape to Cape community, between Cape Paterson and Cape Liptrap, to respond and adapt to climate change impacts on the coast. The plan assisted the Victorian Government to acquire $3.3 million from the Commonwealth Government’s Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program (Emergency Response Fund) for on-ground works at Inverloch surf beach. Through this funding, feasibility assessments for sand nourishment on the Cape also commenced in 2023–24.

The Adapt West – Shaping our Shores Project is being led by the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline RASP. Started in February 2024, the project aims to respond to climate change and coastal hazard impacts on marine and coastal values of Port Phillip Bay’s western shoreline. Work has commenced on stages 1 and 2 (scoping, values and objectives) of the project. The partnership also acquired $0.95 million from the Commonwealth Government’s Disaster Ready Fund to progress the technical and strategic planning assessments required to support the development of a regional Coastal Hazard Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

### Environmental Management Plans

The Act states that DEECA, in collaboration with Melbourne Water and EPA, 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.

DEECA released the interactive [2021–22 PPB EMP Annual Report and Delivery Plan Update online](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/port-phillip-bay-emp/annual-reports/2021-2022) in May 2024. This publication includes report cards for the priority areas of the EMP.

The PPB EMP Delivery Plan Update comprises 277 projects delivered by Victorian Government agencies, key environmental organisations and other stakeholder groups to achieve the 3 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; and the Bay’s habitats and marine life are thriving. These 277 projects will be progressively achieved, and their status reported in the EMP Annual Report, with new activities identified and added over the EMP’s 10-year implementation.

During 2023–24, progress was made to deliver the next Annual Report and Delivery Plan update for 2022–23, and completion of the [EMP Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Implementation (MERI) Plan](https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/port-phillip-bay-emp/monitoring,-evaluation-and-reporting-improvement-plan). DEECA and its partner agencies hosted a stakeholder forum in August 2023 to launch the MERI Plan and provide the opportunity for stakeholders to input into the assessment process. The 2022–23 Annual Report, Delivery Plan and MERI Plan will be released September 2024.

### Coastal and Marine Management Plans

A Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) is prepared under the Act to establish an agreement between the Victorian Government, the relevant land manager and community about how to manage an area/s of marine and coastal Crown land in Victoria. As at 30 June 2024, Victoria has over 18 approved CMMPs, 3 of which were approved by DEECA in 2023–24:

1. Mount Eliza Coastal and Marine Management Plan
2. Flinders Coastal and Marine Management Plan
3. Portsea Coastal and Marine Management Plan

### 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 3 DEECA regions that manage Act consents for Victoria’s marine and coastal environment: Gippsland, Port Phillip and Barwon South West.

In 2023–24:

* Barwon Southwest region approved 81 consents valued at $70.0 million. Types of use and development included maintenance and upgrades, coastal protection structures and environmental protection works, hydrology and geotechnical engineering, facilities, campgrounds, on-water construction, events, dredging, CMMPs and masterplans, and works conducted by the Department of Transport and Planning and VicRoads.
* Port Phillip region approved 189 consents valued at $90.6 million. Types of use and development included maintenance and upgrades, facilities, campgrounds, on-water construction, dredging, surf lifesaving clubs and commercial uses.

Gippsland region approved 55 consents valued at $7 million. Types of approved use and development include maintenance and upgrades, coastal protection structures/environmental protection works, hydrology and geotechnical engineering, on-water construction, events, dredging, surf lifesaving clubs, jetty maintenance and upgrades, offshore wind/energy exploration, and pipeline projects.

## 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.

Pursuant to section 91 of the Act, the department is required to include in its annual report details of the income and expenditure of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund and the balance of the fund. These details for the financial year (ending 30 June 2024) are set out in the table below:

| Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund | ($ million) |
| --- | --- |
| Opening balance | 103.74 |
| Income | 57.32 |
| Expenditure | 47.32 |
| **Closing balance** | **113.74** |

DEECA continues to progress land acquisitions, which will require a significant draw down of levied funds over time, to deliver the Western Grassland Reserve. The 5-year forward budget and delivery plan anticipates the balance of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Fund to reduce to a small surplus by 2030. In 2023–24, 585 hectares of land were acquired for the Western Grassland Reserve and 42 hectares for a conservation reserve. Several parcels within other conservation reserves were acquired.

DEECA is continuing to work with local government authorities and the Royal Botanic Gardens on habitat restoration and protection for the Southern Brown Bandicoot; and with Melbourne Water on wetland planning to support habitat for the Growling Grass Frog.

The program has also supported the 3 Registered Aboriginal Parties within the Melbourne Strategic Assessment footprint through funding a Melbourne Strategic Assessment partnership manager role in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Council, and a research and biocultural landscape mapping project with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to ensure their goals for Country are embedded across the program.

## 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 Act:

### Grants and community programs

* BushBank\*
* Coastcare Victoria program
* Environmental Volunteering Plan
* Faunal Emblems program\*
* Icon Species program
* Nature Fund program
* Peri-urban Weed Management Partnership program
* Port Phillip Bay Fund
* Victorian Landcare Program
* Victorians Value Nature survey
* Victoria’s resilient coast – Adapting to 2100+ program
* Wildlife Advisory Services

Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants

### 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
* Biodiversity Recovery Program
* Melbourne Strategic Assessment program
* Conservation Regulator\*
* On-ground regulation – Wildlife and Protected Flora
* On-ground regulation – Timber harvesting
* On-ground regulation – Public land
* Protecting Biodiversity Program
* Regulatory approvals – Native vegetation clearing
* Sustainable Irrigation program
* Strengthening Country Program
* Victorian Deer Control Strategy and program
* Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration project
* Weeds and Pests on Public Land program
* Wildlife Care and Protection

Wildlife Emergency Management

### Policy and legislation

* Critical Habitat Guidelines
* Invasive Species Policy
* Marine and Coastal Knowledge Framework
* Marine and Coastal Strategy\*
* Our Catchments Our Communities
* Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan 2017–2027
* 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

### Infrastructure planning

* New information, tools and guidance to facilitate renewable energy projects while mitigating biodiversity impacts
* Marine Spatial Planning Framework
* Victorian Transmission Investment Framework

Victorian Planning Provisions Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation)

\*These initiatives are included in the DEECA Corporate Plan 2023–2027. Progress against these initiatives is reported in the Departmental Objectives, Indicators and Outputs section from page 23.

## Compliance with the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*

The Mining Warden is an independent statutory office holder appointed by the Governor in Council under the [Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development Act) 1990](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/mineral-resources-sustainable-development-act-1990/).

Pursuant to section 105 of the Act, the Mining Warden is required to submit a report to the minister within 3 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: 4 new cases were referred and investigated in 2023–24

Nature and status of any matter referred under section 98: nil new matters were referred and investigated in 2023–24.

## Compliance with DataVic Access Policy

Consistent with the DataVic Access Policy issued by the Victorian Government in 2012, DEECA made 1,339 datasets available in a variety of formats on the DataVic website in 2023–24. Information included in this Annual Report will also be available at DataVic in electronic readable format.

DEECA continues to make an extensive range of its data holdings accessible through the DataVic portal including information on:

* biodiversity: species and their locations around Victoria, bioregions
* water and catchments: hydrography and information regarding waterways, stream condition, wetland models and landscape profiles, salinity, groundwater sites
* climate change: rainfall, temperature and other datasets relating to the climate
* fire mapping: bushfire extents and fire operations
* energy: renewable energy storage, feed in tariff data
* land: Crown land tenure, forest cover, public land management including heritage rivers, wilderness zones, remote and natural areas and natural catchment areas, state forest recreation sites, hunting areas, recreation historic relics
* government funded public EV chargers

marine assets.

This data is used by many organisations for a variety of purposes, including analysis, research, education and decision making.

## 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:

1. 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](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/) website, along with more comprehensive information published on the [Water Measurement Information System](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/) and [Victorian Water Register](https://waterregister.vic.gov.au/) websites, and on the [Victorian Water Accounts](https://accounts.water.vic.gov.au/) (VWA) website.

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, water set aside for environmental purposes and water for Traditional Owners, 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 Victorian Water Accounts are now a completely digital offering, beginning in 2021–22.

The new site contains interactive data visualisations and data download options for multiple years, providing easier and more interactive ways to access the accounts. Accounts for earlier years going back to 2003 remain available as PDFs via [VWA: Previous Victorian water accounts](https://accounts.water.vic.gov.au/water-explained/previous-accounts/).

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 [Victoria’s Water Measurement Information System](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/).

Research undertaken 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. During 2023–24, research projects covered topics including rainfall intensity changes across Victoria, the role that large-scale climate drivers have on weather patterns, and improvements to modelling of water resources under a changing climate. 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 reports, 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 953 sites that were monitored in 2023–24 through 3 regional water monitoring partnerships. These partnerships comprise 59 public and private organisations that procure their monitoring requirements under this program. The partnerships include state government departments, water corporations, CMAs, local councils (with a flood management function), the Bureau of Meteorology and the 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](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/) and the [Current Water Snapshot](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/water-monitoring-and-reporting/current-water-snapshot).

#### Groundwater

Victoria’s State Observation Bore Network is underpinned by a program that involves monitoring of 1,426 bores. This monitoring program is jointly managed by DEECA and the rural water corporations and can include quarterly monitoring or real time daily monitoring of water level. Salinity is the most common water quality parameter measured at groundwater bores.

All groundwater data is available via the [Water Measurement Information System](https://data.water.vic.gov.au/). Summary reports on historical longer-term trends in groundwater levels across the state are available on the [DEECA website](http://www.water.vic.gov.au/). Information on groundwater use and trends is also provided on the [Victorian Water Accounts](https://accounts.water.vic.gov.au/) website.

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 their 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, improved 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 DEECA, CMAs, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), Traditional Owners, water corporations, public land managers 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, the EWR 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 the [VEWH website](https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/).

As at 30 June 2024, the VEWH water holdings comprised 25 entitlements and 107 water shares. During 2023–24, the VEWH worked with CMAs and Melbourne Water to manage this water to meet environmental objectives at 59 river reaches and 93 wetlands, including:

* **Gippsland:** Latrobe, Thomson and Macalister rivers, and the lower Latrobe wetlands (Sale Common, Dowd Morass and Heart Morass).
* **Central Victoria:** Yarra, Tarago, Maribyrnong, Werribee, Moorabool and Upper Barwon rivers, Pyrites Creek, the lower Barwon wetlands (Hospital Swamps and Reedy Lake) and one wetland in the Yarra system (Yering Backswamp).
* **Western Victoria:** Glenelg, Wimmera and Mackenzie rivers and the Burnt and Mount William Creeks, as well as 40 wetlands via the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline.

**Northern Victoria:** Ovens, Goulburn, Broken, Campaspe and Loddon rivers, and the upper and lower Broken Creek, 2 Living Murray icon sites (Barmah Forest, and Gunbower Forest) and 5 wetlands in the central and lower Murray systems.

Highlights from 2023–24 include:

Delivery of water for the environment to Lake Elizabeth and Kunat Kunat in spring 2023 to manage salinity and support survival of Murray hardyhead eggs and larvae. Surveys in autumn 2024 detected young fish of different sizes, indicating multiple successful spawning events since spring.

Spring watering of Moira grass plains in Barmah Forest was achieved through delivery of water for the environment between and after larger natural events. This resulted in excellent growth of Moira grass and river swamp wallaby grass, which are beginning to recover after a period of significantly reduced growth due to grazing pressure from feral animals.

Delivery of 83% of environmental watering actions at planned sites across Victoria, against a target of 90%. Wet conditions from winter 2023 through to summer 2024 meant that many sites that were originally planned to receive water for the environment under the [Seasonal Watering Plan 2023–24](https://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/546624/VEWH-2023-24.pdf) 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.

Completion of the Taylors Weir fishway in the North Central region in October 2023 and the Kynmer Creek regulator in the Goulburn Broken region in May 2024, and removal of the Bromfield Street weir in the Glenelg Hopkins region in April 2024.

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.

During 2023–24, waterway managers continued to seek opportunities to increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in environmental water planning, management and monitoring. This included engaging with Traditional Owners during the preparation of seasonal watering proposals on how proposed environmental watering actions may also meet objectives for Traditional Owner cultural values and uses. This resulted in an increase in the number of potential watering actions in the VEWH’s 2024–25 seasonal watering plan that have been planned in partnership with Traditional Owners.

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 2023–24, environmental water was considered and protected through input into numerous reviews in unregulated systems. A new state-wide prioritisation framework was also developed in June 2024 to underpin future management of unregulated rivers.

### 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](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/661737/victorian-floodplain-management-strategy-introduction-section-1.pdf) (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 Victoria 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 10-year term from 2016.

Three consecutive La Niña years (2020, 2021 and 2022) brought increased storm activity with heavy downpours resulting in flooding of Victoria’s waterways and assets, particularly in the northeast, central and south Gippsland areas of the state. During October and November 2022 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, 3 water service disruptions and 4 wastewater service disruptions. Almost all incidents have been resolved, except for 2 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. During the summer of 2023–24, areas of central Victoria were again impacted by major flooding. After experiencing one of the driest Septembers on record, Victoria was impacted by several intense localised storm and flood events across October 2023 (Gippsland region) to January 2024 (Northern Victoria).

The longer-term impacts of the October 2022 flood event on waterway health remains significant. Seven of the 9 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). As with recovery following the 2019–20 bushfires, overall recovery from flood events is ongoing with multi-year funding programs required to repair and restore waterway assets in affected areas.

Regional Floodplain Management Strategies (RFMS) are being coordinated 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)](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/node/93/risk-and-resilience-grants-program/list-of-successful-risk-and-resilience-grant-recipients), 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 receives federal government funding through the National Partnership Agreements on Disaster Risk Reduction and is administered by Emergency Management Victoria with co-funding from DEECA.

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. Considerable positive feedback was received confirming the platform was indispensable for flood analysts providing advice to VICSES for warnings, evacuations and broader response strategies. In a new initiative, FloodZoom is now partnering with the [Digital Twin Victoria](https://digitaltwin.vic.gov.au/public/) online spatial data platform. In doing so, flood maps from completed flood studies contained by FloodZoom can now be freely viewed by the public.

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 invested $248 million over 4 years (2020 to 2024) to improve the health of waterways and catchments. This included:

* 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

review of the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy (2013) and work towards releasing the renewed strategy by mid 2025.

Funding of approximately $40.2 million provided by the Victorian Government in 2023–24 has been invested by CMAs for improving the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments. The delivery of CMA programs is tracked and reported annually.

Over 2023–24 CMAs have:

* completed approximately 11,165 hectares of waterway vegetation works including tree planting, weed control and fencing alongside waterways
* maintained or improved the environmental condition of approximately 218 river reaches and wetlands
* continued the delivery of large-scale, long-term investment in Flagship Waterway projects to improve waterway outcomes at priority sites around the state
* processed 97% of waterway licenses and permits within statutory timeframes
* implemented 17 catchment stewardship projects working closely with community, sector partners and Traditional Owners to deliver 19,500 hectares of improved catchment stewardship
* further developed foundations with partners and Landcare networks to complete stewardship plans and assessments for over 130,000 hectares across Victoria
* continued the 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 the 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 on the [DEECA website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways).

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 2023–24. 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](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 uses of water.

### ga) Current and historic levels of allocation and use of surface water and groundwater

The Victorian Water Accounts (VWA) 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 2021–22 accounts were released in March 2024 and have been published as a digital product on the [VWA website](https://accounts.water.vic.gov.au/). Details of Victoria’s water availability and use in 2022–23 will be provided in the 2022–23 Victorian Water Accounts. These are expected to be completed around October 2024. 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

The 2021–22 VWA reflect that the majority of Victoria received more rainfall than average and more than the previous year. Rainfall was above average in the north-west, and significantly above average in the north-east and eastern Gippsland. Rainfall was average in the rest of the state.

In 2021–22, seasonal allocations to high-reliability entitlements in all declared water systems reached 100%. A 100% allocation means that an entitlement owner has their full water entitlement volume available to use or trade. All northern regulated systems reached 100% allocation against high reliability water entitlements by October 2021, and against low reliability entitlements for the Murray, Broken and Bullarook systems by February 2022. An even wetter year was experienced in 2023–24, emphasised by the Murray system receiving a 100% allocation to low-reliability entitlements – the first time since the introduction of the current entitlement products in 2007.

The Thomson-Macalister and Werribee regulated systems in the south both received 100% against high reliability entitlements by December 2021 and 100% against low reliability entitlements by March 2022.

The Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline Product allocation reached 63% allocation of entitlement volumes in June 2022.

#### 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.

The 2021–22 VWA reflect that restrictions on groundwater use were in place in all management zones in the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA (75%), Katunga WSPA (70%), Deutgam WSPA (50%) and the West Wimmera GMA Neuarpur Sub-Zone 1 (80%).

### 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 conditions. 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. The results of the most recent ISC assessment were released in 2010 and are available at [MapshareVic](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapsharevic/) and [Data Vic](https://www.data.vic.gov.au/). 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, such as the first 10 Flagship Waterway projects established in 2016 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](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways), [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.

### h) Anything else that the minister decides is appropriate

#### 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.

There were 4 SWSs developed 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.

DEECA leads the development and implementation of SWSs in partnership with the water sector, Traditional Owners, water users and the community. The collaborative development of SWSs, including public consultation, is important to ensure a sustainable water future for each region and the waterways, communities and businesses that depend on those supplies.

There are currently 3 existing regional SWSs for Victoria:

* Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (CGRSWS) – 2022
* Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy – 2009

Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy – 2011

The original Central Region SWS (2006) and Gippsland Region SWS (2011) were combined into a single revised SWS for the Central and Gippsland Region in 2022 to account for the increased connectivity of the Victorian water grid network across the region and the need to consider sustainable water management across that combined region.

Water for Victoria commits to maintaining Victoria’s planning framework, including the role of SWSs.

Environmental Contribution Tranche 6 funding has been secured to continue to implement SWSs to a total of $8.0 million over 4 years, commencing 1 July 2024.

More information on SWSs and further details on the status of each individual SWS action is available on the [DEECA website](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/long-term-water-resource-assessments-and-strategies/sustainable-water-strategies).

## Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) maturity assessment

The Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) is a non-prescriptive, devolved accountability model of asset management that requires compliance with 41 mandatory requirements. These requirements can be found on the [Department of Treasury and Finance website](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/home).

The department’s target maturity rating against the requirements of the AMAF is ‘developing’, meaning systems and processes are being embedded, often applied effectively, with clear links to the AMAF mandatory requirement.

The department’s long-term target maturity rating is ‘competence’, meaning systems and processes are fully in place, consistently applied and systematically meeting the AMAF requirement, including a continuous improvement process to expand system performance above AMAF minimum requirements.

Infographic showing the department's numerical self assessment against each of the 41 Asset Management Accountability Framework requirements.
Data in table below.

| AMAF requirement | Overall Assessment | Target Maturity |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 3 | 3 |
| 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | 3 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 | 3 |
| 9 | 2 | 3 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 |
| 11 | 3 | 3 |
| 12a | 2 | 3 |
| 12b | 2 | 3 |
| 13 | 2 | 3 |
| 14 | 2 | 3 |
| 15 | 2 | 3 |
| 16a | 3 | 3 |
| 16b | 3 | 3 |
| 17 | 2 | 3 |
| 18a | 2 | 3 |
| 18b | 2 | 3 |
| 19 | 2 | 3 |
| 20 | 3 | 3 |
| 21a | 3 | 3 |
| 21b | 3 | 3 |
| 22 | 2 | 3 |
| 23 | 3 | 3 |
| 24 | 3 | 3 |
| 25 | 3 | 3 |
| 26 | 2 | 3 |
| 27 | 2 | 3 |
| 28 | 3 | 3 |
| 29 | 2 | 3 |
| 30 | 3 | 3 |
| 31 | 2 | 3 |
| 32a | 2 | 3 |
| 32b | 3 | 3 |
| 33 | 2 | 3 |
| 34 | 3 | 3 |
| 35 | 2 | 3 |
| 36 | 2 | 3 |
| 37a | 3 | 3 |
| 37b | 2 | 3 |
| 38 | 2 | 3 |
| 39 | 2 | 3 |
| 40 | 3 | 3 |
| 41 | 3 | 3 |

### Leadership and accountability (requirements 1–19)

The department has not reached the target maturity rating for some requirements within this category and is partially compliant for this AMAF element. There is no material non-compliance reported. A plan to improve the department’s maturity rating in the areas of resourcing and skills, governance, allocating asset management responsibility, monitoring asset performance, asset management system performance and reporting to government is in place. The AMAF requirements under the Leadership and Accountability key element are detailed below:

| AMAF requirement no. | Chapter No./Area | Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 3.1 Overview and key requirements | Appropriate financial and risk thresholds are defined in line with the AMAF requirements |
| 2 | 3.1.1 Resourcing and skills | Asset management functions are established and appropriately resourced |
| 3 | 3.1.1 Resourcing and skills | Contracted service providers or entities have arrangements in place to ensure their staff are appropriately skilled and trained |
| 4 | 3.1.2 Governance | Appropriate governance frameworks are established |
| 5 | 3.1.2 Governance | Mandatory requirements under other government policies are complied with |
| 6 | 3.1.2 Allocating asset management responsibility | Responsibility, authority, and accountability for all stages of the asset lifecycle are often defined and allocated |
| 7 | 3.1.2 Allocating asset management responsibility | Asset management activities are carried out under proper authorisation |
| 8 | 3.1.2 Allocating asset management responsibility | Systems and processes are in place to support the AMAF |
| 9 | 3.1.2 Allocating asset management responsibility | Individuals responsible and accountable for decision making are mostly documented |
| 10 | 3.1.2 Allocating asset management responsibility | Internal management processes are established for most entities outside the standing directions |
| 11 | 3.1.3 Attestation Requirements | Audit committee satisfied with AMAF process undertaken by the department |
| 12a | 3.1.4 Monitoring asset performance | Performance standards and targets are being established |
| 12b | 3.1.4 Monitoring asset performance | Processes to regularly record, monitor, and assess performance are being established |
| 13 | 3.1.4 Monitoring asset performance | Performance and utilisation of assets are reviewed periodically |
| 14 | 3.1.4 Monitoring asset performance | Asset performance monitoring incorporation into the overall corporate and strategic planning frameworks are being developed |
| 15 | 3.1.4 Asset management system performance | Systems and processes for monitoring performance are being developed to measure asset performance and the asset management systems more thoroughly |
| 16a | 3.1.4 Asset Management System Performance | A self-assessment of asset management maturity within the organisation is conducted at least every 3 years |
| 16b | 3.1.4 Asset Management System Performance | The maturity of asset management systems and practices against aspirational targets and path towards achieving maturity is ongoing |
| 17 | 3.1.4 Reporting to Government | DEECA can provide relevant asset information and performance data to government / central agencies as required |
| 18a | 3.1.4 Evaluation of asset performance | The review and evaluation of asset performance by asset class is developing |
| 18b | 3.1.4 Evaluation of asset performance | Changes to the organisation’s asset management and risk management processes and systems are made to ensure the organisations service delivery objectives are made |
| 19 | 3.1.5 Other requirements | Appropriate risk management strategies and processes to support asset management are being developed. |

### Planning (requirements 20–23)

The department has met its target maturity rating under most requirements within this category and is partially compliant for this AMAF element. The department did not comply with a requirement related to risk management and contingency planning. There is no material non-compliance reported. The department will develop an improved plan to further develop the organisation’s asset risk planning and strategies. The AMAF requirements under the Planning key element are detailed below:

| AMAF requirement no. | Chapter No./Area | Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 20 | 3.2.2 Asset management strategy | A departmental wide asset management strategy has been developed |
| 21a | 3.2.2 Asset management strategy | The strategy outlines how the organisation’s assets will support its service delivery objectives. For some asset classes, Strategic Asset Management Plans and Asset Class Management plans detail the asset lifecycle activities. |
| 21b | 3.2.2 Asset management strategy | The strategy is evaluated by senior management and updated where applicable |
| 22 | 3.2.2 Risk management and contingency planning | Asset risk management planning is being developed and incorporated into the asset management strategy |
| 23 | 3.2.2 Risk management and contingency planning | The effectiveness of risk management measures is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis |

### Acquisition (requirements 24 and 25)

The department has met its target maturity rating in this category. The AMAF requirements under the Acquisition key element are detailed below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AMAF requirement no. | Chapter No./Area | Requirement |
| 24 | 3.3.1 Overview | The process for acquisition of new assets considers different solutions, risks, procurement and approval mechanisms |
| 25 | 3.3.2 Acquisition Process | The process considers aspects of the organisation’s asset management strategies, nature of assets and market conditions in the acquisition of new assets |

### Operation (requirements 26–40)

The department has not reached the target maturity rating for some requirements within this category and is partially compliant against this AMAF element. The department partially complies with requirements in the areas of monitoring and preventive action, maintenance of assets, information management and record keeping. There are no material non-compliances reported. The department is developing an improved plan that will further enhance compliance in these areas. The AMAF requirements under the Operation key element are detailed below:

| AMAF requirement no. | Chapter No./Area | Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 26 | 3.4.2 Monitoring and preventative action | Processes to identify, monitor and record the condition of their organisation’s asset are being established |
| 27 | 3.4.2 Monitoring and preventative action | Processes to proactively identify potential asset performance failures and identify options for preventive action are being established |
| 28 | 3.4.2 Monitoring and preventative action | Actions to control and address critical incidents are undertaken |
| 29 | 3.4.2 Monitoring and preventative action | Processes for the effectiveness of corrective actions to be reviewed and assessed are developing |
| 30 | 3.4.2 Monitoring and preventative action | Policies and procedures that securely protect their assets against fraudulent activity or improper use are established |
| 31 | 3.4.3 Maintenance of assets | Systems and processes for undertaking maintenance activities are being established |
| 32a | 3.4.3 Maintenance of assets | Processes for the review of maintenance programs are being developed |
| 32b | 3.4.3 Maintenance of assets | Available resources for maintenance are examined to ensure that assets are maintained to the right standard |
| 33 | 3.4.3 Information management | Accurate recording, identification, valuation and reporting procedures are established |
| 34 | 3.4.3 Information management | An Asset Information Management System (AIMS) has been established |
| 35 | 3.4.3 Information management | Information in AIMS is readily accessible to relevant individuals |
| 36 | 3.4.3 Information management | Up-to-date asset information and historical records are maintained in AIMS |
| 37a | 3.4.3 Information management | Minimum information requirements are defined |
| 37b | 3.4.3 Information management | Processes to generate the required information and establish necessary controls are implemented |
| 38 | 3.4.3 Information management | Information in AIMS is regularly reviewed |
| 39 | 3.4.3 Record keeping | Appropriate record keeping processes are being developed |
| 40 | 3.4.4 Asset valuation | Asset valuations are recorded in the relevant policies and procedures |

### Disposal (requirement 41)

The department has met its target maturity rating in this category. The AMAF requirement under the Disposal key element are detailed below:

| AMAF requirement no. | Chapter No./Area | Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 41 | 3.5 Disposal | Relevant approval processes are complied with, and, where possible, a disposal method that maximises financial benefits selected |

## Additional information available

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details of the items listed below are available on the department’s [annual report webpage](https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/our-department/annual-report).

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
7. details of overseas visits funded by the department 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 consultancies (valued at $10,000 or greater) including:

i. consultants engaged

ii. services provided

iii. expenditure committed to for each engagement.

Details of all consultancies and contractors (including i. consultants/contractors engaged; ii. services provided; iii. expenditure committed to for each engagement) are available on request from the DEECA Customer Contact Centre on 136 186, or via email: [Customer Service](mailto:mailto:customer.service%2540delwp.vic.gov.au), subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

1. Figures cover the period from the start of October 2022 flood recovery activities to 30 June 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Australian National Greenhouse Accounts Factors](https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-greenhouse-accounts-factors-2022.pdf) page 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resources Sciences and Economics, June 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Number of lost time claims are a subset of total standard claims. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Transition risks are those related to the transition to a lower-carbon economy. Physical risks are those related to the physical impacts of climate change [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Spend is exclusive of GST. Excludes corporate card purchases. DEECA follows the Department of Government Services Social Procurement Framework Measurement and Reporting Guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)