

# BURNDAP BIRRARUNG BURNDAP UMARKOO

## YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN

### Third Annual Report 2023-24

Reporting on implementation from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters.

We acknowledge and pay our respects specifically to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land through which the Birrarung flows.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and to the ongoing living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

**Warning:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this publication contains reference to deceased persons.

## Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision

*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is recognised around the world as an iconic example of a nurturing relationship between a river and its community.*

*Flowing from source to sea, it is the resilient lifeblood of past, present and future generations of Victorians. It connects and enriches our flourishing city, suburbs, regions and beyond.*

*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, its essential role in our lives and its rich history, are respected, understood and protected. It has cared for us for thousands of years and will for thousands to come.*

*The vital and continued role of Traditional Owners as custodians of the River, and its role in their culture, is recognised and celebrated.*

*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its diverse surrounding landscapes provide a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood. It brings communities together and supports sustainable local economies.*

*Its clean waters and connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.*

*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is respected as a sacred natural living entity and everyone takes responsibility for its care. Its health and integrity are paramount and uncompromised.*

*'Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo' (what is good for the Yarra is good for all).*



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# Summary

The Yarra Strategic Plan – Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo 2022–2032 puts the interests of the river and its lands at the heart of future land use planning and decision-making. It sets out an ambitious and transformative shift for collaborative governance between government agencies and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. This transformation is focussed on ensuring the Birrarung and its lands are protected as one living and integrated natural entity.

Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (BBBU) takes an integrated approach – across Government portfolios, across agencies and across the landscape – a plan that drives holistic governance without borders. The Plan identifies actions for the river corridor, enables long-term collaborative management between agencies and Traditional Owners, and guides future land use and development.

This report has been prepared by Melbourne Water as lead agency for implementation, with input from the Yarra Collaboration Committee. This is the third annual report on implementation, and covers the period from July 2023 to June 2024.

Released in February 2022, the Plan is now in the early stages of its third year of implementation.

## Birrarung Council 2023 report

Birrarung Council's second annual report advising on the implementation of the Plan was tabled in Parliament in November 2023. The Council indicated that they were encouraged with continued progress towards delivery of actions and acknowledged the ongoing work and investment of all agencies and Traditional Owner organisations in implementing the Plan.

Birrarung Council acknowledged that agencies and local councils are engaging more comprehensively with Traditional Owners and that the Yarra Collaboration Committee as a forum, supports capacity building leading to

the establishment of sustainable relationships towards eventual self-determination. However, they believe the level of investment remains relatively small and their expectation is to see a clear increase in resourcing of Traditional Owner corporations.

The Minister for Water, the Hon. Harriet Shing, in responding to the Council's 2023 annual report indicated that she was pleased to see their report highlight the importance of the Yarra Collaboration Committee in implementing the Plan. The committee provides a valuable role as a place to network, share advice and lessons and identify collaborative opportunities in a culturally safe environment. She is encouraged by the commitment to and value placed in the Yarra Collaboration Committee by agencies and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners alike.

The Minister acknowledged the Birrarung Council's expectations for increased focus and action to embed the understanding of the Birrarung as a living and integrated natural entity; align operations with the Yarra protection principles; improve the extent and quality of Traditional Owner partnerships; and strengthening collaborative planning, including the use of the decision-making framework and implementing the land-use framework.



**Welcoming ceremony by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder, Uncle Dave Wandin at the Executive Forum, June 2024**

## Responding to the Birrarung Council report

The Birrarung Council report identified and discussed achievements and areas for improvement, setting out the following strategic priorities:

1. Recognition and decision-making supporting the Birrarung's status as a living entity be enhanced
2. Organisational commitment to the principles of the Act be enhanced and embedded in daily practices and decision-making
3. The extent and quality of Traditional Owner partnerships be improved to enable self-determination and support their roles as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country
4. Collaborative planning across agencies be improved to achieve greater and shared outcomes for the River and its lands

The ongoing activities of the lead agency and Yarra Collaboration Committee as outlined in our three-year implementation plan are responding directly to suggestions made in the Birrarung Council's report to the Minister.

In addition to responding to the Birrarung Council's priorities, the Yarra Collaboration Committee will also review and consider issues identified in the State of the Birrarung and Parklands report and the Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review, which were released in 2024.

### Status as a living entity

- The Birrarung Parklands transformative project will deliver one of the most significant legacies of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. Wurundjeri's Cultural Mapping project will support the protection and promotion of cultural values along the corridor; providing a foundational resource that supports self-determination and engagement.
- In parallel, the cultural narrative and visual identity will provide a consistent message for how to express the concept of a living entity and strengthen the connection between the community and agencies with the river.
- Conceptualising the Birrarung's parklands as a living and integrated natural entity is fundamental to our transformative project for the Birrarung Parklands. Yarra Collaboration Committee members and

parks and open space planners have developed hallmarks that inform planning and managing parklands as a living entity.

- A communication toolkit was developed, and a communication workshop was held in November 2023 to support and to enable a consistent narrative for implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.



Upper rural reach of the Yarra River / Birrarung at Warburton

### Organisational commitment

- Organisational commitment to implementation and collaborative governance continues to be supported by our executive leaders across all responsible public entities. We again had strong representation of executives at our Executive Forum in June 2024. And our executive leaders have enjoyed the opportunity to yarn with the Birrarung Council at their monthly meetings throughout the year.
- Commitment to the Yarra protection principles has been reinforced through the lead agency's work with the Yarra Collaboration Committee and increased use of our decision-making framework. The committee is dedicated to formalising the self-assessment process over the next year, creating a process that supports continuous improvement.

## Traditional Owner partnerships

- Wurundjeri Corporation have developed an Engagement Framework to provide guidance for partner organisations to work together with Wurundjeri to realise the objectives of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. This is a critical step towards Traditional Owners being resourced as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country. The document provides a framework of values, expectations and principles for engagement involving the Wurundjeri Corporation and responsible public entities. It asks responsible public entities to consider whether their projects demonstrate partnership and shared decision-making with Traditional Owners; and alignment with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Birrarung Water Policy, the Yarra River Protection Act and Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.
- Resourcing has been provided to Wurundjeri Corporation to engage a lead officer to support involvement of Traditional Owners in implementation of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. The officer leads Wurundjeri Corporation's engagement and participation in the implementation of the Plan and is responsible for pursuing and progressing Wurundjeri Corporation's interests and objectives through the Plan and associated forums. This has resulted in improved engagement levels and outcomes, and supports their self-determined role as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country.
- The Wurundjeri Corporation have provided briefings to agencies and councils on their engagement framework. This has led to improved mutual understanding of organisational structure and processes. Our belief is that adoption of the framework will support equitable resourcing of Traditional Owners for involvement in the planning and delivery of projects, fulfilling their obligations under Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo and delivering better outcomes for the Birrarung.
- Building a culturally safe environment within the Yarra Collaboration Committee remains a priority. Wurundjeri Corporation again provided cultural awareness training for the committee in May 2024. And we continue to hear from Elders in our meetings and events, providing deeper cultural understanding to the work we are doing.
- Our evaluation surveys are indicating that agencies and councils are seeing increased value in projects involving Traditional Owners, which

is gradually leading to increased levels of resourcing for their roles as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country.

## Collaboration

- This year, the Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC) has established a strong foundation of trust and transparency - vital for the success of our transformative projects. To continue to boost collaboration, we have launched a collaboration platform for YCC and partner members, enabling them to visualise river projects, connect with partners, and deepen their understanding of our collective impact on the Birrarung. This platform promises to be a powerful tool for aligning our programs of work and shared purpose of caring for the river.
- Importantly, collaboration is also occurring through our revegetation and maintenance programs along the river. In 2023/24, Melbourne Water's Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan established 249 hectares of riparian vegetation and maintained a further 6506 hectares. This work is coordinated with Parks Victoria, local councils and Wurundjeri Narrap team. It also included awarding of 47 grants to private landholders, community groups and local councils to undertake their own projects.

## Transformative projects

Transformative projects will set Traditional Owners up as decision makers, leave a long-lasting impact, and build a stronger connection between the community and the river while addressing complex multi-agency gaps.

As lead agency, Melbourne Water successfully secured \$1.65 million from the State Government and facilitated scoping with the Yarra Collaboration Committee to agree two transformative projects – Birrarung Parklands and Greening the Birrarung.

**Birrarung Parklands** will address some of the most significant gaps in how we care for the river and its parklands as a single living and integrated natural entity. The project includes Wurundjeri's Cultural Mapping to ensure the ongoing protection and promotion of cultural values and support ongoing engagement; the development of a cultural narrative and visual identify that will strengthen the relationship between the community and agencies with

the river and finally, a parklands management stocktake that will set the foundation for achieving the 2070 vision for Birrarung Parklands.

**Greening the Birrarung** will leverage the significant investment on revegetation and habitat improvement along the corridor and align activities for greater collective impact and holistic management of the Birrarung.

At the conclusion of this project, a multi-year collaborative management plan will identify where responsible public entities will coordinate delivery and procurement activities to achieve efficiencies and maximise investment. This will also contribute to better monitoring and reporting of the scale of revegetation and habitat improvement being undertaken in the corridor.

Two additional transformative projects will progress in parallel. This includes building a **Collaboration Platform** to help align investment and support holistic management along the corridor. The other is to create the **Birrarung Valley Walk**, which is led by the Birrarung Valley Walk Inc. and supported by the members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee.



**Yarra River / Birrarung river mouth, Bunurong Country**

## Delivering the Actions

Importantly, we have continued to deliver on commitments in the Plan, with significant progress achieved over the past year. We have now delivered nine of the 40 collaborative actions in Part 1 of the Plan, an increase of five for this year; and we have 21 in progress (Table 1). We have also moved forward on a number of the more transformative aspects of the Plan.

Another highlight was finalising the **Birrarung-Bolin Framework Plan** (for the Bulleen precinct), which aligns with the regional land use framework outlined in Part 2 of the Plan.

**Table 1: Status of actions across performance objectives**

Performance Objective	Number of actions	Delivered	In progress	Planning
1: Healthy river and lands	23	6	14	3
2: Culturally diverse	5	1	0	4
3: Quality parklands	10	2	6	2
4: Protecting landscapes	2	0	1	1
Totals	40	9	21	10

Progress continued on the five priority projects listed in the Plan. These projects represent a shift toward collaborative management between agencies and partnership with the Traditional Owners and are on track to deliver significant change across the Birrarung. They include:

- Birrarung Floating Wetlands trial, led by the Melbourne City Council
- Polystyrene Pollution Project, led by Yarra Riverkeeper Association
- Birrarung Rangers Program, led by Wurundjeri Corporation
- Yering Billabongs floodplain restoration project, led by Yarra Ranges Council
- Yarra Flats environmental watering and billabong enhancement project, led by Melbourne Water.

## Outlook for 2024/25

For 2024-25, we will continue to operate in line with our three-year implementation plan. This includes:

- Working with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to progress Part 2 land use framework, moving to recognise Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo in Victoria Planning Policy and progressing supporting actions.
- Exploring with Wurundjeri and Bunurong corporations resourcing options that support their self-determined role as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country. And supporting adoption of the Wurundjeri Corporation's engagement framework.
- Continuing to use the Yarra Collaboration Committee as a forum to drive improved collaboration between organisations; establishing processes for integrating and sharing knowledge and by providing a forum for responding to new information important to the health of the Birrarung. This includes exploring issues highlighted in the State of the Birrarung report and Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review.
- Facilitating increased use of the decision-making framework, including preparation of guidance notes and improved processes for Traditional Owner input to inform project delivery, and development of an approach for assessing net gain.
- Driving transformative change through our transformative projects – Birrarung Parklands, Greening the Birrarung, our Collaboration Platform, and supporting the externally led Birrarung Valley Walk.
- Tracking progress of activities being undertaken by responsible public entities, specifically the five priority projects; and sharing these outcomes with the community and raising awareness of the significant investment in activities for the Birrarung.

We will also formally review the current three-year implementation plan and its progress in delivering outcomes and transformational change.

### State of the Birrarung (Yarra) and its Parklands 2023 report, and Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review

The *State of the Birrarung (Yarra) and its Parklands 2023 report* (SoY 2023) is the second 5-yearly condition report on the Yarra Corridor by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria. Tabled in April 2024, the report is a requirement of the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017* (the Act), and acts as an accountability mechanism alongside the advice and advocacy of the Birrarung Council.

The **Healthy Waterways Strategy** (HWS) is Melbourne Water's overarching 10-year plan for the management of waterways, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Western Port Region. The Yarra catchment is one of 5 major catchments covered by the Strategy. The *Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review* was released in June 2024, examining progress towards condition targets, the state of waterway values and evaluated delivery methods.

In addition to policy improvements such as Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (SoY, 2023), good progress has been made in the Yarra catchment on several aspects of the HWS over the past five years, including 5000 ha of vegetation maintained annually (target is 7,100 ha); 20 km of waterway access delivered (target is 43km); reduced agricultural runoff from 972 ha of land (target is 1800 ha). A new fishway was constructed on Darebin Creek, and the Dights Falls fishway on the Yarra River was upgraded to allow more fish species to use it in different flow conditions.

The SoY 2023 and HWS mid-term review both highlight climate change and population growth as key pressures on waterways in the Yarra catchment. Increasing threats from declining water availability (climate change and extractions), urbanisation (unmitigated stormwater, and wetland and headwater stream loss) and invasive species were also identified.

The reports make a series of recommendations regarding key focus areas, including the need for enhanced collaboration, the inclusion of community perspectives, research, monitoring and data management. Indeed, responsible public entities (RPEs) have already commenced, or are committed to, several actions that align with these recommendations, including the Birrarung Parklands and Greening the Birrarung transformative projects

The reports' findings and recommendations are consequential for how we implement Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, and we will consider how the YCC can respond in the coming year.



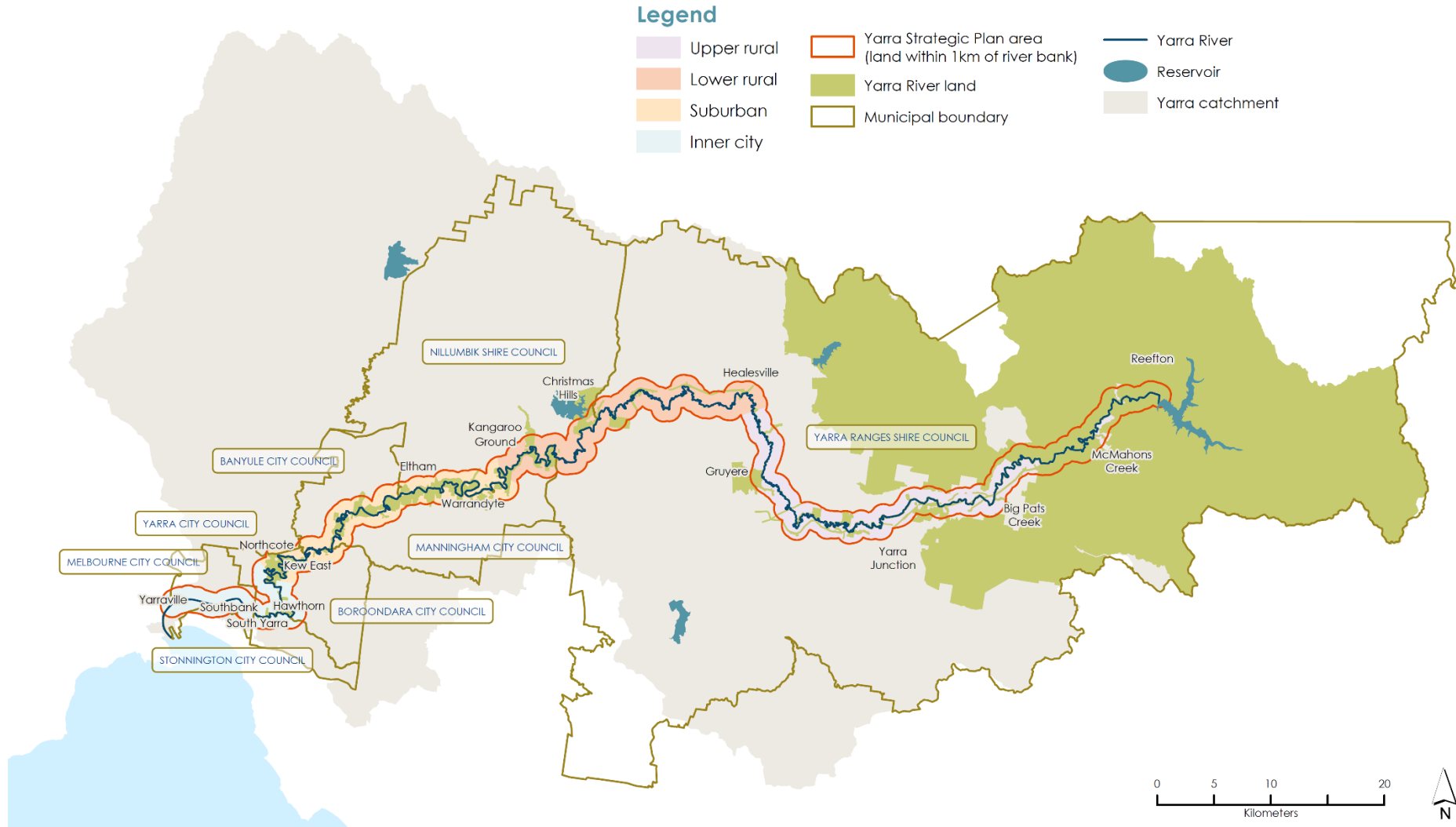


Figure 1 Map of Yarra Strategic Plan area showing Yarra River land

# About the Plan and its implementation

Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo is a whole-of-government initiative, co-designed with the Traditional Owners of the Birrarung and responsible public entities. Commencing implementation in February 2022, this 10-year plan provides an overarching policy and planning framework in relation to the Yarra River and land in its vicinity (Figure 1).

The Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Peoples have always considered the Birrarung to be the lifeblood of Country. It flows across organisational boundaries, encompassing the land and waters of the river as well as its unique ecosystems. The Act and the Plan return to this holistic view – requiring focus, care and reverence across all reaches of the river. Agreement to collaborate in decision-making, align investment in activities, and to use statutory planning mechanisms, including the land use framework, supports this holistic view of the river as one living and integrated natural entity.

Implementation of the Plan has embedded collaborative governance, with state and local government agencies working with Traditional Owners to put the interests of the river and its lands at the heart of decision-making.

Delivery of the actions and land-use directions in the Plan are bringing to life the 50-year community vision for the Yarra and delivering on *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung – Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra* articulated by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

Responsible public entities and six committees of management for Yarra River land endorsed the Plan in 2021, which was approved by the Minister for Water, and became operational in February 2022.

The responsible public entities continue to meet their own obligations and operational requirements, while collaborating with other entities in delivering Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.

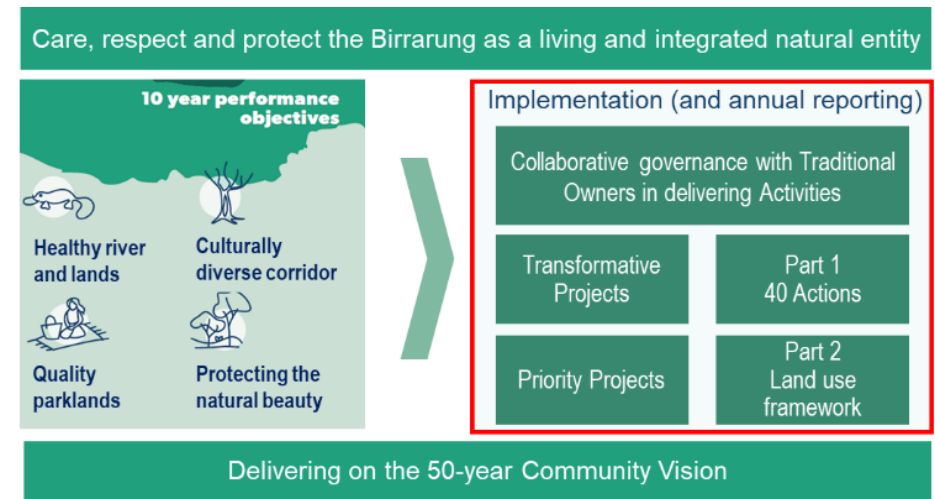
## What implementation involves

Implementation of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo is multi-faceted and complex (Figure 2). We have an overall goal of caring, respecting and protecting the Birrarung as a living and integrated natural entity. This impacts every activity and project that we undertake.

The Plan sets out 10-year performance objectives that will deliver on the 50-year community vision.

Five elements underpin implementation of the Plan (red box, Figure 2). Collaborative governance involving government agencies and Traditional Owners requires shared decision-making and co-delivery, and builds on the commitment to care for the Birrarung as a living and integrated natural entity. The Plan is collaboratively delivered through transformative projects, priority projects, and our Part 1 actions and Part 2 land use framework.

This annual report is structured according to the five implementation elements.



**Figure 2 Structural elements in implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo**

## Reporting requirements

Under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017* (the Act), Melbourne Water as the appointed lead agency reports annually to the Birrarung Council on implementation of the Plan.

The annual report provides an update on progress, demonstrates accountability and informs ongoing implementation of the Plan. It is supported by a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework that considers the achievement, impact and legacy of the Plan, in relation to collaborative governance (and organisational commitment) and delivery of the Plan's four performance objectives.

Melbourne Water prepares the annual report using information provided by each of the responsible public entities. The report and supporting information from responsible public entities is provided to the Birrarung Council to assist them in their annual reporting to the Minister for Water. The responsible public entities then respond to the Council's report setting up a cycle of continuous improvement (Figure 3).

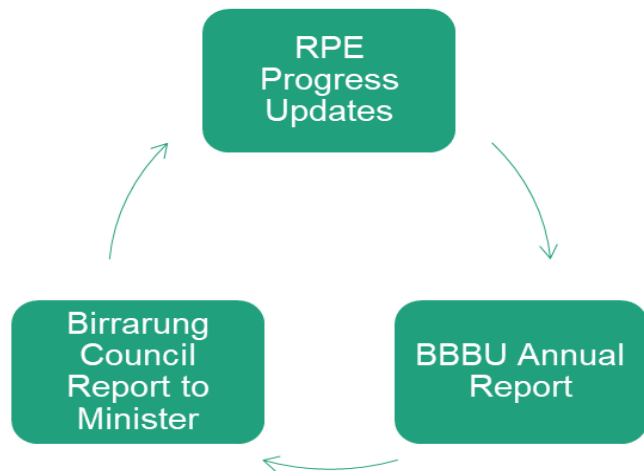


Figure 3 Cyclic process for reporting

## Traditional Owner Partnerships

There are two registered Aboriginal parties recognised under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* covering Country that the Birrarung flows through. The **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation** are the registered party for the majority of the Yarra, Birrarung, from the mountains to the city. The **Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation** are the registered party for the lower part of the Yarra estuary from the city out to Narm (Port Phillip Bay).

Acknowledging and empowering the role of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Peoples as custodians of the river and its lands, with a self-determined role in planning and decision-making on their Country is a core element of the Plan's implementation. Development of this role is informed and directed by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.



**Uncle Bill Nicholson talking at the First Peoples, Living Waters cultural knowledge exchange along the Birrarung November 2023.**

**First Peoples, Living Waters brings global Indigenous Peoples into conversation, to explore how agreement making can lead to water law reform.**

**(Photo credit: Vix Penko)**

## Responsible public entities

The Act lists government agencies and local councils as responsible public entities, each having land management responsibilities for Yarra River land. The list of responsible public entities includes:

- Banyule City Council
- Boroondara City Council
- Manningham City Council
- Melbourne City Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Stonnington City Council
- Yarra City Council
- Yarra Ranges Shire Council
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria
- Victorian Planning Authority
- VicTrack

## Yarra Collaboration Committee

The Yarra Collaboration Committee is comprised of representatives from the 14 responsible public entities, together with representatives from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Corporations and an independent Chair.

The committee continues to provide strategic and operational advice for implementing the Plan. It is the mechanism for collaborative governance and is considered an innovative feature of the Plan.

The committee continued to hold online meetings at 2-monthly intervals throughout the year, with four additional in-person workshops to support development of our transformative projects.

We have had a high level of attendance and participation, with over 80% of organisations represented at each meeting, which has allowed the committee to continue to perform to a high standard. Dr Jane Doolan continued in her role as the independent chair of the committee.

Dates for each of the meetings and workshops, and key outcomes are listed in **Attachment 1**.



**Members of Yarra Collaboration Committee participated in cultural awareness training provided by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, May 2024**

# Implementation in 2023-24

As we enter our third year of implementation, processes for implementation continue to mature. This can be seen through the increased delivery of actions and progress towards more systemic change within and across organisations.

We continue to operate in line with our three-year implementation plan, as approved by the Yarra Collaboration Committee in 2023. This has us progressing short term outcomes as set out in Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, whilst continuing to build momentum towards the transformational changes required by the Act. Our focus continues to be on delivering the following six outcomes identified in the implementation plan:

1. Commitment to the Birrarung at all levels
2. Collaboration leads to greater collective impact
3. Traditional Owners resourced as decision makers and delivery agents
4. Birrarung at the centre of decision-making through adoption of the decision-making framework
5. Commitments on track and being delivered
6. Transformative change through transformative projects.

## Collaborative governance with Traditional Owners in delivering Activities

The success of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo is dependent on having commitment to its implementation across all levels of government and the support of the community. Since endorsing the Plan in 2021, responsible public entities have committed to implementation through ongoing collaboration between organisations and with Traditional Owners, knowledge sharing and listening to the community.

### Executive Forum 2024

This year's Executive Forum was held at Abbotsford Convent on Monday 3 June 2024. This was the second time that we have brought executives together to reaffirm their commitment to implementation.

In 2023, we brought executives together on Country, with a strong focus on cultural ceremony and the connection to the Birrarung as a living entity. This year the intention was to transition the group towards a decision-making role.

The session provided a powerful opportunity for Wurundjeri Corporation to introduce their Engagement Framework to an executive audience. It also provided Dr Jane Doolan, as Chair of the Yarra Collaboration Committee, an opportunity to present the direction of the transformative projects on behalf of the committee. In the next two years, it's anticipated that key decisions relating to Traditional Owner resourcing and transformative projects will return to the executive forum and shape the trajectory and legacy of our implementation.



**Executives at the 2024 Executive Forum, Abbotsford, June 2024**

## Traditional Owners resourced as decision makers and delivery agents

Acknowledging and empowering the role of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Peoples as custodians of the river and its lands, with a self-determined role in planning and decision-making on their Country is central to implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. However, we acknowledge that uncertainty of ongoing funding to enable Traditional Owner participation in implementing the Plan presents a significant challenge to Traditional Owners and to delivering expected outcomes.

In the Birrarung Council’s second annual report they acknowledged that responsible public entities are engaging more comprehensively with Traditional Owners and that the Yarra Collaboration Committee is supporting capacity building leading to the establishment of sustainable relationships towards eventual self-determination. However, the Birrarung Council believe the level of investment remains relatively small compared to what is likely needed and varies significantly across organisations. The Birrarung Council’s expectation is to see a clear increase in the secure and effective resourcing of Traditional Owner Corporations.

Throughout 2024, Wurundjeri Corporation have provided briefings to responsible public entities on their engagement framework. Adoption of the framework will enable consideration of appropriate resourcing for Traditional Owners to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities under the Plan. This is a critical step towards Traditional Owners being resourced as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country. Melbourne Water will work with Traditional Owners and the Yarra Collaboration Committee in the year ahead to explore options for reliable long-term resourcing across organisations.

Collectively, the Yarra Collaboration Committee is providing financial support and opportunities for Traditional Owners to participate in Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. The amount varies significantly between organisations. DEECA and Melbourne Water are major supporters, with local councils providing more targeted support for specific activities, mostly associated with engagement of Narrap Rangers, and advisory roles as part of Reconciliation Action Plans.



**Wurundjeri Corporation BBU Lead, Dr Paul Mitchell presenting on their engagement framework at the Executive Forum, June 2024**

## Investment to support decision-making

DEECA and Melbourne Water have provided financial support to Wurundjeri Corporation and Bunurong Corporation to participate in the implementation planning and development of the transformative projects. This includes funding of a Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo Lead within Wurundjeri Corporation, and attendance of Elders at workshops. Other significant initiatives for Wurundjeri Corporation include the Birrarung Rangers Program, and the Birrarung Cultural Mapping.

**Birrarung Rangers Program** – focuses on empowering Traditional Owners and Narrap Rangers to make informed culturally appropriate decisions regarding water management. The funding for this priority project covers the program from May 2024 through to June 2026.

**Birrarung Cultural Mapping** – involves the Wurundjeri Research Unit (with support of the Water Program) documenting Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural values along the Birrarung and their significance to the Wurundjeri community. Representing these values spatially via cultural mapping will provide a resource for future planning and decision-making. This is a 2-year project, commencing in September 2024. The project is funded from the \$1.65 million for transformative projects announced by the Minister for Water in June 2023.

While formal and ongoing funding arrangements are required, it is positive to note that the evaluation survey indicates that the increased funding is resulting in both improved engagement levels and outcomes. Highlights include projects at Yarra Flats and Yering Billabongs, which incorporate cultural values studies, exploration of cultural burning, and use of core sampling to build a picture of previous vegetation and Traditional Owner cultural practices in the Yarra corridor. These projects are exemplars for how Traditional and western science can complement each other, and are providing opportunity for Traditional Owners to participate in collection and interpretation of the data and development of management plans.

Our evaluation survey responses indicate that support is not consistent across organisations, which reflects both the maturity of relationships between individual organisations and Traditional Owner corporations and the number and nature of activities being undertaken by the organisations.

Financial contribution towards the participation of Bunurong Corporation is significantly less than for Wurundjeri Corporation. This is mainly because of their comparatively smaller area of Country through which the Birrarung flows, and smaller level of investment by responsible public entities along the lower part of the Birrarung (downstream of Bolte Bridge).



**Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Welcome and Smoking Ceremony for Yarra Capital Improvement Program, May 2024**

## Traditional Owner collaboration – looking ahead

Continued development and implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans and increased engagement with the corporations on projects are positive signs for improving participation by Traditional Owners.

Publication of Wurundjeri Corporation's engagement framework and adoption by organisations will lead to increased support for participation and capacity building of Traditional Owners.

Melbourne Water, as lead agency will continue to work with Bunurong Corporation to understand how they want to be involved in implementation and how best to resource their participation.

Building a culturally safe environment for First Nations People to be involved in implementation remains a priority for the Yarra Collaboration Committee. Members attended cultural awareness training in May 2024, hosted by Wurundjeri Corporation, and we continue to incorporate cultural ceremony and the voice of Elders in our workshops and events.

In the year ahead, there are plans for an on-site Cultural immersion experience, immediately followed by a workshop to channel the inspiration and enthusiasm into meaningful action.

## Hearing the community

Melbourne Water as lead agency and Yarra Collaboration Committee have strengthened their relationship with the Yarra Riverkeeper Association (YRKA), which is providing us with another avenue for hearing the voice of the community.

The YRKA participated in our planning workshops for the transformative projects and the communication workshop in 2023.

In September 2023, our member organisations took part in the YRKA Birrarung Riverfest, a vibrant celebration of the Birrarung. Looking ahead to Riverfest 2024, we have ramped up our support for program coordination, with our members contributing an even broader array of community-focused events along the river. Additional partner organisations include the National Gallery of Victoria, RMIT, Melbourne University, EPA, local businesses and numerous Friends of groups. Together, the forty-plus events will embody the festival's themes of a healthy, protected, and cherished Birrarung, making this year's celebration more impactful than ever. The floating wetlands priority project was featured in a Channel 31 Community Designs interview on innovative projects that benefit Australian biodiversity and community. The piece provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the project and the broader objectives of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.

Lead agency representatives also presented Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo to more than 200 members of the Warrandyte community and to Victorian teachers at the 'After the Bell' Session, hosted by Sustainability Victoria.





**Birrarung Riverfest 2023 River Cruise, September 2023**

## Communication and Engagement Strategy

Increased commitment from executives provides a clear focus to make decisions for the best interest of the Birrarung. Similarly, ongoing support from the community, through shared knowledge and involvement in activities is critical for decision-making. The Yarra Collaboration Committee recognises the need to maintain open channels of communication for community representatives to inform or be involved in implementation where possible.

Our Communication and Engagement Strategy was developed in 2023 to support implementation of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo and delivery of the Community Vision. The key objectives of the strategy are to:

- guide consistent messaging on implementation
- raise awareness and drive participation in implementation
- facilitate collaboration in communication and engagement activities to increase collective impact.

Our communications network workshop with communication leads from each organisation was held in November 2023. The workshop strengthened

relationships among partner organisations and established a common understanding of how to support communication for implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. Participants also helped to finalise the communication and engagement strategy.

A key output has been development of a communication toolkit to be used by organisations as a go-to guide. It includes key messages, frequently asked questions, style guides and templates to support communication planning for implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo.



**BBBU Communications Network workshop, November 2023**

## Collaboration leads to collective impact

Meaningful collaboration is an outcome of quality relationships and trust, both of which take time and effort to nurture. The creation of a culturally and psychologically safe environment has been critical to developing these relationships. Increasingly we are seeing this evidenced through collaborative initiatives in the Birrarung corridor, such as the Spring Outdoors cultural series, Yarra Capital Improvement program and shared conservation programs between neighbouring councils.

The willingness of councils and agencies to step up and commit to shared outcomes for the river is apparent through the development of our transformative projects. The first step of which has been organisations, other than the lead agency, taking on responsibility for the recruitment and support of component projects.

The annual monitoring and evaluation survey provides a tool for responsible public entities to assess progress in implementing Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. The majority of respondents rated quality of collaboration with Traditional Owners as being moderate. They provided a similar score with regard to collaboration with other responsible public entities. Importantly the majority of respondents believe that collaboration is improving.

The belief that collaboration is improving is supported by the explanatory comments provided. For example, Parks Victoria suggest that collaboration is initially driven through shared projects, but as staff become familiar with staff in other organisations there is a more collegiate approach to sharing of knowledge, planning of work programs and undertaking maintenance activities.

Evidence of improved collaboration is seen in the analysis of the Activities Schedule. In 2022, 66% of the 88 activities listed in the Activities Schedule were collaborative. That proportion increased to 82% in 2023, and is currently sitting at 86% of 176 activities. Further statistics from the Activities Schedule is provided in **Attachment 2**.

Importantly, collaboration is also occurring through revegetation and maintenance programs along the river. In 2023/24, Melbourne Water through their Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan established 249

hectares of riparian vegetation and maintained a further 6506 hectares within the four Healthy Waterways Strategy sub-catchments along the main stem of the Yarra River. Much of this work is planned, coordinated and delivered with assistance from Parks Victoria, local councils, Wurundjeri Narrap team and local Friends groups. Through Melbourne Water's Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways program 47 grants to support this coordinated vegetation program were awarded to private landholders, community groups and local councils to undertake their own projects, which contribute to the targets set out in the Healthy Waterways Strategy.

### Spring Outdoors cultural series

As part of the 2023 Spring Outdoors program, Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik Councils and Wurundjeri Corporation partnered to run a series of cultural events to celebrate caring for Country, nature connection and knowledge sharing. The series involved cultural walks to encourage residents to learn more about the Traditional Owners, to see Country through a cultural lens and to take responsibility in caring for Country. A [video](#) promoting the program was produced.

### Yarra Capital Improvement Program

The Yarra Capital Improvement Program is an excellent example of collaboration and collective impact. It was co-designed and delivered by Melbourne Water in partnership with Parks Victoria, local councils, Wurundjeri Corporation and community groups.

The \$4.5 million program will see 60 km of the Birrarung transformed with significant weed control and revegetation projects. The aim is to create long lasting change, enhancing habitat and biodiversity values along the Birrarung.

Driven through Melbourne Water's operational collaboration, the program aligns and realises objectives from Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo and Healthy Waterways Strategy.

In May, project partners were invited to celebrate the works to date and participate in a planting at one of the project sites. A celebration [video](#) showcasing the inspiring Birrarung and operational collaborative project partners has also been produced for the program.

## Forum for better collaboration

The Yarra Collaboration Committee has become a forum to drive better collaboration. We aim to improve upon this by further sharing of knowledge between related programs and using the forum to prepare responses to new information important to the health of the Birrarung. For example, over the next year we plan to explore as a collective, issues highlighted in the ‘State of the Birrarung’ and Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review.



**Celebratory planting event for the Yarra Capital Improvement Program, May 2024**

## Birrarung at the centre of decision-making

Our decision-making framework supports the assessment of projects against criteria based on the protection principles of the Act, aspirations of Traditional Owners, the Yarra River 50-year Community Vision and the Plan’s performance objectives. The criteria and responses to them are set out in a pro-forma that proponents complete, providing both a means for self-assessment and mechanism for sharing the decision process with other parties.

The lead agency has continued to work with the Yarra Collaboration Committee to embed use of the decision-making framework. The committee supports formalising the self-assessment process, and creating a process that supports continuous improvement.

In supporting the decision-making framework, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is sharing its Birrarung engagement framework with responsible public entities. The engagement framework builds on the protection principles enshrined in the Act and the guidance provided in the decision-making framework. It provides a practical tool for responsible public entities to work with Wurundjeri Corporation to ensure that Wurundjeri expectations are met.

The number of organisations using the decision-making framework pro-forma on projects as a tool to guide discussions with stakeholders and project partners has increased. However, organisations are still relying on internal project approval processes that align with the protection principles.

As lead agency, Melbourne Water has encouraged the use of the pro-forma for their own projects. For example, Melbourne Water staff in the Property section completed the pro-forma for a land divestment project. It was apparent that Traditional Owners had not been involved in the decision-making. This then led to a review of the decisions in consultation with Elders and staff from the Wurundjeri Water Program. Melbourne Water have also identified potential alterations to the land divestment process, which will be shared with the government department overseeing the process.

For the Yarra Capital Improvement Program, completion of the pro-forma showed excellent alignment with the protection principles. From its inception this project has had a strong collaborative approach, involvement with Traditional Owners, and is delivering positive outcomes for the Birrarung.

Similarly, staff from Nillumbik Council completed the pro-forma for upgrades to Lower Eltham Park, which is on Yarra River land. Completion of the pro-forma showed strong alignment with the protection principles.

The lead agency will continue to facilitate, through the Yarra Collaboration Committee, uptake of the decision-making framework.

## Transformative projects

The 40 actions and priority projects contained in the Plan are just the beginning in our journey to meet the ambitious 10-year performance objectives. Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo is far more than a list of tasks. It's a bold commitment to transform our approach to governing the river, to position Traditional Owners as decision makers and to ensure the Birrarung is cherished, respected and protected as one living and integrated natural entity.

The transformative projects are designed to push the boundaries of what can be achieved for the river, fulfilling the deeper purpose of the Act and the 50-year Community Vision. In 2022, the Yarra Collaboration Committee defined a transformative project as one that positions Traditional Owners as decision makers, leaves a lasting legacy, strengthens the connection between the community and the Birrarung, and address complex multi-agency challenges.

As lead agency, Melbourne Water has secured \$1.65 million from the State Government to bring these transformative projects to life. A collaborative process, guided by the Yarra Collaboration Committee, has scoped two key projects, which were endorsed and presented to the Executive Forum in June 2024.

In addition to these, two more transformative projects will progress in parallel. The first project is a collaboration platform to align investment and support holistic management along the corridor. The second is the Birrarung Valley Walk, spearheaded by Birrarung Valley Walk Inc. and supported by the members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee. These initiatives represent a significant step forward in realising our shared vision for the Birrarung.

## Birrarung Parklands

Birrarung Parklands will set the standard for what it means to care for the river and its parklands as a single living and integrated natural entity. It will provide a powerful narrative that will foster a deeper, more connected relationship with the river and its parklands.



Suburban reach of the Yarra River / Birrarung looking towards the city

It will empower Traditional Owners to actively engage as decision makers on their Country. It leverages Melbourne's world-class network of parks to showcase our collaborative and holistic governance. This will create new opportunities for community education, engagement, and wayfinding, inviting everyone to understand and connect with the river and its parklands as a living entity. The vision will be brought to life through three key elements:

1. **Cultural narrative and visual identity** – sharing a cultural narrative that defines what it means to care for and protect the river as a living entity. This narrative will sit alongside a brand strategy, creating a unified look and feel for signage and communication across our parkland network and key projects delivered through the Plan.
2. **Cultural Values Mapping** – led by Wurundjeri Corporation, this initiative will document cultural values along the entire length of the Birrarung. This foundational resource will empower the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung in their engagement and decision-making.

3. **Parkland Stocktake** – led by Parks Victoria, the stocktake of parklands management will identify priority actions needed to achieve the 2070 vision for Birrarung Parklands.

## Greening the Birrarung

Greening the Birrarung will harness the substantial investment made by local councils, government agencies and community groups in revegetation and habitat enhancement along the corridor. By aligning these efforts, the project aims to amplify collective impact and ensure the holistic management of the Birrarung as a living and integrated natural entity.

This initiative is a critical step toward safeguarding the river and fostering stronger collaboration between Traditional Owners, local councils, government agencies and community groups. Manningham City Council has stepped forward to lead the collaboration in the alignment of our broader shared goals on revegetation and habitat creation. This unified approach to managing the Birrarung corridor will enable culturally appropriate and climate resilient planning, planting and maintenance practices. These efforts will not only improve vegetation survival rates and achieve better outcomes for the river, but also actively engage community members in their local environment, while providing efficiencies for councils and agencies in program delivery.

At the project's conclusion, a multi-year collaborative management plan will be developed, outlining how responsible public entities will coordinate

delivery and procurement activities to maximise investment and achieve lasting impact.



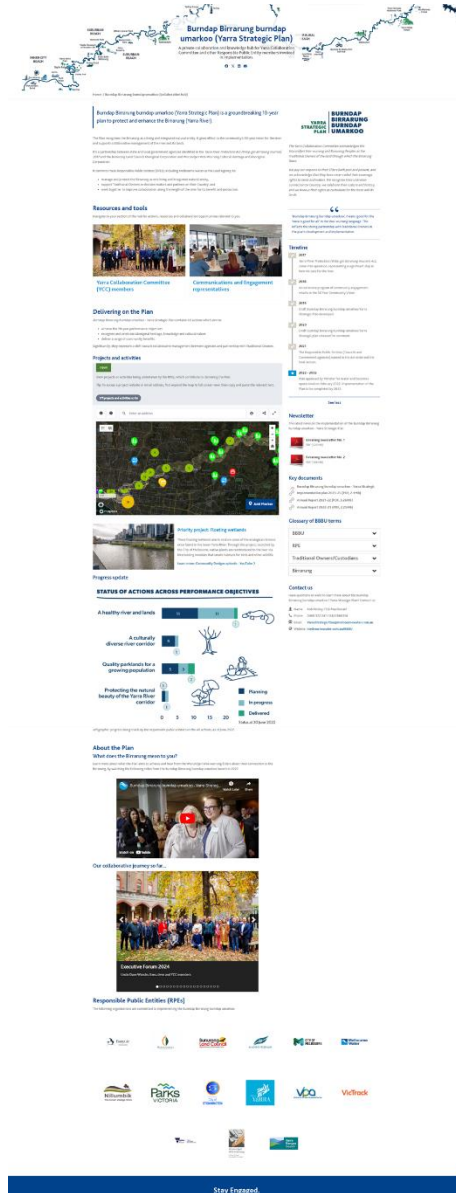
Community planting event (photo credit: Apanie Wood)

## Collaboration Platform

Effective communication and information sharing are crucial for enhancing collaboration and building strong relationships. A comprehensive review of organisational communication channels, mapping platforms and data sharing practices highlighted the need for an accessible platform to streamline collaboration.

To explore this need, Melbourne Water established a 'Let's Talk' website, initially designed for the Yarra Collaboration Committee and communication leads within our partner organisations. The platform provides members with access to an interactive map showing all activities and projects in the corridor, technical reports, communication material, videos, newsletters and outputs from workshops and meetings.

As we advance with the transformative projects, insights gained from the user analytics of this site will shape the development and potential of a more robust and comprehensive collaboration platform. This approach has allowed us to explore our needs through a low-cost platform and consider the need and business case for a more advanced solution.



Let's Talk Collaboration Platform

## Birrarung Valley Walk

A 200+ km journey into the heart of the Birrarung – creating a continuous, multi-day walk that winds through the breathtaking Birrarung valley, stretching from the inner urban reaches to the Upper Yarra Reservoir, using existing pathways on public land.

Led independently by Birrarung Valley Walk Inc. (BVW) with the support of the members of the Yarra Collaboration Committee, this is a one-of-a-kind, "whole of river" project that seeks to protect, promote and celebrate the Birrarung and its lands.

Through strong partnerships with Traditional Owners and key stakeholders, the Walk will connect the community to the values of the Birrarung, its billabongs, its lush valley, its indigenous flora and fauna and its profound significance as a living cultural landscape for Traditional Owners.

## Priority projects

Progress continued on the five priority projects listed in the Plan. These projects contribute to the 10-year performance objectives, recognise and celebrate Aboriginal heritage, knowledge and cultural values, while delivering a range of benefits to realise the protection of the river as one living and integrated natural entity.

These priority projects represent a shift toward collaborative management between agencies and partnership with the Traditional Owners and are on track to deliver significant change across the Birrarung.

The priority projects are:

- Birrarung Floating Wetlands Trial, led by the Melbourne City Council
- Polystyrene Pollution Project, led by Yarra Riverkeeper Association
- Birrarung Rangers Program, led by Wurundjeri Corporation
- Yering Billabongs Project, led by Yarra Ranges Council
- Yarra Flats Project, led by Melbourne Water



**Floating wetlands installed in Victoria Harbour, Docklands (in front of Library at the Dock)**

## Birrarung Trial Floating Wetlands

Lead organisation	Melbourne City Council
Achieved to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floating wetlands installed</li> <li>• Wildlife monitoring and community engagement established</li> </ul>
Upcoming milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing maintenance, monitoring and public education</li> <li>• Evaluation and reporting</li> </ul>
Estimated delivery	Conclusion of trial, mid-2026

This project is reintroducing biodiversity to the city through wetlands planting on floating beds. The trial is providing knowledge on the plant and animal species that these wetlands can support, and will inform future opportunities to improve the health of the river and experience of our city landscapes.

Floating wetlands are installed at three locations, Victoria Harbour, Yarra's Edge and the Turning Basin adjacent to Enterprize Park. Final plant choices were made with input from Wurundjeri Narrap team.

The wetlands are performing well, and there are constructive learnings regarding the performance of plant species relating to water salinity and wildlife activity. Positive benefits for wildlife have been identified (with swans nesting at all three locations during the last breeding season) along with the wetlands attracting a great deal of community and visitor interest.

Additional grant funding has been received from DEECA, which will allow extension of the trial and maintenance of the wetlands until mid-2026. The evaluation, commencing in late 2025, will draw on environmental monitoring, operational aspects and community feedback collected over the past three years. The findings will inform future management and opportunities for investment in this innovative approach to bring back nature to city reaches of the Birrarung.

## Polystyrene Pollution Project

Lead organisation	Yarra Riverkeeper Association
Achieved to date	Building evidence base, mapping of source pathways, and roundtable deliberation
Upcoming milestone	Final roundtable and reporting to stakeholders
Estimated delivery	Final report, October 2024

The Polystyrene Pollution Project is building a stronger evidence base for understanding how expanded polystyrene (EPS) enters waterways and potential ways to avoid it happening. The collated information will inform education and engagement programs for community and industry.

The YRKA project team held another roundtable session in mid-July in preparation for release of their final report on the state of polystyrene pollution, its journey and actors. This project is an important opportunity to review and update our understanding and current evaluation of pollution events and reduction measures, and to map out a way forward.

## Birrarung Rangers Program

Lead organisation	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Achieved to date	Implementation plan released, and resourcing for phase 1
Upcoming milestone	Detailing project execution to June 2026
Estimated delivery	Ongoing

The Birrarung Ranger program focuses on empowering Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and Narrap Rangers to make informed and culturally appropriate decisions regarding water management. The program is providing a pathway for training rangers in undertaking and reporting on self-determined Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung healthy water assessments.

The Birrarung Rangers will operate alongside the Water Program vision to centre Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as leaders, decision makers and delivery agents on Country. The project supports the established Narrap Unit Ranger Program to expand capacity and skillset (capability) in waterway monitoring, planning, management and decision-making. While the predominant focus is the Birrarung, the Birrarung Rangers can work across Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country to improve the health of Country.

Co-leads for the program were appointed in April 2024. Their initial task has been to produce the project execution plan in collaboration with the Water Program and Narrap Unit. This project plan sets out how the co-leads will deliver the Birrarung Rangers Project over the delivery period of May 2024 to June 2026. The project will comprise of a tailored training program by upskilling Narrap Rangers through acquiring necessary field based resources, skillsets and networking. The outcome will be a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Water Assessment report that details monitoring methodology; analysis, interpretation and results; and recommendations for long-term waterway management strategies. This report will provide an evidence based and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung led mechanism for participation and informing waterway management.



**Narrap Rangers and Melbourne University researchers undertaking monitoring to evaluate improved watering regimes for the Birrarung's billabongs and wetlands (photo credit: Charlotte Hilbig)**



## Yering Billabongs

Lead organisation	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Achieved to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional design for re-engaging floodplains</li> <li>• Cultural values assessment</li> <li>• Flora and fauna survey</li> <li>• Eel eDNA monitoring by Narrap</li> <li>• Cultural burn</li> <li>• Planning application and diversion application</li> <li>• Concept design for boardwalks, trails and viewing platforms</li> </ul>
Upcoming milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake ground works</li> <li>• Community engagement event</li> </ul>
Estimated delivery	June 2025

The Yering Billabongs project sees the 100-hectare Crown land reserve at Yering returned to public management and former grazing lands restored to functional billabongs and floodplain. This is a collaborative project led by Yarra Ranges Council in partnership with Wurundjeri Corporation, Melbourne Water and Zoos Victoria.

A shallow meadow across the floodplain will hold water for four months of the year, restoring natural habitat and providing water quality treatment, while also improving connectivity to the neighbouring Spadonis Reserve. Highlights of the project include a firestick project, delivery of interpretive signage to share stories and Aboriginal cultural site history and protection of the river's iconic and endangered biodiversity.

The timeline for the groundworks has been extended until June 2025 because of challenges in accessing the floodplain following wetter than average seasons. The major milestone for construction is reconnecting Olinda Creek to the floodplain, which is scheduled for summer 2024/25.

Melbourne Water as a key partner is exploring the potential for a capital works project along Olinda Creek to assist with weed control, revegetation and encouraging natural meanders to form in the waterway through the introduction of woody debris.

Fencing of the site has allowed staged removal of cattle from the north side of Olinda Creek for the first time in several decades. Monitoring will be put in place to evaluate the rate of restoration as a result of removing livestock. There is significant regeneration happening on the south side of the creek where flooding, targeted weed removal and a more conscientious slashing regime has seen an increase in regeneration; including for endangered species such as Buxton Gum and poison rice flower. Yarra Ranges Shire Council's Firestick officer, Darren Wandin, led a small cultural burn on the site in autumn, supported by the Bushlands team.

The Narrap Rangers and council collaborated to create a [video](#) sharing the cultural values assessment findings and the Rangers reflections. The Narrap Rangers will be undertaking on-ground works and monitoring at the site over the next 12 months. Yarra Ranges Shire Council is currently working with Narrap to determine how this might be continued beyond project completion.

Yarra Ranges Shire Council have also partnered with Eco-Warriors to undertake land management activities with five local primary schools. Activities will include propagation of local species and revegetating canopy deficient floodplain riparian woodland areas present on site.



**Cultural burn supporting regeneration and floodplain restoration at Yering, May 2024**

## Yarra Flats

Lead organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melbourne Water</li> </ul>
Achieved to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful trial: watering of billabongs</li> <li>Detailed designs for constructed wetland</li> <li>Feasibility study and cost benefit analysis for a permanent watering solution at Annulus Billabong</li> </ul>
Upcoming milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annulus Billabong permanent environmental watering solution</li> <li>Banksia Street wetlands construction</li> <li>Ecological monitoring</li> </ul>
Estimated delivery	Practical completion - June 2026

Yarra Flats Park, managed by Parks Victoria, features 85 hectares of pastoral and heritage landscapes, natural bushland, wetlands and billabongs, abundant birdlife and iconic picnic areas within the close confines of a heavily developed urban area. Of significance is the Yarra Flats billabong complex; a landscape that continues to be important for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and features in their dreamtime stories.

Much of this area has been subject to land use change. Together with changes in the wider catchment, these landscapes have experienced significant alterations to their natural water availability and wetting and drying cycles. These alterations have significantly impacted the cultural, liveability and ecological function of the billabongs.

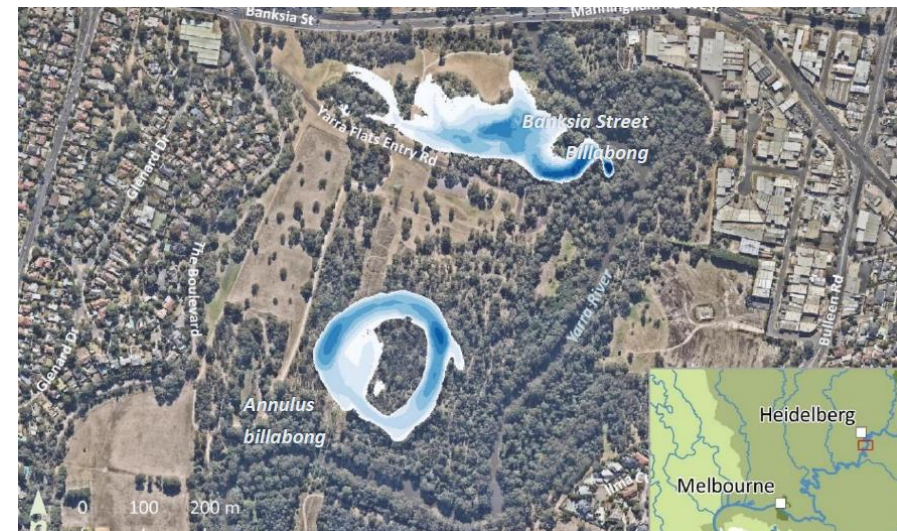
Melbourne Water is collaborating with Parks Victoria, Wurundjeri Corporation, Banyule Council, Friends of Yarra Flats, DEECA and the Victorian Environmental Water Holder on this project to improve ecological, cultural and social values of the billabong complex whilst reducing stormwater pollution to the Birrarung.

The project involves constructing a new stormwater treatment wetland on Banksia Street Main Drain, a permanent environmental watering solution for Annulus Billabong, and embedding opportunities for Narrap Rangers to continue leading project elements.

For the Banksia Street wetlands, work has progressed on the detailed design and planning for construction, and incorporating stormwater harvesting to deliver additional water to Banksia Billabong as required. For Annulus Billabong, a detailed design for a permanent environmental watering solution has been prepared and a cultural heritage management plan is underway.

Ecological and cultural monitoring continues to be undertaken by University of Melbourne and Narrap Rangers, and additional bird monitoring is being undertaken with Bird Life Australia and Narrap, funded by Melbourne Water.

Funding for construction has been sourced through the Federal government Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, which will allow the project to be delivered by June 2026.



**Annulus and Banksia Street billabongs, Eaglemont**

## Part 1 Collaborative actions

The four performance objectives set out in Part 1 of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo are supported by a series of 40 actions to deliver over the 10-year life of the plan. Table 2 provides a summary of the status of these actions across the four performance objectives.

In general, actions that align with waterways management are further progressed than actions relating to community behaviour, cultural diversity and parklands. This is reflective of the need for higher levels of collaborative planning and new ways of working to deliver actions relating to community behaviour, cultural diversity and parklands.

Since last year's report, we have delivered a further five actions and put in progress seven more actions. As we report on this second full year of implementation, we are well on track to continue to deliver on the 10-year plan, with 75% of the 40 actions either in progress or already delivered. **Attachment 3** provides a status update for all 40 actions.

**Table 2: Status of actions across performance objectives**

Performance Objective	Number of actions	Delivered	In progress	Planning
1: Healthy river and lands	23	6	14	3
2: Culturally diverse	5	1	0	4
3: Quality parklands	10	2	6	2
4: Protecting landscapes	2	0	1	1
Totals	40	9	21	10

### Progress in short-term actions

Actions in the plan are categorised into short, medium and long term actions. Short term actions have a 1-3 year timeframe for delivery and are due for completion next year. Medium and long-term actions are planned to be delivered in the middle to later phase of this 10-year plan.

At present, nine of the 22 short-term actions have been delivered and nine are in progress, with the remainder to be progressed as part of our transformative projects (Table 3).

In summary, it is anticipated that 82% of short-term actions will be delivered by June 2025, with the remainder to be delivered in conjunction with our transformative projects and other state-led initiatives.

**Table 3: Status of actions across short, medium and long term periods**

Performance Objective	Number of actions	Delivered	In progress	Planning
1: short-term actions	22	9	9	4
2: medium-term actions	13	0	9	4
3: long-term actions	5	0	3	2
Totals	40	9	21	10

### Actions in planning phase

Currently, there are four short-term actions in the planning phase (Actions 3, 21, 31 and 35). This reflects dependence on other actions or external activities and changes in priorities.

**Action 3**, an education program targeting agricultural chemicals in rural areas was expected to be undertaken as part of Melbourne Water's risk management for drinking water quality in the mid-Yarra catchment. However, a targeted program has not been pursued. Instead, focus has shifted towards regulations for chemical use and more general education programs for managing rural land and agricultural impacts on waterways.

**Action 21**, capacity building program for Wurundjeri Narrap team to assist with deer control has not been progressed. Consideration is being given to a more nuanced program delivered through the Birrarung Rangers program, with a focus on assessing impacts and planning of control programs.

**Action 31**, partnership agreements with Traditional Owner corporations to manage parklands have been suggested as opportunities to pursue by

various RPEs. For example, Parks Victoria see partnership agreements as an opportunity, with initial discussions occurring at an executive level. Wurundjeri Corporation see partnership agreements as a way to realise multiple benefits, with park management being just one benefit. Other RPEs, including Melbourne Water, DEECA and local councils have also indicated a desire to progress partnership agreements. How quickly discussions progress to partnership agreements will depend on the capacity of each organisation.

**Action 35**, consideration of green infrastructure within parklands will be an outcome of the strategic assessment of infrastructure and services in parks (Action 34), which has recently commenced as part of the Birrarung Parklands transformative project.

Four mid-term actions in the planning phase are related to cultural heritage (Actions 24, 25, 27 and 28). It is anticipated that these actions will be progressed following the Cultural Mapping program that Wurundjeri Corporation will be commencing in late 2024.

### Short-term actions in progress

In addition to the four short-term actions in the planning phase, there are a further nine short-term actions in progress, as detailed below.

**Action 2**, is for a Yarra-specific education campaign to raise awareness that stormwater carries pollutants including litter to the Birrarung through the drainage network and that behaviours in the catchment can reduce loads. Local councils, Melbourne Water, EPA and other agencies have education programs being delivered for specific areas, the catchment and broader region all of which deliver on this action. Over the next year, implementing agencies will identify education programs that can be tailored to draw clearer links between behaviours and declining values in the Birrarung. The Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review has identified stormwater management as requiring additional attention, which will provide more opportunities to collaborate on raising awareness through catchment programs.

**Action 8**, is supporting the aspirations of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to pursue water justice for their People and Country. Water justice

has not yet been achieved, although progress is being made. This includes increased involvement in developing seasonal watering plans for the Birrarung and the transfer of a 1.405 GL licence in the lower Birrarung to Wurundjeri Corporation. True water justice will require reform of the water management and entitlements frameworks to remove structural barriers, and redistribution of power and resources between the state and Traditional Owners. Support for Wurundjeri and Bunurong Peoples must be ongoing and is being pursued through state initiatives such as the Water is Life framework, and the Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy, which committed to investigating possible water returns in the Birrarung for Wurundjeri and Bunurong.

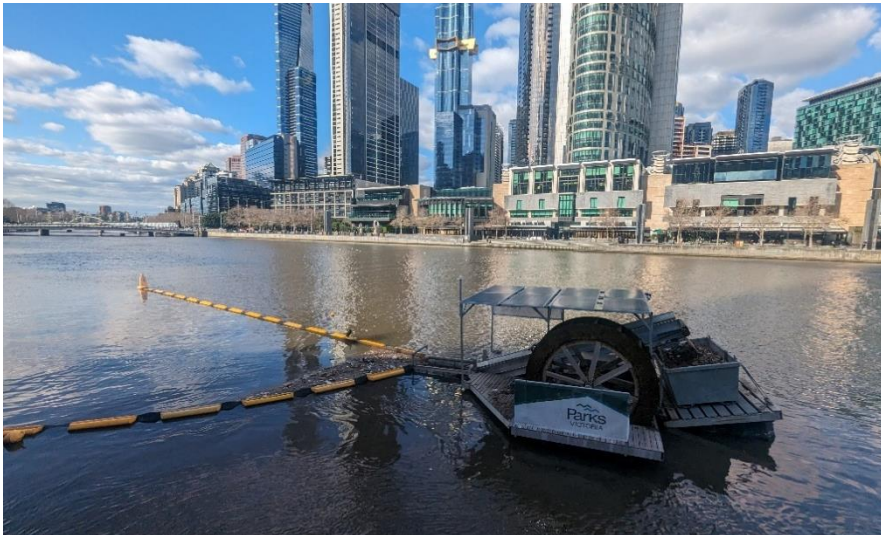
**Action 11**, is about increasing urban greening in our built environment. Local council urban forest strategies and associated plans together with new building developments are seeing increased vegetation and return of biodiversity to the city. An outcome from our **Greening the Birrarung project**, will be development of guidance material and collaborative approaches to increase urban greening.

**Action 22**, is for climate change education programs to enhance awareness of climate change and adaptive capacity of the Birrarung. Local councils and agencies currently deliver a range of education programs around the impacts of climate change and what needs to be done to build resilience. We are assessing how these education programs currently consider climate risks and how we can improve education outcomes for the Birrarung.

**Action 23**, is about understanding climate risks for the river and what can be done to mitigate these risks. Significant investment has been made in modelling ecological risks associated with climate change and the impact of urban heat on social values across Melbourne. A state-led adaptation strategy has been developed for Greater Melbourne and for seven industry sectors, including the built environment and water sectors. This work forms the foundation for more targeted assessment for the Birrarung. DEECA have commenced a project to understand where organisations are at in their preparation for climate change risks and protection of Birrarung values. From this work we will develop a common narrative for the Birrarung in respect to climate change risks, highlighting exemplars and opportunities.

**Actions 29, 30 and 34** are associated with improved parklands management and seeing parks as part of one living and integrated natural entity, which is the Birrarung. These three actions (and actions 32 and 33) will progress through the **Birrarung Parklands transformative project**.

**Action 39**, will see Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo recognised in planning policy. It is anticipated that the necessary changes to the Victoria Planning Policy will be completed this year (see further detail under Part 2 – land use framework).



**Geoff the automatic river cleaner is being trialled by Parks Victoria in the Yarra River, and is a complement for the existing Parks Victoria litter traps on the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers**

## Part 2 Land use framework

The land use framework in Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo Part 2, provides planning direction and guidance for future land use and development on public and private land. Importantly, it supports delivery of the performance objectives in Part 1.

The planning scheme amendment to give effect to the land use framework is being finalised by the Department of Transport and Planning for the consideration of the Minister for Planning. The amendment includes updating clause 12.03-1R ‘Yarra River Protection’ of the Victoria Planning Provisions, translating relevant land use directions into planning schemes, and having Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo referenced as a background document.

### Supporting the land use framework

Planning scheme amendment VC197 (approved April 2021) introduced permanent and consistent planning overlays to manage development and protect the Yarra’s landscape within the urban areas (downstream of Warrandyte); prescribing maximum building heights and minimum development setbacks, together with tougher vegetation removal controls.

A key planning deliverable this year was the release of the **Birrarung-Bolin Framework Plan** in January 2024 by the Minister for Planning. This framework plan for the Bulleen precinct brings to life the community’s vision for a healthy river and environment, a thriving arts and cultural scene, and connected people and places. The plan aligns with Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo performance objectives, while providing a more detailed framework for future land use and development through this iconic part of the river.

We have also seen private developments aligning with Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. An example being the redevelopment at the Richmond Power Station, which is providing stronger connectivity to the river, improved biodiversity outcomes and involved Wurundjeri Elders in the design process.

Ideally, as developers and planners become more familiar with Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo and the intent of the Act there will be less impact

on the Birrarung from development. Specifically, development impacts on visual amenity, overshadowing, stormwater and biodiversity.

## Monitoring and evaluation framework

Our monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) plan, which was revised last year, delivers on the legislative requirements for monitoring and reporting as set out in the Act. This includes alignment with the Birrarung Council's annual evaluation of implementation, and the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's 5-yearly reporting of the State of the Birrarung and its Parklands.

The MERI plan, through its program logic, provides a succinct description (schematic representation) of Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo, from actions through to the strategic goals and performance objectives that deliver on the 50-year community vision. An abridged version of the program logic is presented in Figure 4.

Reporting of the condition of the Birrarung continues to be served by broader monitoring and reporting programs, such as monitoring and reporting for the Healthy Waterways Strategy – Yarra Catchment and State of the Birrarung and its Parklands report (published in May 2024).

As indicated in the MERI plan, progress against the 50-year community vision will be assessed as part of the 8-year evaluation.

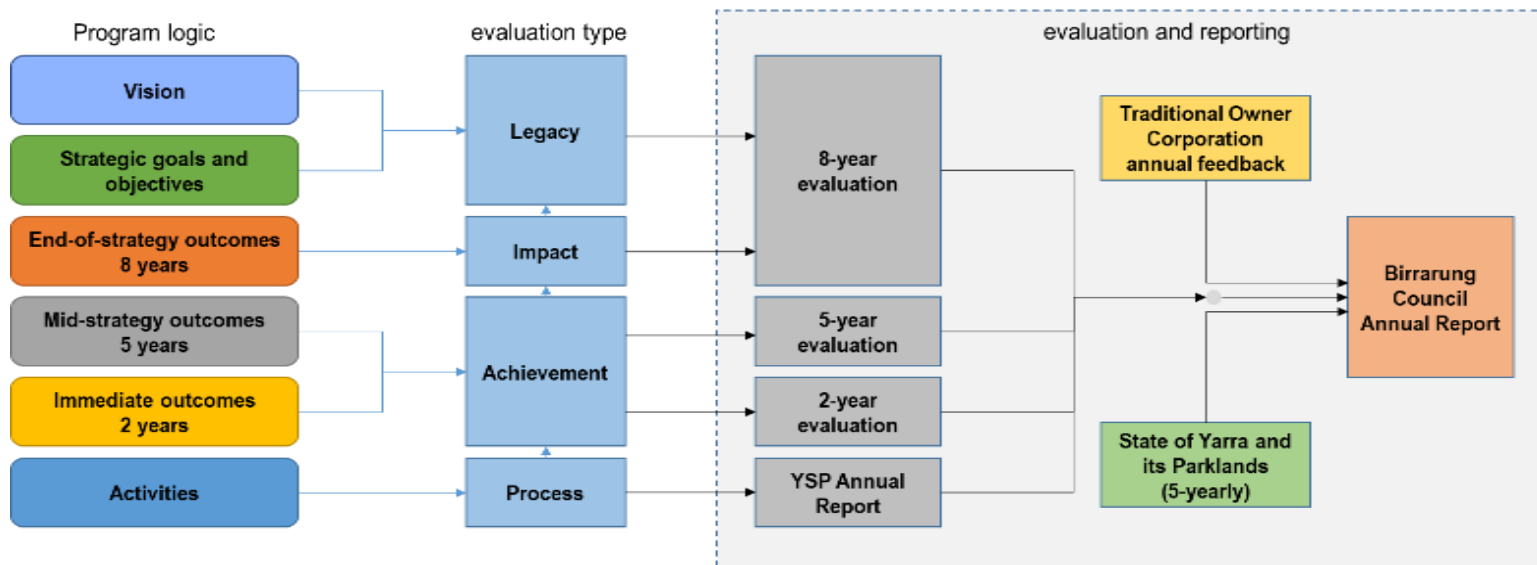


Figure 4 Alignment of program logic with evaluation type and reporting

# Next steps

For 2024-25, we will continue to operate in line with our three-year implementation plan, which focuses on the following six outcomes.

## Commitments on track and being delivered

Our focus will be on delivering the remaining Part 1 short-term actions and further progressing mid-term actions. Workplans will be reviewed, and where necessary re-scoped to facilitate delivery.

The lead agency will work with DTP to progress Part 2 land use framework, moving to recognise Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo in Victoria Planning Policy and developing workplans for supporting actions.

The lead agency will continue tracking progress of activities being undertaken by responsible public entities, specifically the five priority projects; ensuring alignment with the intent of the Plan and the Act.

## Traditional Owners resourcing

The lead agency and Yarra Collaboration Committee will explore with Wurundjeri and Bunurong corporations resourcing options that support their self-determined role as decision makers and delivery agents on their Country.

The Yarra Collaboration Committee will support adoption of the Wurundjeri Corporation's engagement framework. This will ensure learning from early adopters across a range of project and organisational scales are applied.

## Collaboration leads to greater collective impact

The Yarra Collaboration Committee will continue to provide a forum to drive better collaboration between organisations. Establishing processes for integrating and sharing knowledge between related programs and by providing a forum for responding to new information important to the health

of the Birrarung. This will include exploring issues highlighted in the State of the Birrarung report and Healthy Waterways Strategy mid-term review.

## Commitment to the Birrarung at all levels

The lead agency with support of the Yarra Collaboration Committee will continue to evolve decision-making processes at the executive level, primarily through the Executive Forum.

Implementation of the Communication and Engagement Strategy will focus on embedding systems and processes with organisations to promote activities that contribute to the intent of the Act and the Plan. Performance targets will be defined through our communications network.

## Birrarung at the centre of decision-making

The lead agency will facilitate through the Yarra Collaboration Committee, uptake of the decision-making framework, including preparation of guidance notes, improved processes for Traditional Owner engagement in project inception and planning, and development of an approach for assessing net gain for projects and activities that impact Yarra River land.

## Transformative change through transformative projects

The lead agency with the Yarra Collaboration Committee will facilitate the delivery of three transformative projects and their component projects:

- Birrarung Parklands
- Greening the Birrarung
- Collaboration Platform

The Yarra Collaboration Committee will also support the externally led Birrarung Valley Walk transformative project.

## Attachment 1 – Yarra Collaboration Committee meetings and events

Meeting/event date	Key outcomes
YCC Meeting #34 21 Jun 2023	Reflected on the Executive Forum, briefed on Parks Victoria Landscape-scale Management Planning, and confirmed Implementation Plan and priorities for next year.
Parklands workshop #1 (in person) 10 Aug 2023	Developed hallmarks for managing parklands as a living entity. Emphasis on collaborative planning informed by cultural values.
YCC Meeting #35 22 Aug 2023	Traditional Owner resourcing and next steps for new transformative projects DEECA provided update and sought direction on action 33. YCC supported approach to investigate parkland creation tools other than acquisition into State ownership.
YCC Meeting #36 16 Oct 2023	Discussed Communications & Engagement Strategy and YRKA involvement with YCC.
Parklands workshop #2 (in person) 9 Nov 2023	Revised hallmarks for managing parklands as a living entity, emphasising the recognition of Traditional custodians and centrality of the river's health in decision-making.
Comms Leads workshop (in person) 23 Nov 2023	Agreed approach to working together on issues such as branding, shared communications, and use of internal channels for communication and engagement.

Meeting/event date	Key outcomes
YCC Meeting #37 4 Dec 2023	Approved the Birrarung Valley Walk proposal, Birrarung Council priorities for 2024 and yarning circles, approved revised terms of reference for YCC, and scope for Cultural Mapping project.
YCC Meeting #38 (in person) 12 Feb 2024	Briefed on Wurundjeri Corporation's Birrarung engagement framework. Confirmed scope for transformative projects – Birrarung parklands and Greening the Birrarung, and demonstrated 'Let's Talk' page as trial collaboration platform.
YCC Meeting #39 15 Apr 2024	Discussed and approved endpoints for short term actions, approach for 2024 Executive Forum, and budgets for transformative projects.
Cultural Awareness Training 1 May 2024	Led by Wurundjeri Corporation's Uncle Bill Nicholson, at Abbotsford Convent – attended by YCC members.
Executive Forum 3 Jun 2024 Abbotsford Convent	Attended by Executives from RPEs and Wurundjeri Corporation. Opportunity to strengthen authorising environment, reinforce commitment and ensure strong progress for year ahead.
YCC Meeting #40 17 Jun 2024	Reflections on the Executive Forum, and preparation for annual reporting.



# Attachment 2 – Status of activities

The lead agency maintains a list of activities being undertaken or planned by responsible public entities, all of which contribute to the Plan’s four performance objectives. The collated list, referred to as the Activities Schedule, includes routine business, local projects and transformative projects; including the five priority projects committed to in Part 1 of the Plan. Initially developed in 2022, the schedule was revised in 2023 and again this year. There are now 176 activities listed.

As shown in Table 4, 27 (15%) of activities listed as in progress last year have been delivered, and we have 108 (61%) activities currently in progress. 36 (20%) activities are considered to be of an ongoing nature, and therefore do not have a formal completion (delivery) date.

The lower rural reach has the lowest number of projects listed (14), contrasting with the suburban reach which has the most (73), and the inner city next (46) (Figure 5). There is a strong correlation between the number of projects and the level of urban development.

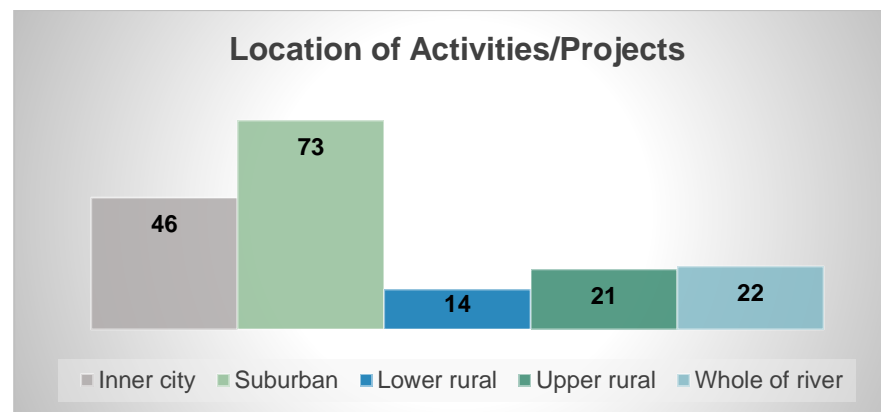
Alignment of activities against the Plan’s performance objectives shows that 65% of activities contribute to performance objective one, a healthy river and lands, and 28% contribute to performance objective three, quality parklands (Figure 6). This is a similar result to last year. And suggests additional planning is needed by the Yarra Collaboration Committee to increase the number of activities that contribute to performance objective two, a culturally diverse river corridor.

The spread of activities is similar to last year with 64% associated with on-ground works, compared with 65% last year (Figure 7).

A copy of the Activities Schedule is available from the lead agency on request.

**Table 4: Summary of activity status across reaches**

Reach	Number of activities	Delivered	In progress	Planned	Idea
Upper rural	21	3	13	5	-
Lower rural	14	1	10	3	-
Suburban	73	14	42	12	5
Inner city	46	7	27	9	3
Whole of river	22	2	16	4	-
Totals	176	27 (15%)	108 (61%)	33 (19%)	8 (5%)



**Figure 5 Graph showing number of activities across the four reaches**

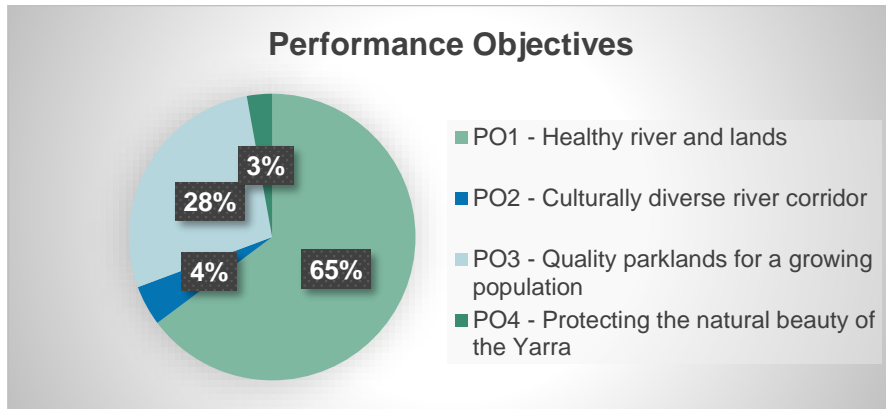


Figure 6 Graph showing alignment of activities against the four performance objectives

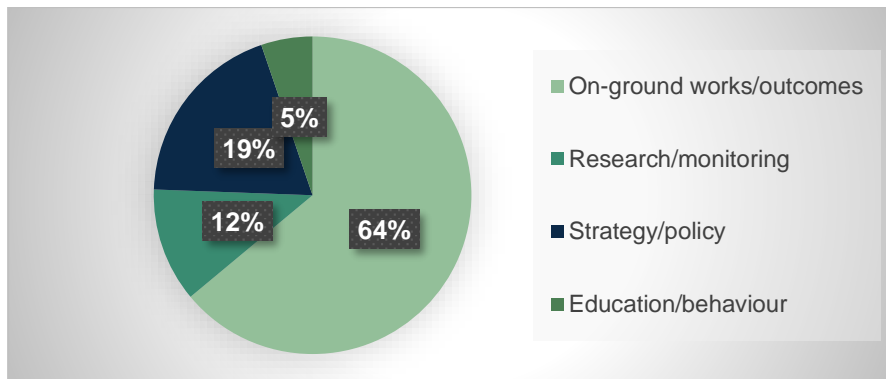


Figure 7 Graph showing categories of activities

## Attachment 3 – Actions Tracker

The Action Tracker indicates the status of actions, timeframe for delivery, nominated coordinating or lead organisation, and summary comment on status and progress. Please note that the actions descriptions have been shortened for ease of reporting in the table format.

Action	Status at Jun 2024	Time-frame	Coord agency	Status comment
<b>Performance objective 1: A healthy river and lands</b>				
<b>Water quality</b>				
1 Develop a place-based pilot project (in an area where stormwater is threatening Yarra health and amenity) to explore innovative re-use of stormwater...	in progress	4-7 yrs	MW	Potential sites being discussed by MW with Banyule and Yarra Ranges Councils. Yarra IWM forum actions will also contribute to this action (led by Councils and water corporations)
2 Implement a Yarra-specific stormwater awareness and behaviour change campaign targeted at reducing litter and contamination entering the Yarra River.	in progress	1-3 yrs	MW	Draw on YRKA litter project, lessons from Dandenong Creek program, council led programs and EPA pollution prevention task
3 Increase education, awareness and regulatory compliance to reduce pesticides and chemicals entering the river...	planning	1-3 yrs	MW	Prepare paper for discussion at YCC October meeting Plan is to review current education programs for use of agri-chemicals and assess if more targeted program required for Yarra Valley
4 Develop the integrated water management plan (including bicultural approaches) for the Yarra Catchment...	delivered	1-3 yrs	DEECA	Yarra Catchment IWM plan completed, and associated Action Plan developed and endorsed by all Yarra IWM Forum partners
5 Develop an integrated program to improve management of domestic wastewater in non-sewered areas (includes places serviced by septic tanks)...	in progress	4-7 yrs	DEECA	Supported by Onsite Wastewater Steering Committee activities, and programs with YVW and local councils
<b>Billabongs and wetlands</b>				
6 Investigate options to restore billabongs and wetlands on private and public land by using water for the environment to mimic natural water cycles and undertaking complementary land and water management works.	delivered	1-3 yrs	MW	Comprehensive program of investigations, works and environmental watering in place to support restoration objectives for wetlands and billabongs, predominantly on public land
7 Work with partners, primarily Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, VEWH and Parks Victoria, to implement a landscape scale approach to improving the condition of wetlands and billabongs for the Lower Yarra billabongs...	delivered	1-3 yrs	MW	Methodology developed and being delivered to influence watering plans
8 Support the aspirations of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to pursue water justice for their People and Country...	in progress	1-3 yrs	WWCHAC	DEECA working with WWCHAC to facilitate transfer of water entitlements for cultural use, part of water justice program driven through Water is Life; and Wurundjeri and Bunurong are consulted for seasonal watering plans

9	Work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to enhance knowledge, monitor and understand ecological change in prioritised Lower Yarra billabongs which have received environmental water.	delivered	1-3 yrs	MW	Monitoring being undertaken to assess benefits of seasonal watering and to inform future watering plans; includes vegetation, birds, frogs, eels and water level/quality
<b>Habitat connectivity</b>					
10	Undertake vegetation works to strengthen terrestrial and aquatic habitat corridors to improve biodiversity...	in progress	4-7 yrs	MW	Continued and significant investment in revegetation and maintenance programs; aligns with HWS priorities and Council biodiversity plans
11	Increase and enhance the extent and quality of urban greening in the inner city reach on public and private land downstream of Gardiners Creek...	in progress	1-3 yrs	MW	Aligns with Greenline Project, trial floating wetlands and Gardens 4 Wildlife programs - accelerate through Greening the Birrarung Transformative Project
12	Follow the goals and principles as set out in Protecting Victoria's Environmental Biodiversity 2037 for habitat and species conservation planning. ... Includes developing bicultural approach to assessing net gain on Country ...	in progress	1-10 yrs	MW	Aligns with RCS - creating spatial layers for ecosystem units, allow prioritising and selection of biodiversity management methods for land managers
13	Explore and support the use of incentive mechanisms to build skills, knowledge and capacity in restoring landscape function...	in progress	4-7 yrs	MW	Continued use of MW incentive program for stream frontage and rural land, DEECA funding landcare, Yarra4Life collaborative support and Council programs
14	Promote the use of conservation covenants to protect priority conservation values on private land as well as enhancing habitat connectivity...	in progress	4-7 yrs	DEECA	DEECA have funded TfN to identify priority areas for protection in Yarra Valley
15	Plan and undertake terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna assessments to ascertain where opportunities exist to reintroduce and restore native plants and animals...	in progress	4-7 yrs	MW	Assessments routinely undertaken for environmental watering
16	Develop and pilot Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung flora and fauna assessments as critical planning tools for future management of the catchment...	delivered	1-3 yrs	WWCHAC	Developed and tested by Narrap Rangers on mid-Yarra billabongs, with further development through Birrarung Rangers project
<b>Native Fish</b>					
17	Invest in habitat restoration and environmental watering to: increase native fish, ..., and improve opportunities for recreational fishing and cultural practices...	delivered	1-3 yrs	MW	Monitoring indicates environmental flows and Dights fishway upgrade are improving connectivity for migratory species; further investigation required to understand causes of decline in non-migratory species such as River blackfish
18	Work in partnership with angling groups to develop and implement a community education program on protection of native fish...	planning	8-10 yrs	DEECA	Links to action 17, scope to be developed with VFA and industry groups
19	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung CHAC to lead and explore the feasibility of research projects identifying current extents, habitat needs, and best practice recovery programs for culturally valued freshwater aquatic species...	in progress	8-10 yrs	WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Water Program and Birrarung Rangers to review and reset research program with ARI and other groups
<b>Pest plants and animals</b>					

20	Adopt a multi-agency collaboration and investment approach to management of invasive animals and plants...	in progress	4-7 yrs	DEECA	Pest animal and plant control programs are continuing to be undertaken in a collaborative manner as set out in relevant strategies and plans; and these programs will be reviewed as part of the Greening the Birrarung transformative project
21	Build capacity of the Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap ('Country') team to manage and eradicate deer...	planning	1-3 yrs	WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Narrap Team are looking to re-scope this action, with a proposal to increase capacity for monitoring impacts of pest species on Country, as opposed active involvement in deer control
<b>Climate change</b>					
22	Deliver an interactive education program along the river corridor to enhance awareness and understanding around climate change and adaptive capacity...	in progress	1-3 yrs	MW	Currently investigating how RPE's education programs consider climate risks for the Birrarung and whether additional content is required to improve outcomes
23	Map key risks to the Yarra for climate change and develop a climate change adaptation and resilience action plan...	in progress	1-3 yrs	DEECA	Currently investigating how RPE's have mapped climate risk to the Birrarung, and whether risks are covered by existing mitigation plans
<b>Performance objective 2: A culturally diverse river corridor</b>					
<b>Cultural heritage</b>					
24	Develop, or where existing, enhance interpretive and educational programs for sites that have...	planning	4-7 yrs	MW	Scope to be developed in consultation with Traditional Owners in association with the Birrarung cultural mapping project
25	Deliver interactive educational programs that include storytelling about the rich culture and heritage of the Yarra River...	planning	4-7 yrs	MW	Scope to be developed in consultation with Traditional Owners in association with the Birrarung cultural mapping project
26	Support a program of cultural value studies by the Traditional Owners for the Yarra...	delivered	1-3 yrs	WWCHAC	Bulleen–Banyule Flats, Healesville and Yering studies completed and Brushy Creek being finalised; further cultural values studies will be informed by the Birrarung cultural mapping project
27	Explore with the Traditional Owners, the possibility of registering the Yarra as a cultural landscape.	planning	4-7 yrs	WWCHAC	The possibility of registering the Yarra as a cultural landscape will be discussed as an outcome of the Birrarung cultural mapping project
28	Develop a holistic heritage assessment to understand historic heritage values...	planning	4-7 yrs	DTP	Development of heritage assessment methods will be discussed as an outcome of the Birrarung cultural mapping project
<b>Performance objective 3: Quality parklands for a growing population</b>					
<b>Park management</b>					
29	Plan, design, and manage the river parklands as one living and integrated natural entity...	in progress	1-3 yrs	PV	Management of Birrarung parklands as one living and integrated natural entity is being progressed through the Parklands transformative project; hallmarks were developed as part of the initial planning for the project
30	Develop, with Traditional Owners, a consistent conservation, cultural and visitation brand identity for the Yarra and its parklands...	in progress	1-3 yrs	PV	Brand identify and narrative for Birrarung parklands is being progressed through the Parklands transformative project
31	Establish formalised partnership agreements (including resourcing) with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung CHAC and TOs to manage the parklands...	planning	1-3 yrs	PV	Partnership discussions with Traditional Owners are planned to be progressed through Parks Vic Relationship Leads in the coming year

32	Investigate locations and options for improved access to the Yarra and its parklands...	in progress	4-7 yrs	PV	Options for improved access will be undertaken as part of the Birrarung Parklands transformative project - stocktake
33	Investigate opportunities to improve and extend the area of parklands and deliver on priorities for acquisition...	in progress	8-10 yrs	DEECA	To date 9 properties with Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) in planning schemes acquired in suburban reach totalling over 20ha of new parklands. Additional options for extending network of parks is being investigated. Aligns with Birrarung Parklands transformative project
<b>Park infrastructure</b>					
34	Conduct a strategic assessment of infrastructure and services in the Yarra's parklands...	in progress	1-3 yrs	PV	To be progressed through Birrarung Parklands transformative project; stocktake will consolidate assessments already undertaken
35	Consider green infrastructure investment and solutions at the local and landscape scale within parklands...	planning	1-3 yrs	PV	To be progressed through Birrarung Parklands and Greening the Birrarung transformative projects
<b>River activation</b>					
36	Develop a 10-year berthing strategy for the lower Yarra River.	delivered	1-3 yrs	PV	Strategy developed and being implemented
37	Investment in a comprehensive dredging operation and ongoing maintenance dredging of the river to ensure boats and vessels can move safely...	in progress	4-7 yrs	PV	Dredging Mar-Jun 2024 along Main Yarra Trail, Herring Island landings, Victorian Rowing landing and Southbank completed
38	Establish a Lower Yarra River management committee to guide commercial berthing, events and activation...	delivered	1-3 yrs	PV	Committee established in 2022 - continues to discuss challenges and opportunities for the lower river - projects this year include preparing an emergency management plan to guide water pollution response responsibilities, and a review of waterway rules
<b>Performance objective 4: Protecting the natural beauty of the Yarra River corridor</b>					
<b>Landscapes and views</b>					
39	Protect the river's landscapes and views through improved planning and management of the river corridor and incorporation of the Yarra Strategic Plan land use framework into local and state planning policy.	in progress	1-3 yrs	DTP	Recognising BBBU in Victoria Planning Policy is likely to be completed in late 2024, much of the on track paperwork has been completed by DTP Planning group
40	Set land use planning goals and monitor changes in land use...	planning	8-10 yrs	DTP	Project yet to be fully scoped

Coordinating agency abbreviations: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), Melbourne Water (MW), Parks Victoria (PV), Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC).

Other abbreviations: Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Integrated Water Management (IWM), Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWS), Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS), Responsible Public Entity (RPE), Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), Climate Change (CC), Traditional Owners (TO), Trust for Nature (TfN), Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Victoria Planning Policy (VPP), Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC), Yarra Valley Water (YVW).

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