ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS
STATE REPORT

2024-25

Citizen science in
Victoria's waterways

EstuaryWatch Victoria

WaterWatch Victoria

Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

EstuaryWatch and WaterWatch proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

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INTRODUCTION

A Big Leap Forward for WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch

First of all, a heartfelt thank you to all the staff and volunteers working across Victoria on the WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch programs. Over the past year, 449 volunteers contributed an incredible 14,750 hours of citizen science—an extraordinary effort that underpins everything we do. In addition, 5,323 people engaged with us through events and information stalls, showing just how interested our communities are in our waterways.

Volunteer hours aren't just numbers—they represent real meaningful contributions to the health of our waterways. The data collected by citizen scientists helps build a clearer picture of long term trends, identify emerging issues early and guide decision that affect the future of our rivers and estuaries.

Without this grassroots effort, many of these insights simply wouldn't be possible.

Communities' understanding of their rivers and estuaries through citizen science is essential to communities caring for them.

This year marked a major milestone for WaterWatch and EstuaryWatch with the long-awaited upgrade of our website and data portal. After years of requests from dedicated coordinators and community members from across the state, we were finally able to bring this vision to life.

The redevelopment was a significant undertaking, shaped by the insights and expertise of our incredible community. Volunteers, waterway managers, data scientists, and researchers all contributed to the design and functionality of the new platform—ensuring it meets the needs of everyone who uses it.

One of the standout features is the brand-new data dashboard, which is now more intuitive and user-friendly than ever. But perhaps the most exciting addition is the water quality rating system. You can now explore sites across Victoria and, where sufficient data exists, see each parameter rated as Good, Moderate, Poor, or Very Poor. It's a powerful tool for understanding the health of your local waterways—go ahead and check out your nearest site!

A huge thank you goes to David Tiller and Leon Metzeling for their invaluable help in developing the rating system. With decades of experience at the Environment Protection Authority as waterway scientists their input has been instrumental.

The new website is already making waves—bringing in significantly more traffic, volunteer interest, and community engagement. In just four months, we've received many volunteer requests from people across the state, and 65 people have signed up to our newsletter—a 100% increase in subscriptions compared to last year. It's fantastic to see so many people connecting with the program and wanting to get involved!

In addition to the new rating system on the website, the portal now includes:

- "Explain for me" buttons to help interpret data
- Easier site navigation
- A more visually appealing interface
- Interactive, instant charts

Additionally we now have access to detailed insights into how data is being utilised across various sectors. This new capability is both exciting and informative, revealing that university students are the most active users, followed by university staff and state government. Community members and private organisations also show strong engagement with the data. Other data users include TAFE institutions, local government, contractors, secondary schools, and primary schools. Importantly, these statistics represent only four months of usage, highlighting the early and diverse engagement with the new website. This highlights the broad appeal and utility of the website, demonstrating its growing importance in educational, government, and community settings.

User Category	Download Count
University Student	597
University	65
State Government	61
Community	48
Private Organisation	25
TAFE	16
Local Government	15
Contractor	13
Secondary School	11
Primary School	6

And finally, I'd like to acknowledge Britt Gregory, the dedicated WaterWatch Coordinator at North Central Catchment Management Authority. After seven remarkable years in the role, Britt has wrapped up her time with WaterWatch, during which an incredible 4,336 sites were visited by volunteers under her guidance.

While Britt is continuing her journey at North Central CMA, she'll now be turning her focus to some truly special conservation projects—including the Plains-wanderer, the Eltham Copper Butterfly, and the platypus. What an inspiring lineup of work to be involved in!

STORIES FROM
ACROSS THE STATE

St George Rivermouth, Lorne

CORANGAMITE

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

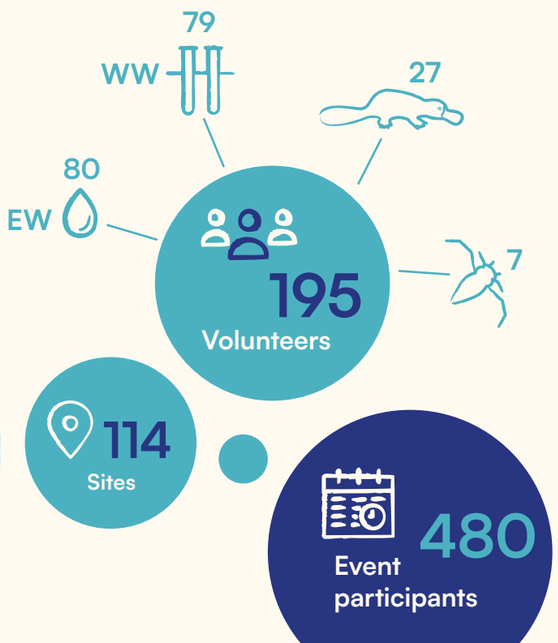
Dry summer at the Curdies Estuary

The unprecedented dry summer of 2024 highlighted the importance of the Curdies EstuaryWatch volunteers in keeping key stakeholders and the community abreast of conditions in the Curdies River estuary. Volunteers began conducting additional testing after a fish death event was reported by the public. Observations of an unusually high phosphorus reading triggered further investigation by authorities. EstuaryWatch volunteer Graeme Murfett reported it was “the highest phosphate reading we have ever recorded,” at Boggy Creek, which prompted the additional investigation.

Initial results indicated that low dissolved oxygen and a dinoflagellate algal bloom were the likely causes of the fish death event.

Dinoflagellates are a type of algae that sometimes produce toxins. They are more commonly known for causing red tides, which are marine environmental alerts. Great Ocean Road Coast And Parks Association installed signs warning people to avoid contact with the water and the bloom was reported to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and as a precaution.

The Curdies River Coordinating Committee was informed using this EstuaryWatch data and



Curdies Estuary before and after rainfall event, Peterborough

photo point imagery, which visually documents changes before and after a major rainfall event. This helped communicate the estuary’s response to natural events. The recently updated EstuaryWatch and Waterwatch Data Portal was also presented to the committee, highlighting how the platform can be used by all stakeholders to access real-time and historical data, support shared understanding, and inform ongoing discussions and local decision-making.

Long term volunteer data essential for FLOWS study

Long term photo records and observations recorded by the St George River EstuaryWatch group have been used to inform the St George River FLOWS Study published in 2024. In a system where there are limited flow gauges, EstuaryWatch data was critical in understanding the flow regime of the St George River and seasonal changes in estuary mouth condition between 2008 and 2020. This data helped inform the flow recommendations required to support estuary form and function, good water quality, fish and vegetation. These flow recommendations will be considered as part of planning for a sustainable and resilient water future for Lorne.

Friends of the Gippsland Lakes open day

EAST GIPPSLAND

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Friends of Gippsland Lakes

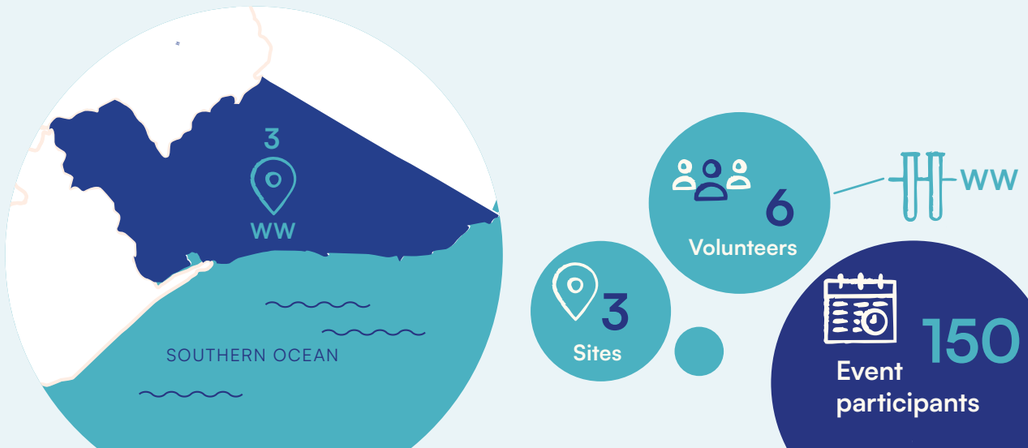
Friends of the Gippsland Lakes (FOGL) is a friends group primarily focussed on the health and wellbeing of the Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes and associated wetlands and feeders. It has been established for over 20 years.

In early 2024 we approached the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority about getting involved in WaterWatch. We thought our involvement in the program could help achieve several outcomes including:

- Raising awareness in the community about waterway health and relevance to health of flora and fauna.
- Contributing to the collection of data that helps determine actions and plans for the lakes.
- Resurrecting the WaterWatch program in East Gippsland, which has severely declined over the last 10 years.
- Encouraging improvement and expansion of water testing programs by authorities and agencies.

With the support of the East Gippsland CMA who supplied an initial water testing kit and training, we got started. We faced a steep learning curve with volunteers all very new to water testing, so East Gippsland CMA suggested we initially take on only three sampling sites. Since that start we are proud to say we've managed to test all three sites on an almost regular monthly basis.

We have since acquired additional equipment purchased through a Landcare grant, and equipment recovered from other groups. This has enabled us to expand into nutrient testing (phosphates and nitrates).



We also ran our own volunteer training day last September, which was well attended.

To encourage community involvement, we have an "open day" testing at one of our more easily accessible sites each month. We try to make it a social occasion, with a chat and picnic lunch. We've had one local primary school attend, with great enthusiasm from the 15 or so children, and have received interest from other schools who are keen to start their own WaterWatch program.

We think WaterWatch is a valuable citizen science program and hope to see it grow and expand in East Gippsland. The struggle as always is finding volunteers who are capable of doing the testing, are available and can commit on a regular basis. The level of knowledge and care required to obtain consistent and accurate results is also challenging for some volunteers.

We'd like to expand into the taxonomy side of WaterWatch, collecting information on the bugs and critters.

With adequate funding and support for the entire WaterWatch program, and particularly in East Gippsland, we think we can help to drive a resurgence in community involvement in this very important and useful initiative.

We'd like to thank East Gippsland CMA for their ongoing support.

Volunteer training day

Merri EstuaryWatch volunteers undertaking monthly physico-chemical testing at site M1, Merri River Warrnambool, June 2025

GLENELG HOPKINS

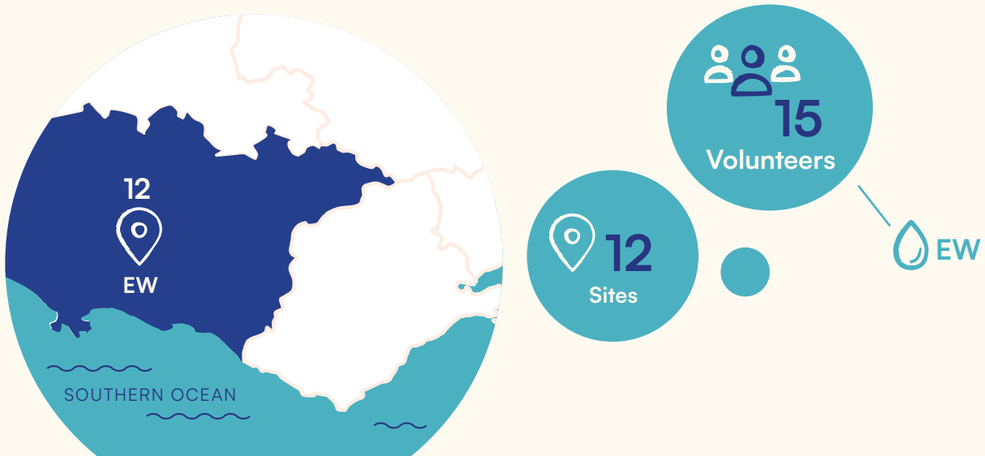
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Harnessing Citizen Science to Navigate a Year of Extremes

The 2024—2025 year has proven to be one of the most challenging on record for southwest Victoria, with severe drought conditions placing immense pressure on our region's waterways.

Despite these difficulties, the Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch Program has continued to remain strong, with dedicated volunteers capturing invaluable data which has helped highlight the complex interactions between ocean, estuary and catchment systems during these challenging seasonal conditions.

The Merri River estuary has drawn significant attention this year. This is a unique waterway, with historic post-European modifications creating a unique dual-mouth system — Stingray Bay and Rutledge's Cutting — each operating independently. Typically, the Stingray Bay entrance remains open year-round, but in a remarkable shift, volunteers recorded a drought-induced closure lasting over three months in 2025. This may represent the longest continuous closure on record for this estuary mouth. EstuaryWatch volunteers were instrumental in documenting this rare event, collecting critical physical-chemical data throughout the closure and following the natural opening of the mouth during a storm tide event on June 6. This dataset could be a once-in-a-decade — or even a century — record, underscoring the long-term value of citizen science in capturing environmental events.



The Hopkins River estuary also experienced significant impacts from long-term drought conditions. Volunteers recorded prolonged mouth closures, record beach berm heights, elevated water levels, and high-impact estuarine flooding. In response, the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Warrnambool City Council conducted three authorised Artificial River Mouth Openings (ARMOs) between March and June. Each event was closely monitored by EstuaryWatch volunteers, who collected monthly photo point and physical-chemical water quality data, providing essential insights into the ecological responses to these interventions.

Beyond data collection, the volunteers continued to play a vital role in community engagement. Through ongoing conversations with local residents and visitors, they successfully promoted the value of estuaries, the importance of seasonal closure patterns, and the role of citizen science in understanding and protecting these dynamic systems. Their efforts have helped foster a deeper appreciation of estuarine ecology across the Warrnambool community.

As we reflect on this extraordinary year, the Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch Program stands as a shining example of resilience, dedication, and scientific contribution. Together, we are not just observing change — we are helping shape the future of our estuaries.

Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch Program 2024—2025

The Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch Program has again demonstrated exceptional dedication and impact through the 2024—2025 monitoring year. The 15 committed volunteers have continued to be the backbone of the program, showing remarkable consistency, organisation, and enthusiasm in their efforts to monitor and protect these vital estuarine environments.

Volunteer teams have responded proactively to seasonal weather patterns and significant environmental events, including storm systems and periods of estuary mouth closures and openings. Their adaptability and readiness to monitor during these dynamic conditions have ensured that critical data was captured during times of ecological sensitivity, contributing to a

deeper understanding of seasonal estuarine responses and responses to climatic variability.

The quality of data collected remains a standout feature of the program. Through annual Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) processes, the information gathered has been validated as both high-quality and highly relevant. This data continues to inform management decisions and supports broader scientific understanding of estuarine health.

Notably, both the Hopkins and Merri estuaries have maintained sufficiently oxygenated conditions throughout a severe drought period. This is a testament to the resilience of these systems and the importance of ongoing monitoring to detect and understand such trends. The data collected has provided reassurance to waterway managers and the community that these estuaries are currently functioning well despite climatic pressures.

Community engagement has also flourished, with volunteers actively promoting the EstuaryWatch program across Warrnambool. Their outreach efforts have helped raise awareness of estuarine health and the importance of citizen science, fostering a stronger connection between the community and their local waterways.

Looking ahead, the future of the Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch Program is bright. The Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority extends its thanks and gratitude to all volunteers for their commitment. It is pleasing that funding for the next three years has been secured through support from the Victorian Government, ensuring the continued success and growth of the program.

Together, the Catchment Management Authority and the volunteers are building a legacy of stewardship, science and community connection. Thank you to everyone involved for making this year another outstanding chapter in the Hopkins & Merri EstuaryWatch story.

Hopkins EstuaryWatch volunteers Dina Selman (L) and Ash Zanker (R) during annual QAQC testing, June 2025

Corey with a Macquarie perch

GOULBURN BROKEN

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Waterwatch and waterway condition monitoring for Macquarie perch

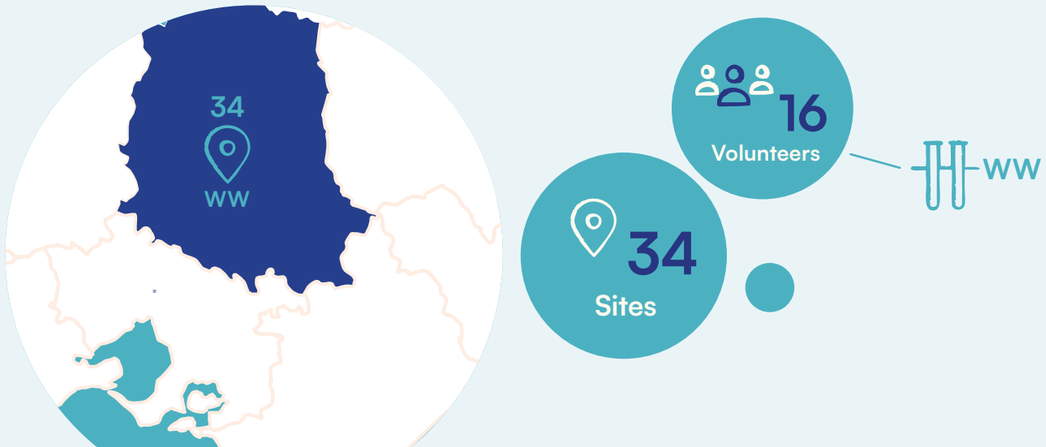
The Goulburn Broken catchment is a stronghold for the nationally endangered Macquarie perch (Macquaria australasica), supporting seven of the 11 known populations in Victoria.

Recent climatic conditions in northern Victoria have placed these important native fish populations under significant stress. Major flooding in October 2022, followed by prolonged dry conditions and critically low stream flows in early 2025, posed serious threats to Macquarie perch populations in unregulated waterways such as Seven Creeks, Hughes Creek, and King Parrot Creek.

In response, dedicated WaterWatch volunteers played a vital role in monitoring water quality and waterway health in streams across the Goulburn Broken catchment. Through regular sampling of water quality parameters (including temperature, pH, EC and turbidity) and through regular visual inspections, volunteers provided site-specific data on water quality and the condition of critical fish refuge pools. These refuge pools are essential habitat for Macquarie perch in unregulated waterways during periods of low or cease to flow events.

The data collected was extremely useful for Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority waterway managers, informing decision-making around potential emergency conservation measures. Measures that were being considered include the potential translocation of some Macquarie perch to deeper pools (within the same waterway) and translocation to the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snobs Creek hatchery, where they could be safeguarded until environmental conditions improve.

This collaborative effort highlights the value of citizen science in environmental management. By combining local knowledge with scientific monitoring, WaterWatch volunteers contributed directly to decision making around measures to ensure the ongoing survival of one of Victoria's most threatened native fish species.



Broken River in Swanpool

Planting day, Werribee

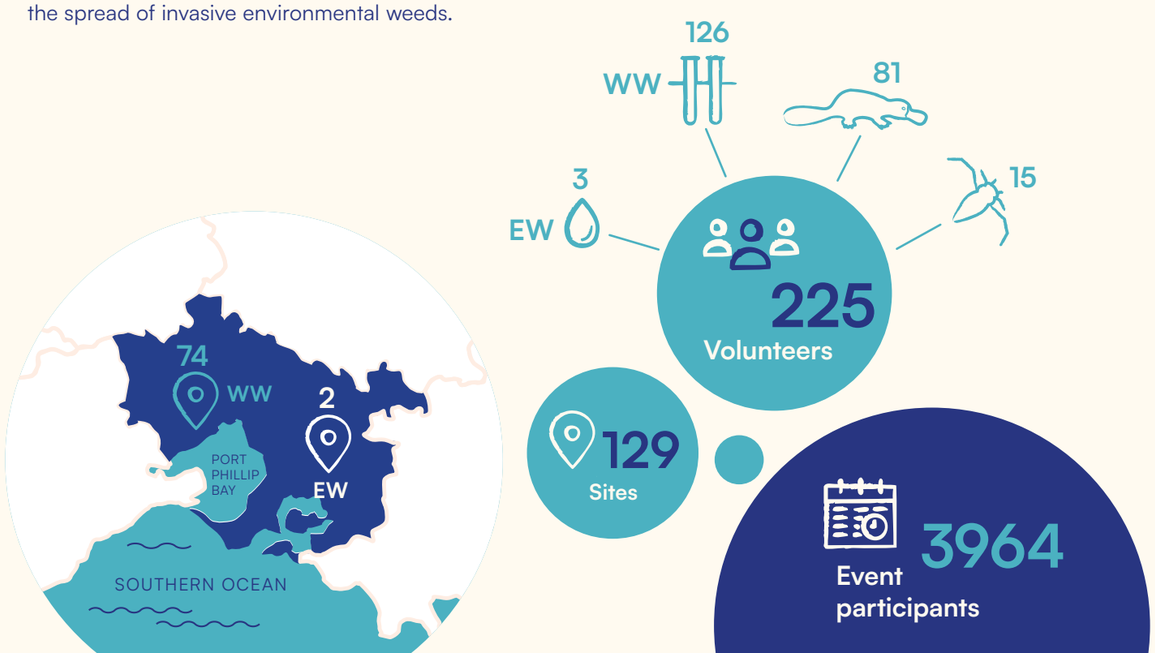
MELBOURNE WATER

Restoring Native Grasslands in Melbourne's West

Over a series of events, staff, volunteers, and visitors at the Western Treatment Plant came together to plant native grasses and wildflowers in the remnant grasslands surrounding Lake Borrie.

This collaborative effort is helping to expand the area of native vegetation that supports a range of rare and threatened species found on the Victorian Volcanic Plain. It also plays a vital role in creating a natural barrier to help prevent the spread of invasive environmental weeds.

This project aimed to introduce new audiences to experience the landscape of the Western Treatment Plant, while learning about an increasingly under-threat ecosystem and contributing hands-on to its protection. The planting project was run in partnership with NatureWest and Little River Land Care Group.



Waterbug monitoring workshop by John Gooderham

Assessments of creek naturalisation capital works

Reimagining Your Creek is a program that is transforming stormwater drains back into natural waterways to benefit biodiversity and provide more open space for community use. The WaterWatch team has been monitoring a number of these Reimagining sites to track their ongoing impacts to wildlife. Arnolds Creek in Melton has seen a continuing increase in the proportion of native birds compared to introduced species as the understory and mid-canopy establishes at the works site.

Macroinvertebrate sampling on Blind Creek in Boronia and Wantirna and Moonee Ponds Creek in Oak Park has seen the colonisation of different water bugs (caddisflies and beetle larvae), this shift suggests an improvement in water quality as these new species are more sensitive to pollution and prefer cleaner, well oxygenated environments. This monitoring was supported by John Gooderham from The Waterbug Company, who also provided training for volunteer macroinvertebrate monitors.

Merri Creek Stream Health Team

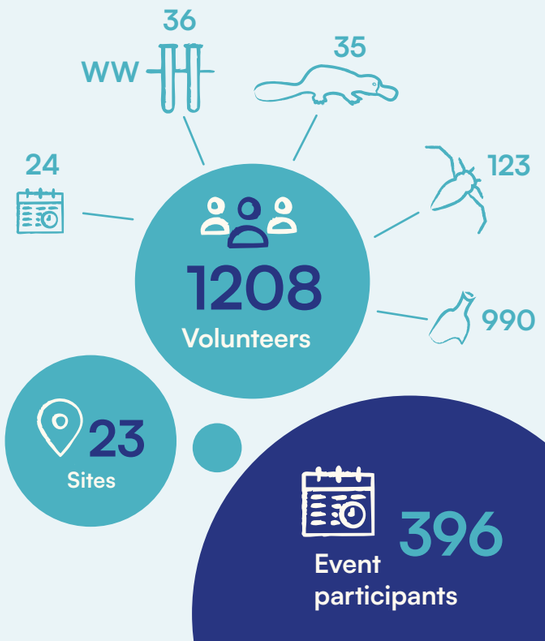
MERRI CREEK

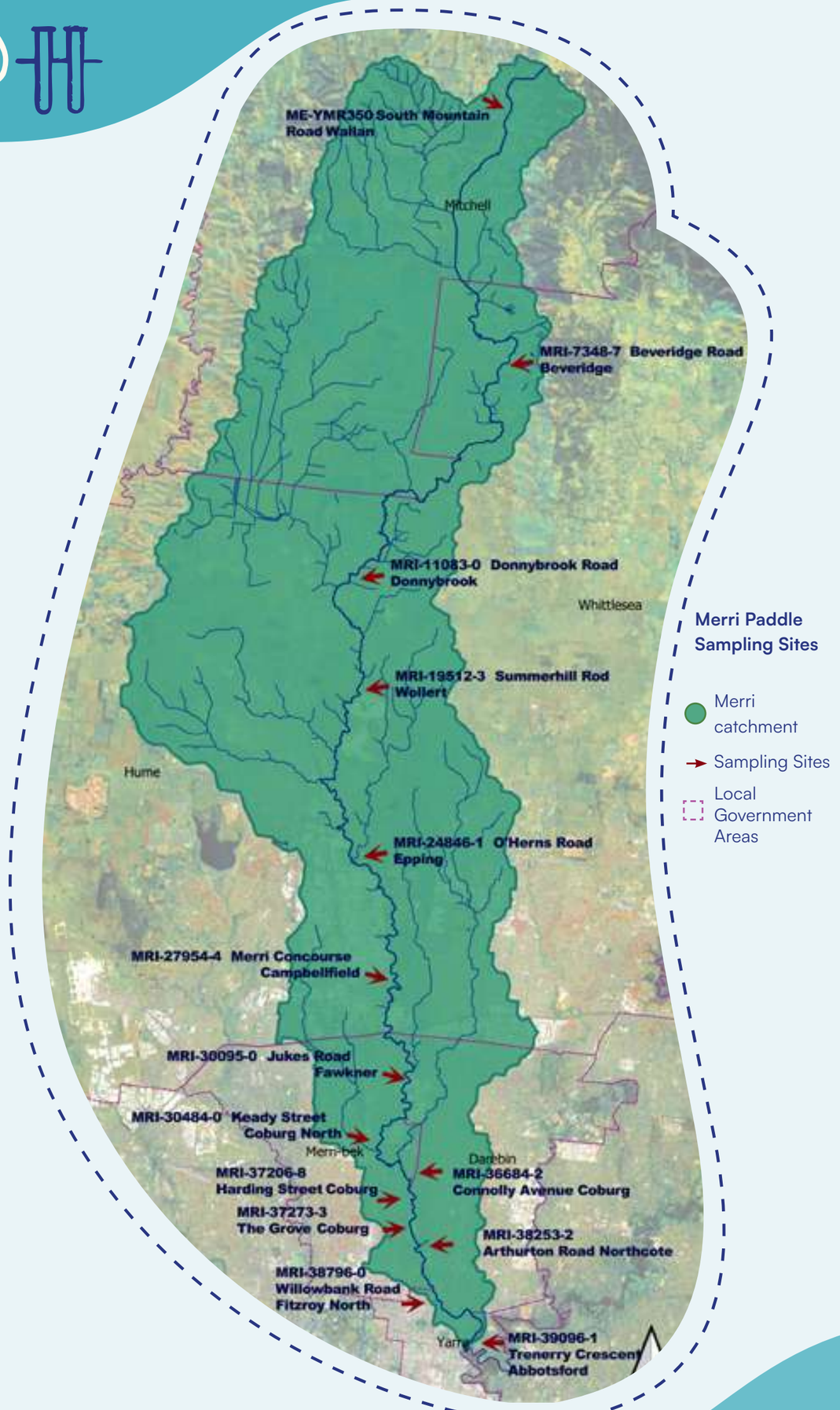
Monitoring the Darebin Creek at Nangak Tamboree / Barling Reserve

Since 2021, Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) has partnered with La Trobe University, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Narrap Unit, the Australian Government and Melbourne Water in the restoration of the Nangak Tamboree Grassy Eucalypt riparian area. Nangak Tamboree means respecting/sharing/looking after the waterway in Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people. This remnant area is located between the sporting precinct and the Darebin Creek in Bundoora (north east Melbourne). Original plans to monitor a wetland were changed when the wetland dried out during construction of sporting infrastructure at La Trobe University. In consultation with WaterWatch coordinator Julia Cirillo, DCMC monitoring staff and volunteers decided to instead monitor above and below a recently constructed stormwater pipe into the creek which drains the sporting precinct.

Regular monitoring since October 2023 has revealed sporadic turbidity flowing into the creek coming from the drainage pipe. Results have enabled DCMC to engage with La Trobe University to improve its integrated water management at this site. During this time;

- We have discovered sensitive stonefly larvae in this stretch of the creek.
- A platypus was spotted in the area by a student from La Trobe University.





- We have engaged ten new volunteer monitors with a further seven interested in taking part in the near future.
- OzFish's "fish motels" will be installed in the water to help fish hide and breed, and native plants, shrubs, and ground cover will be planted to help stabilise creek banks, reduce erosion, and create essential habitats for local wildlife. The two monitoring sites are accessed from the western side of the Darebin Creek at Barling Reserve in Bundoora, one of the major sites of the Darebin Creek Restoration Project. DCMC is partnering with OzFish, Microsoft, Wurundjeri Narrap Rangers and Native Fish Australia.
- WaterWatch data from the two sites has provided baseline data to assess improvements in water quality from this project, along with providing ongoing data on water quality from upstream and pipe outflow.

Warm reception for community Citizen Science event

In January 2025, MCMC WaterWatch organised and hosted a free community event entitled "Current Citizen Science research with a Merri Creek focus", held in the new community hall at CERES, Brunswick East, on the banks of the Merri Creek.

The event was instigated by PhD candidate Siqing Yu, who wanted to share her research with the local community that provided so much input.

This inspired WaterWatch Coordinator Julia Cirillo to invite another PhD candidate, Brady Hamilton to talk about his research, as well as hear from one of the nine local WaterWatch groups collecting WQ data on the Merri Creek. The evening event featured three presenters who spoke about their academic research focusing on the Merri Creek and Citizen Science (CS):

Siqing Yu presenting her research to citizen scientists.

Citizen Science academic event on Merri, January 2025

- Siqing Yu (PhD candidate), a joint researcher at the University of Melbourne and KU Leuven in the Netherlands. Siqing's research topic has focused on CS, and how researchers and CS volunteers using CS practices contribute to society's increased knowledge and understanding of sustainability. Siqing used the information from interviewing the MCMC WaterWatch volunteers and the work they are doing and compared it with another CS case study in Adelaide, South Australia.
- Brady Hamilton (PhD candidate), a researcher at Deakin University whose research has focused on emerging toxicants in the aquatic environment. Brady uses CS volunteers, many from the WaterWatch program, to collect water samples to test for contaminants and a section of these sites are on the Merri Creek. The program is called Pesticide Watch and has a national reach. Brady provided background on the Pesticide Watch program and the toxicants of concern present in our local waterways around Australia. The water samples collected by local volunteers on the Merri Creek in 2024 are currently being analysed.
- Irene Baker, who has been a leader of the Friends of Merri Creek WaterWatch Stream Health Team for over 10 years. Irene presented a summary of the 20 years of Water Quality data the group has collected on the Merri Creek.

Quite a few participants stayed on past the end of the event asking the presenters questions and lots of discussion ensued. One of the presenters commented that the event was the highlight of their PhD so far. Participant feedback was very positive, with many requesting more events where academics share their findings on the Merri Creek with the Merri Creek community.

The Cities of Darebin, Merri bek and Yarra as well as MCMC and Friends of Merri Creek were co-funders and supporters of this event, continuing the strong partnership of the stakeholders for the Merri Creek catchment.

Peter Rose presenting on small-bodied native fish to WaterWatch volunteers

NORTH CENTRAL

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Partnerships protect local billabong.

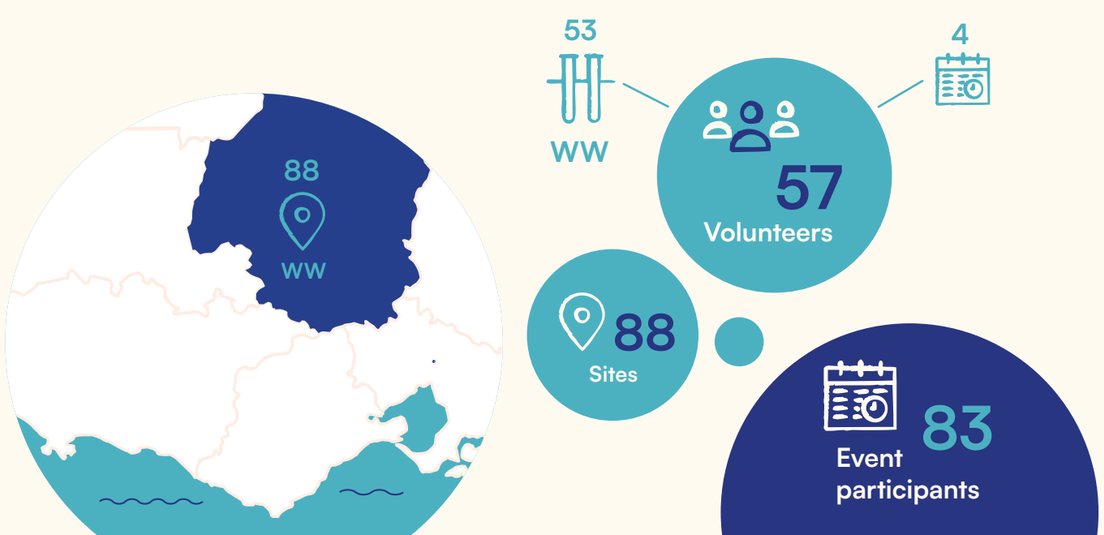
An incredible partnership between North Central Catchment Management Authority, Djaara, and City of Greater Bendigo led to a great outcome for the billabong at Bendigo Botanic Gardens in 2024.

The billabong in the gardens is part of an old waterway system connected to Bendigo Creek. In July, that the condition of the water in the billabong raised concerns, with stagnant water and green bubbling algae. Djaara and City of Greater Bendigo reached out to North Central Catchment Management Authority, and not long after the North Central WaterWatch Coordinator met with them to investigate the issue.

They used a WaterWatch kit to collect a sample from the billabong and undertake water quality testing. While collecting the sample, they also noticed that there was a rotten egg gas smell coming from the water, adding to the mystery.

The results of the water quality monitoring showed that both the dissolved oxygen (DO) and reactive phosphorous levels were of concern. The low DO (11-14%) was at a 'critical' level, threatening the lives of fish and other aquatic animals. The high levels of reactive phosphorous (0.25mg/L) were ranked as 'very poor'. While some nutrients in the water is a natural occurrence, extremely high levels can have side effects such as the algal bloom which was observed. The high reactive phosphorous result could also help explain the low DO observed. Bacteria in the water often increase in response to the presence of large amounts of nutrients (indicated by reactive phosphorous), and as they consume oxygen the DO levels can drop.

After these results were discovered, council staff investigated possible sources of pollution which could be driving the high nutrient levels. They found that a local business was discharging food and wastewater into the stormwater system connected to the billabong. Thankfully, they were able to work with the business to resolve the problem, and the water quality in the wetland improved as a direct result.



Bendigo Botanic Gardens billabong algal bloom (photos by Carolyn Vivian)

This story is a great example of the power of teamwork driven by existing partnerships. As the three agencies regularly work closely together, they were able to respond quickly and combine forces to detect the problem and test the water quality.

It also shows what can be revealed by the water quality monitoring undertaken by WaterWatch volunteers. Regular testing means that poor water quality — such as spikes in reactive phosphorous — are far more likely to be detected early and addressed. Volunteers' local knowledge of their sites also increases the chance that pollution and other issues will be noticed and reported before causing further harm.

Britt Gregory (WaterWatch Coordinator) testing dissolved oxygen in the billabong (photo by Carolyn Vivian)

Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon at Riley Street Wetlands

QAQC sessions — now with bonus fish!

Annual Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) helps to ensure WaterWatch methods are consistent, and that volunteers' equipment is functioning properly. It's an important part of the program to ensure we are collecting high quality and rigorous data. QAQC sessions typically involve volunteers coming together to analyse mystery water samples and compare results for consistency. It's a great opportunity to gather with other volunteers, and a chance to get equipment replaced or fine-tuned.

For this year's two QAQC sessions, something special was organised for North Central WaterWatch volunteers - North Central Catchment Management Authority's native fish expert Dr Peter Rose joined us to talk about his work with threatened small-bodied native fish. As an added bonus, Pete included the chance to observe his live trapping and monitoring program in action, surveying sites where captive-bred threatened fish had previously been released.

The sites of interest were Riley Street Wetlands in Bendigo and Me-mandook Galk, a property near Chewton owned and managed by Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation.

The fish species included olive perchlet, southern purple-spotted gudgeon, and southern pygmy perch. To everyone's delight, Pete's trapping brought in a great abundance of the released species, with the presence of many young fish indicating successful breeding. Pete counted and measured each fish on site and then translocated some to other nearby wetlands to continue growing and breeding.

The allure of the fish at QAQC brought in an increased number of volunteers compared to other years, with a combined 21 attendees across the two events. After the excitement of Pete's fish presentation, the volunteers sat down to diligently do their testing of mystery samples and update their kits.

Waterbug activity at the Hooked on Native Fish event

NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Hooked on Native Fish event

The community of Wangaratta and surrounds came together to enjoy a warm March evening by the Ovens (Torryong) River at the Hooked on Native Fish event. Hosted by North East CMA and Rural City of Wangaratta, the event promoted local conservation efforts to improve native fish populations in our local waterways.

People of all ages enjoyed learning about our local native fish with many activities on offer including creating their own native fish artworks, getting up close to many of our local native species with a wonderful live fish display from Glenwaters Native Fish, exploring innovative examples of local habitat restoration works, magnet fishing for the little kids, discovering a diversity of waterbugs and their relationship to fish and healthy waterways and exploring the impacts of different land management practices on waterways with the realistic North East catchment model.

Bangerang elder Uncle Dozer Atkinson shared insights into the cultural significance of our local waterways with a Welcome to Country that highlighted the importance of walking together to conserve the health of our waterways for all. The event was supported by Victorian Fisheries Authority, Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group and Wangaratta Landcare Sustainability who showcased their native fish knowledge and efforts to increase native fish populations.

Carp muster measuring at the Hooked on Native Fish event

Art activity at the event

Swamps, Rivers and Ranges were on hand to help run a successful Carp Muster competition that saw over 200 keen anglers take to the banks of the Ovens to catch a prize-winning carp and learn from local fishing guru Robbie Alexander. By reeling in some great catches and removing some of the Carp, they played a vital role in restoring the Ovens River for our native fish.

With so many interactive activities to engage with and a delicious BBQ dinner cooked by the Glenrowan Warby Range Lions it was fantastic to see community members of all generations sharing their knowledge, swapping fishing tips, and enjoying a great evening together.

Mullinmur wetland water quality data

Water quality data collected by volunteers at Mullinmur Wetland in Wangaratta provides an indication of wetland health, vital for understanding if the wetland is suitable habitat for maintaining healthy native fish.

The Mullinmur Wetland committee of management including North East CMA and volunteers from Wangaratta Landcare Sustainability, local schools and traditional custodian ranger groups have worked tirelessly to improve the environmental, educational and cultural outcomes at the site. This has been achieved through management actions including weed control, cultural burning, revegetation, habitat enhancement, monitoring, carp removal and native fish re-introductions with assistance from Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research.

Water quality monitoring is also used as an education tool at the wetland and gives students an understanding on how to check the environmental health of the waterway while learning practical skills and gaining experience in the environment field.

Quote from Kelvin Berry, Wangaratta Landcare Sustainability volunteer:

“Students love the hands on learning through Waterwatch that helps us understand how water quality impacts the survival of native fish in the wetlands.”

Robert and Lil Edis at their WaterWatch site

WEST GIPPSLAND

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Morwell River has new caretakers

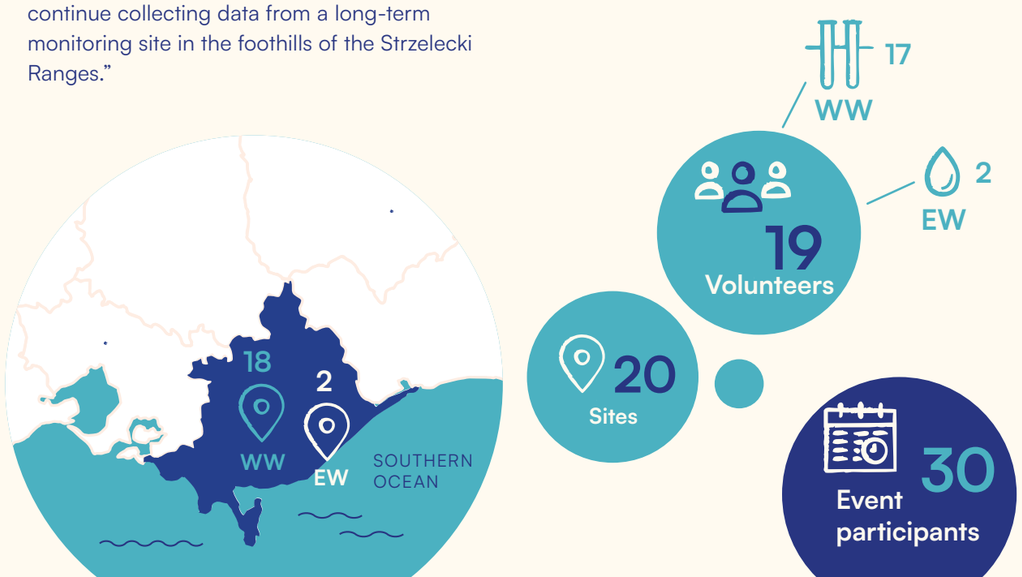
West Gippsland CMA would like to introduce our newest WaterWatch volunteers Robert and Lil who have been testing the water quality at Morwell River on behalf of the Boolarra South Landcare group since January 2025.

The dynamic retired couple bring an amazing wealth of knowledge to the program having both studied science at university and worked in science-based careers.

Lil said that they were inspired to become WaterWatch volunteers for "the opportunity to continue collecting data from a long-term monitoring site in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges."

The Morwell River monitoring site on Gunai-kurnai Country has special significance to the couple because water arising from natural springs on their farm eventually makes its way to the very spot — connecting them in one big system.

"We really enjoy visiting our site on the Morwell River." Thanks for volunteering your time and expertise Robert and Lil!



"After a few wet years the wetlands are starting to dry. As the wetlands dry, acid sulphate soils become an issue. The data helps us keep an eye on this and allows us to adaptively manage watering the wetlands. The crew also add field notes about what the vegetation is doing, and if any notable birds have been seen. All this information informs how we manage the water at Heart Morass."

Adrian Clements
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Environmental Water Officer

Heart monitors get their feet wet

Field and Game, known for their gaming pursuits, are also passionate conservationists. The Sale branch are the proud caretakers of Heart Morass, a wetland in the internationally recognised Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site. There, the Sale Field & Game branch members plant trees, control weeds and test the water quality at nine sites. Due to the large size of the wetland, this takes several hours each month and often involves navigating around flood waters.

West Gippsland CMA environmental water officer, Adrian Clements said: "It's really valuable having the Heart Morass volunteers (we call them the Heart Monitors) out there monitoring."

This WaterWatch data keeps the CMA's environmental water team informed about the water quality which helps guide management actions to preserve the health and ecological functioning of this large and precious wetland.

Field and Game WaterWatch volunteers at Heart Morass

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Many thanks to all the excellent delivery partners working within and alongside the EstuaryWatch and WaterWatch programmes. Your dedication and hard work are instrumental in achieving our shared goals and making a tangible impact on our environment.

WaterWatch Victoria
www.vic.waterwatch.org.au

EstuaryWatch
www.estuarywatch.org.au

National Waterbug Blitz
www.waterbugblitz.org.au

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