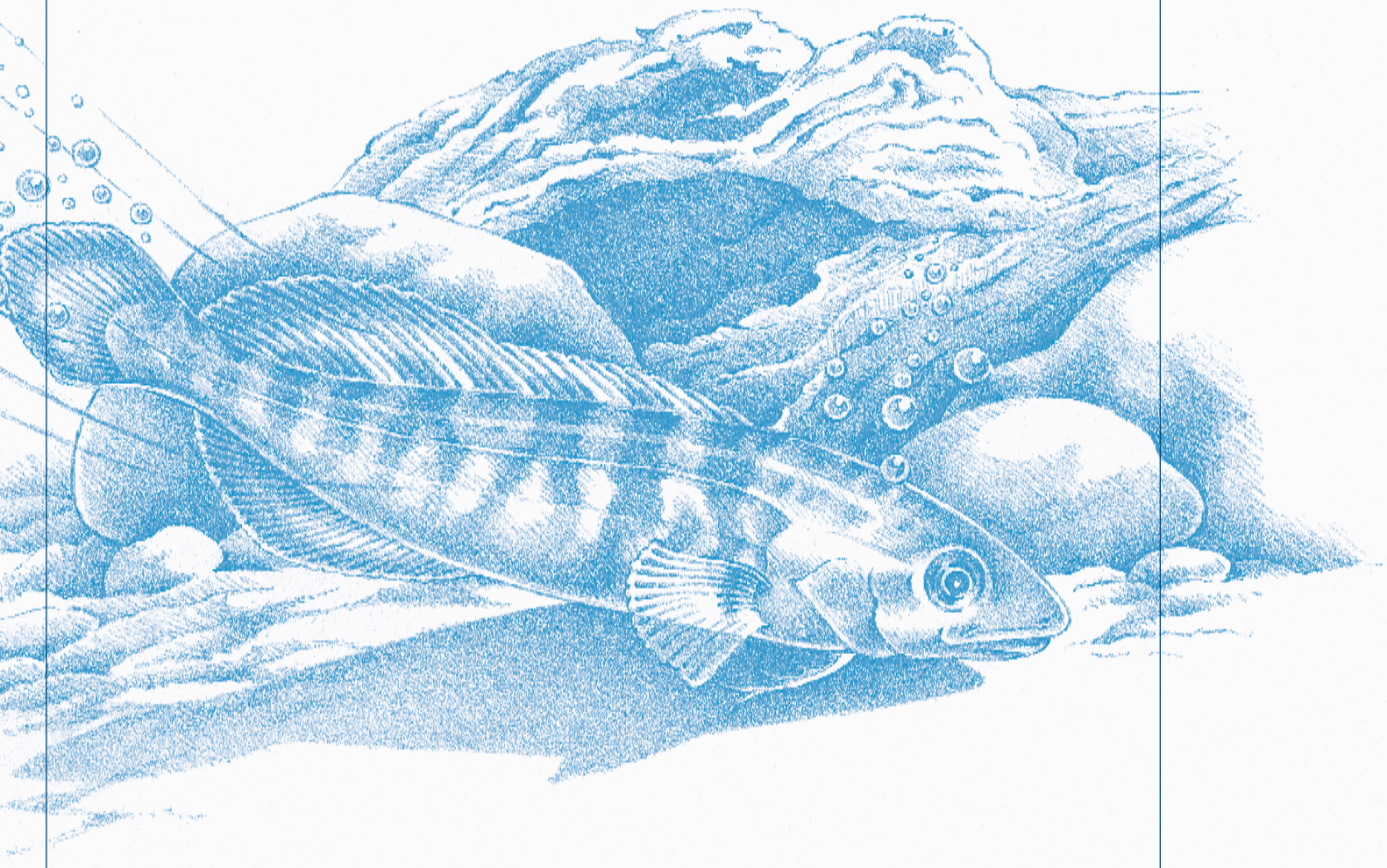


# Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy



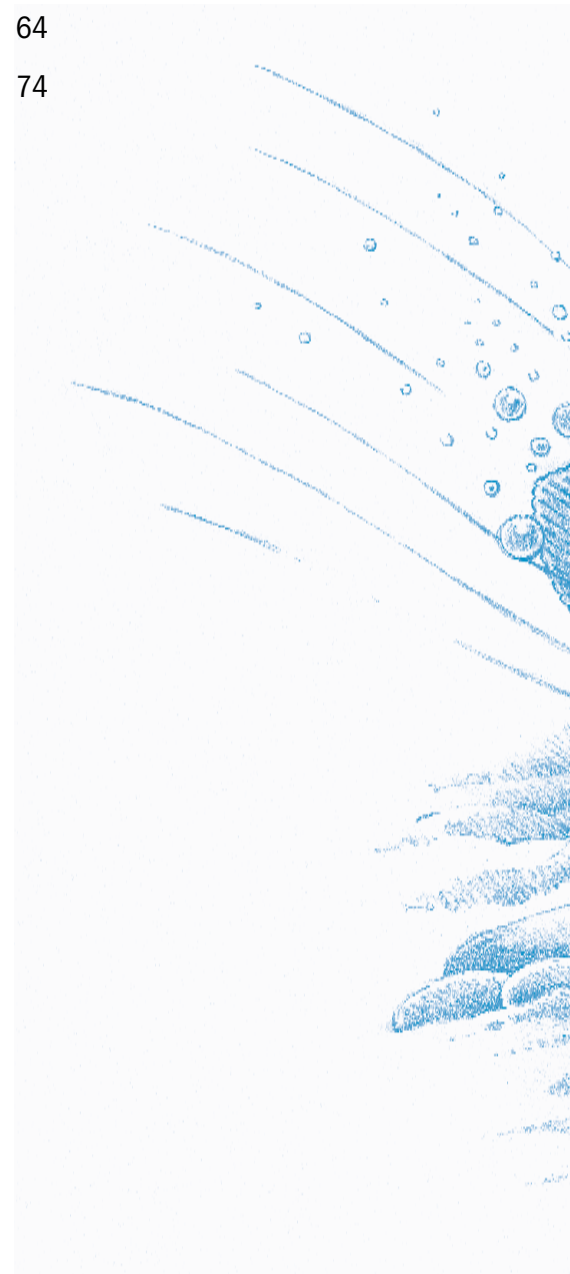
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*Melbourne Water is owned by the Victorian Government. The Victorian Government in its Our Water Our Future action plan assigned Melbourne Water the caretaker of river health and gave Melbourne Water responsibility for waterway management, regional drainage and floodplain management, the management of the environmental water reserve, and water quality monitoring throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region.*

*Melbourne Water works closely with the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (CMA) to protect and improve the region's rivers and creeks. The CMA is responsible for the overall strategic management of natural resources and regional planning for the Port Phillip and Westernport region through the development of a Regional Catchment Strategy.*

*See page 10 for more information on roles and responsibilities for river health in the Port Phillip and Westernport region.*

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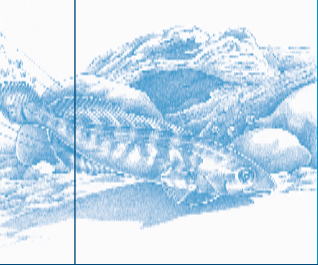


This Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy has been developed by Melbourne Water and the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and community representatives.

The resource document that accompanies this strategy summarises the data and information that guided the development of the strategy. This document can be found on the attached Resource CD and includes information relating to the condition and values of each of the region's rivers and creeks, and an analysis of the risks to these values. A program of the regional plans and activities as well as the river health program for each river and creek can also be found. This resource document also contains a description of the method and assumptions applied to develop the strategy.

This resource document is also available from [www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au) and [www.pppwma.vic.gov.au](http://www.pppwma.vic.gov.au)





# Minister's Foreword

The Port Phillip and Westernport region is a diverse area, taking in the large Melbourne metropolis, major agricultural districts, extensive areas of protected catchments and natural bushland and a number of environmentally significant wetlands.

With 3.8 million people currently living in the region and the population continuing to grow, local communities and river health managers face real challenges in terms of protecting and restoring waterways in the region.

The Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy is one of ten strategies developed across the State to achieve key river health objectives highlighted in the Bracks Government's *Our Water Our Future* action plan and the Victorian River Health Strategy.

It focuses on the importance of protecting and restoring its ecologically important rivers such as the Yarra, Lerderderg, Maribyrnong, Werribee and Bass as well as hundreds of wetlands including three internationally significant Ramsar sites – Edithvale Seaford wetlands, Western Port and Port Phillip Bay.

Extensive stakeholder and community involvement has ensured the production of a high quality strategy to address waterway health. It establishes regional priorities for river protection and restoration, providing a framework for communities, industries and Government to work in partnership over the long term and steer river health investment.

The strategy uses an innovative asset-based approach. It allows river health managers to document the range of social, environmental and economic values of local waterways; identify the threats and risks to these values; and establish priority actions to protect and restore our rivers.

This strategy recognises the strong commitment of the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment communities to river and wetland health. It also highlights the cooperation of many regional agencies to achieve improvements in river health through land and water management.

I commend all those involved in planning and implementing this innovative strategy. Your valuable contribution to protecting and restoring our precious rivers will benefit all Victorians.

John Thwaites  
Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change



John Thwaites  
Minister for Environment,  
Water and Climate Change

# Managing Director's Foreword

The Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy presents us all with a unique opportunity to protect our most valuable community assets – our rivers, creeks and wetlands.

For the first time, this strategy brings together comprehensive information on river health for all waterways in the Port Phillip and Westernport region. It represents both a long term commitment to improving the health and enjoyment of our waterways and a structured pathway for achieving that goal.

The strategy provides a region-wide framework for agencies to work together to improve the health of rivers and creeks, starting with a five-year plan for implementing high priority actions. These priorities have been determined by assessing the environmental, social and economic values of our waterways, and concentrate effort on river health areas and activities that deliver greatest results.

One of the key elements of the strategy is a focus on improving environmental flow regimes to protect the health of rivers whilst supporting important agricultural activities. This strategy, and the realisation of its goals, are only possible with the support and involvement of so many dedicated community groups. As the caretaker for river health for the entire Port Phillip and Westernport region, Melbourne Water will continue to work closely with these groups through planning and delivery of on ground river improvement projects, Waterwatch and various grants programs such as our Steam Frontage Management Program, Community Grants and Corridors of Green.

Improving the health of our rivers, creeks, estuaries and wetlands is clearly a priority for regional, urban and coastal communities alike, and the Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy is a blue print for achieving that priority.



Rob Skinner  
Managing Director  
Melbourne Water