



EAST GIPPSLAND
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

Corporate Plan

2024/25 - 2028/29

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of East Gippsland and recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and emerging leaders.

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CHAIRPERSON FOREWORD

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to submit the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's (EGCMA) Corporate Plan for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2029.

This Corporate Plan satisfies the requirements under the *Water Act 1989* (Water Act) and the Business Plan requirements under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act).

Importantly it provides transparency to our community, government, and other stakeholders about the outcomes we aim to achieve with government investment and provides the framework for reporting on the EGCMA'S corporate performance in the Annual Report.

The East Gippsland region continues to experience challenging times, with the region witnessing flood and storm events throughout 2023/24.

Aboriginal people across Gippsland have been on a long journey of healing and re-establishing their culture and lore practices since European settlement during the 1800s. The dispossession has had generational impacts on the community and Country, and while some recent improvements have occurred, there is still a long way to go. The EGCMA continues to work closely with Traditional Owners and First Nations People to support Aboriginal self-determination.

Although the recent past has had its challenges and uncertainty, in partnership with Traditional Owners, agencies and community, the EGCMA continues to deliver on priorities and accountabilities as outlined in the Minister's Letter of Expectations.

Ewan Waller
Chair, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

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1. BUSINESS DIRECTION

1.1. PURPOSE

Promote cooperation of people working together to manage the land, water, and sea country resources in a changing environment; and promote community awareness and understanding of the importance of sustainable use, conservation, and rehabilitation of East Gippsland's catchments.

1.2. VISION

"Leaders in integrated catchment management, partnering with our communities to enhance East Gippsland's landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage."

1.3. VALUES

EGCMA maintains the values defined in the *Public Administration Act 2004.*, s. 7. In addition to the Public Sector values, the CMA defines their top five values as:

Respect - We respect each other, our customers, our role within our community and environment, Traditional Owners and First Nations people; and we are supportive of our colleagues and provide information and assistance to help get the job done.

Integrity - We will follow policy and process to ensure consistency, clear communications and unbiased decision making.

Accountability - We are a professional organisation with high standards of governance, program and project delivery. If mistakes are made, or not everything turns out as planned or hoped, we will work together to learn and put in place strategies to change the outcome for the next time.

Responsiveness - We will provide a quality and timely responses, both internally and externally.

Leadership - We are all leaders who contribute knowledge, expertise and experience, regardless of our role within the Authority.

1.4. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The East Gippsland region covers 2.2 million hectares of land, lakes and coastal waters in eastern Victoria. About 83% of the region is in public ownership, mainly as state forests, national and coastal parks, and marine national parks, and virtually all of this retains extensive native vegetation cover. East Gippsland is the only place on mainland Australia where such continuity of natural ecosystems – from the alps to the sea – still exists.

1.5. AGENCY OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES)

The EGCMA goals align with the vision and values of the organisation. They are based on the Ministerial directions and are outlined below.

Priority Area	Outcome	Measure
Climate change	Provide services that mitigate against, and assist with the adaptation to climate change, and we will reduce emissions aligned with government targets.	EGCMA net zero emissions plan and target. Collaborative partnerships with shared climate initiatives.
Waterway and Catchment Health	Lead the delivery of programs that improve the health of priority waterways and catchments.	EGCMA Annual Report. Catchment Condition reporting. Case studies and supporting documents. Implementation of Regional Catchment Strategy, Regional Waterway Strategy and Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan.
Sustainable Agriculture	Deliver services and programs that prepare and support the agricultural sector for climate change and a more resilient and sustainable future.	Collaborative partnerships with shared agricultural outcomes. Several programs and projects supported to deliver shared agricultural outcomes.
Community Engagement and Partnerships	Customer and community focussed with all our work, engaging with people and developing partnerships broadly.	EGCMA Engagement Strategy. Communications Plans and Customer Relationship Management database maintained.
Recognise and support First Nations People, their Cultural values and Inclusion	Work in partnership with First Nations people to promote and foster self-determination and healthy Country.	EGCMA Engagement Strategy. EGCMA Annual Report. Catchment Partnerships Agreement.
Recognise Recreational Values	Create value for the liveability and economic benefit of the community through recreation and the visitor economy in all our projects.	EGCMA Annual Report. EGCMA Engagement Strategy. Collaborative partnerships with shared recreational outcomes.
Resilient and Liveable Regions and Places	Actively contribute to the health of our communities through the provision of waterway and catchment health services and programs.	IWM Forum Chair. EGCMA Engagement Strategy. Communities supported to adapt to changing environmental conditions.
People, Leadership, and Culture	Reflect the diverse needs of the community as an employer of choice with outstanding people working safely with a strong outward facing culture.	People Matter Survey. Workforce data. Safety Management Systems. Risk Management Framework.
Improved Performance	Continually improving our services, delivery and processes being transparent and accountable to community and government.	Customer Relationship Management database maintained. EGCMA Annual Report.

2. PLANNED PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

2.1. MAIN BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS

The EGCMA is a government statutory authority with legislated functions for planning and delivering waterway management programs, leadership and co-ordination of integrated catchment management across the region, in partnership with Traditional Owners, agencies and the community.

The EGCMA is responsible for the integrated management of land, biodiversity, and water resources in the region. It also has responsibility for the planning and delivery of waterway management programs and water statutory functions. These functions and others of the Authority are defined in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and the *Water Act 1989* and the Statement of Obligations associated with each of these.

The EGCMA is governed by a Board, appointed by the Minister for Water. The Board's responsibilities include strategic direction setting, performance monitoring, risk management and stewardship. To achieve the organisational priorities and deliver regional plans and strategies, the Authority will implement five programs including Waterway Health, Biodiversity, Gippsland Lakes, Sustainable Agriculture and Corporate Governance.

2.2. PROGRAM THEMES (BUDGETS AND OUTPUTS)

The following section outlines the four programs that have associated projects, investment and outputs that will be delivered during 2024/25.

Waterway Health

This program aims to work in partnership with landholders and agencies to maintain or improve the health of priority waterways and catchments so that they can support environmental, social, cultural and economic values.

Project	2024/25 Investment	2024/25 Expected Output
<i>Environmental Water</i> The project will support the role of a dedicated Environmental Water Officer with a specific focus on environmental water related issues, projects and community engagement.	\$236,000	0.6 FTE Environmental Water Officer 2 Community Engagement Events 1 Assessment (Snowy Estuary monitoring)
<i>Victorian Estuary Resilience and Hazard Risk Reduction Project</i> This project will improve the estuary monitoring capability to better understand long term changes in estuary dynamics through the establishment of monitoring infrastructure and subsequent analysis of real time and historical estuary data.	\$115,000	4 Monitoring Structures 1 Ecological Assessment 1 Written Publication
<i>Integrated Catchment Management</i> Deliver integrated catchment management outcomes across East	\$375,000	2 Vegetation – Native 10 Weed Control - Non woody 20 Assessment – Property

Gippsland through the implementation of key priorities identified in the East Gippsland RCS.		10 Engagement Event – Meeting 2 Partnership – Agency 10 Partnership – Mixed 1 Plan - Management
Increasing Fish Habitat This project will include the installation of fish habitat structures into the Gippsland Lakes and rivers flowing into the Lakes.	\$110,000	15 fish habitat structures 50 additional logs to existing habitat structures
Statutory Functions – Planning, Assessment and Approvals Meet the responsibilities in the Water Act and the Statement of Obligations for CMA's, including floodplain referrals and recommendations; and monitoring condition of waterways, wetlands, and floodplains.	\$913,000	125 Approval and Advice 60 Approval and Advice 1 Partnership, Agency
Building Resilient Waterways Program Maintain and protect the health of the riparian areas of priority waterways across the region, including waterways recovering from fires, floods, and storms.	\$413,000	2 Water Storage – Tank 1.5 Fence 3.5 Vegetation – Native 30.5 Weed Control - Non woody 120.5 Weed Control – Woody 1.5 Grazing – Riparian 2 Management Agreement - Binding (non-perpetual) 41 Assessment – Property 41 Engagement Event – Meeting 8 Partnership – Agency 23 Partnership – Mixed 3 Plan - Management
Flagship Waterway – Mitchell Rehabilitation works along the lower Mitchell to transition the waterway from a willow dominated river, to a resilient water with a native vegetation corridor.	\$194,000	2 Vegetation – Native 25 Weed Control - Non woody 10 Assessment - Ecological 20 Assessment – Property 20 Engagement Event – Meeting 2 Partnership – Agency 10 Partnership – Mixed 1 Plan - Management
Flagship Waterway – Cann Continue to improve the resilience and resistance of the river to improve the bed and bank stability and native vegetation corridor.	\$127,000	3 Vegetation – Native 10 Weed Control - Non woody 10 Assessment - Ecological 10 Assessment – Property 10 Engagement Event – Meeting 1 Partnership – Agency 10 Partnership – Mixed 1 Plan - Management
Floodplain Management Maintain and strengthen partnerships to implement the Regional Floodplain Management Strategy.	\$200,000	2 Plans – Management 6 Partnerships – Agency 4 Engagement Event - Meeting
Bushfire Recovery Program Undertake recovery program of works to reduce weed infestations, improve water quality, stabilise riverbanks following bushfires and floods.	\$1,100,000	2 Vegetation – Native 10 Weed Control - Non woody 127 Weed Control – Woody 10 Assessment – Property 10 Engagement Event – Meeting 1 Partnership – Agency 10 Partnership – Mixed 1 Plan - Management

Biodiversity

This program aims to work in partnership with agencies and community to maintain or improve the health of terrestrial species, including plants and animals. The main areas of focus for this year include the Red Gum Plains, Gippsland Lakes, Alpine Peatlands and South East Coastal Ranges.

Project	2024/25 Investment	2024/25 Expected Output
Red Gum Plains This project seeks to improve the condition of the Redgum Woodlands and Seasonal Herbaceous Wetland Threatened ecological communities.	\$52,000	40 ha Weed control 0.5 ha Revegetation 8 Habitat condition assessment 8 Identifying location of potential sites 1 First Nations Australian Cultural Practices (cultural assessments) 1 Weed distribution survey
South East Coastal Ranges This project seeks to improve the condition of threatened ecological communities within the South East Coastal Ranges priority place by applying landscape-scale pest plant and animal control.	\$1,267,000	220 ha Weed control 8 ha Revegetation 744 ha Controlling pest animals 30 Habitat condition assessment surveys 6 Identifying location of potential sites 0.25 ha Controlling access 1 Community stakeholder engagement events 2 Synthesising baseline datasets

Gippsland Lakes

This program aims to work in partnership with agencies and community to maintain or improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes, and catchment area. The program also includes coordination and implementation of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan.

Project	2024/25 Investment	2024/25 Expected Output
Gippsland Lakes Program (State) This project will deliver a program of works designed to improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes and contribute towards achieving the long-term outcomes of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan.	\$700,000	4 Engagement Events (Partners) 8 Partnerships 3 Plans 1 Community Engagement Event 1 Written Publication 1 Audio Publication 1 Visual Publication
Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Mgt This project will facilitate the coordination of management of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site, including the implementation of priority actions, monitoring and evaluation projects.	\$140,000	0.5 FTE Ramsar Officer 4 Engagement Events (Partners) 6 Partnerships 1 Plan 1 Information Management System (database) 1 Assessment (Surface Water)
Gippsland Lakes Program (NHT) This project will see 4ha of critical bird breeding and feeding habitat be restored along the Gippsland Lakes, it will also ensure the data captured for key species within the Lakes (frogs, birds, saltmarsh and seagrass habitats) will continue, to assist in the application of management actions for the Gippsland Lakes system.	\$853,000	2 ha Habitat augmentation (sand renourishment) 1 First Nations cultural practices (cultural assessment) 25 Fauna surveys (birds and frogs) 4 Water quality surveys 6 Synthesising baseline datasets 2 Identifying location of potential sites 2 Flora survey (saltmarsh)

Sustainable Agriculture

This program aims to work with agencies, community, and landholders to maintain or improve the health of agricultural land across East Gippsland.

Project	2024/25 Investment	2024/25 Expected Output
Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator (SAF) The role of the SAF is to engage and inform the agricultural community about innovative practices and government policies, facilitate partnerships, assist in project development and funding opportunities, and support sustainable agriculture projects enhancing productivity, profitability, and sustainability.	\$166,000	1 employment of SAF (1FTE) 1 Training program for SAF
State-wide Carbon Outreach Program In collaboration with the Victorian CMAs, support Victorian farmers to transition to a low carbon future	\$TBC	0.2 FTE employment 2 Assessments 1 Plan – Management 1 Training program 4 Partnerships – Agencies 4 Engagement events
Climate Smart Agricultural Program (Topsoils3) The TopSoils 3 program is a multi-partner project aimed at enhancing soil health and farm profitability through farmer-led focus groups and demonstration sites across East Gippsland.	\$484,000	TBC

Corporate Governance

This program is to support CMA collaboration, and improve governance and compliance across the CMA sector. The program is a support enabler to ensure appropriate levels of governance and compliance are embedded in all activities of the Authority.

2.3. MINISTERIAL EXPECTATIONS (OUTCOME INDICATORS)

Each year the Minister provides to the CMA, a letter that outlines their expectations of the CMA for the given financial year. The table below maps the Ministers expectations to projects and activities undertaken by the CMA that will deliver on these expectations.

Outcome indicator	Indicator	Activities planned for 2024/25
Climate Change and Energy (LOE1)	CMA's to explore opportunities and/or deliver initiatives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sequester carbon and generate carbon offset credits, and • adapt to climate change and climate variability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Victorian CMA's and Agriculture Victoria to deliver the Carbon Outreach Program. • Implement the actions of the EGCMA net zero emissions roadmap to be net zero by 2025. • Participate in state and regional forums to collaborate with partners in identifying opportunities and implement joint initiatives. • Support the Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator and encourage carbon sequestration opportunities.
Customer, Community and Engagement (LOE2)	CMA's to continue to build extensive, effective and consistent approaches to community engagement and partnerships in regional planning and implementation and to further the objectives of the CaLP Act 1994.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Landcare through the Victorian Landcare grants, regional coordination and CMA initiatives and regional programs. • Deliver Our Catchments, Our Communities to implement partnership projects to deliver stewardship outcomes.
	CMA's to work collaboratively with organisations and communities to strengthen engagement approaches and capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver on regional plans and strategies through the EGCMA Engagement Strategy. • Support the work through the Gippsland Catchment Partnerships Agreement, including an active member at Gippsland Environment Agencies (GEA) and East Gippsland CEOs Forum.
Recognise Aboriginal Values (LOE3)	Provide the number of formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owners/Traditional Owner Groups for water planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and renew the Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation and Gippsland Environmental Agencies Partnership Agreement. • Continue to provide a working partnership arrangement with Moogji Aboriginal Council. • Consider options to formalise a partnership agreement with Ngarigo – Monero Aboriginal Corporation.
	Describe the nature of the formal partnership agreements entered into with Traditional Owner Groups for water planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal partnership agreement between GLaWAC and GEA in place for multiple years, includes the 14 signatories with aligned objectives and outcomes to support self-determination. • Moogji Aboriginal Council have successfully worked closely with EGCMA for the past 18 years, the focus is to

	CMA's to demonstrate how Traditional Owners' aspirations and recommendations have influenced water planning, strategies and management.	<p>continue to strengthen this partnership, building capacity and capability amongst community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Owner and First Nations groups involved in strategy development and delivery, examples for this year will include the renewal of the Regional Waterway Strategy. • Traditional Owner groups and First Nations People involved in the development of the EC6 waterway health and Gippsland Lakes programs, and the NHT programs, this also includes the direct delivery of projects and initiatives.
Recognise Recreational Values (LOE4)	Provide evidence of community engagement processes that identified and considered recreational objectives relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - waterway health and environmental land - water planning and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for recreational user groups to be engaged as part of strategy, planning and program development, including the renewal of the Regional Waterway Strategy and the Estuary Opening Protocols. • Support opportunities for recreational groups and individuals to be involved in programs, including the Gippsland Lakes, Estuary Management and Environmental Water initiatives.
	Provide evidence of actions taken to improve information sources to help recreational users plan their activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the EGCMA Engagement Strategy with evidence captured and report in Accessing Community Engagement (ACE) database (evidence includes community meetings, social and traditional media, citizen science and community events).
	Provide evidence of actions taken to collaborate with other organisations and government agencies to explore and progress opportunities to support recreational objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing discussions through partnerships with Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) and EGCEOs Forum. This is representative of agencies from health, education, local government, water authorities, CMA's and departments working together. • Maintain the Gippsland Catchment Partnerships Agreement
Resilient and Liveable Cities and Towns (LOE5)	Actively participate and promote stakeholder collaboration with other organisations through IWM Forums, to help facilitate IWM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGCMA CEO is the IWM Forum Chair. • EGCMA is an active participant in the implementation of the East Gippsland IWM Strategic Directions Statement.
	CMA's to participate in the preparation and monitoring the implementation of IWM plans, particularly through prioritising measures to enhance waterway values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGCMA is an active participant in the implementation of the East Gippsland IWM Strategic Directions Statement. • EGCMA in partnership with other agencies, work together to deliver priorities from the East Gippsland Strategic Directions Statement.

	CMA's to provide quantitative data to support the narration provided regarding participating in the preparation and monitoring the implementation of IWM plans, particularly through prioritising measures to enhance waterway values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGCMA active participation in IWM forum and practitioners group; and provide IWM information and data as requested.
Leadership, Diversity and Culture (LOE6)	Is a Diversity Inclusion Plan/s published on entity website (Y/N).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - the Authority Diversity and Inclusion Plan is published on the website and is due for review in November 2024.
	Percentage of all the staff who complete the VPSC people matter survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% of staff completed People Matter Survey in 2024. EGCMA staff will be encouraged to complete the annual people matter survey. Develop and implement an action plan following the survey results.
	Summary of progress against LOE Priority Area Leadership, diversity and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed Independent Aboriginal Delegate and Youth Associate to the EGCMA Board. 51% of women in the EGCMA workforce. Supporting the development of the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy. Psychosocial action plan developed for the Authority, training and development provided to Authority staff.
Performance and Financial Management (LOE7)	CMA's to provide commentary on strategies undertaken to achieve efficiencies and cost savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGCMA leads a state-wide CMA Group to improve governance and compliance Reports provided to CMA CEOs, Vic Catchments and DEECA as required.
	CMA's to collaborate with DEECA (formerly DELWP) to improve reporting systems and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting completed on time and as expected. EGCMA participant in state-wide forums and committees to support improvements.
Waterway and Catchment Health (LOE8)	CMA's to coordinate and monitor the implementation of your regional catchment strategy and regional waterway strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Catchment Strategy mid-term review completed, including tracking of progress. Regional Waterway strategy renewed.
	CMA's to deliver waterway and integrated catchment management in line with government policies and frameworks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterway health and ICM projects delivered as agreed and reported as expected.
	Report on Catchment Partnership Agreements for your region in accordance with the Framework for Catchment Partnership Agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual report and state reporting completed as expected. Active participation in the Gippsland Environment Agencies and East Gippsland CEO/MDs forum.
Water for Agriculture (LOE9)	CMA's to provide commentary on actions taken to promote sustainable irrigation management practices to support the growth and viability of regional communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGCMA Irrigation Management Design Guidelines followed and implemented.
	CMA's to provide commentary on actions taken to plan and coordinate activities to manage salinity, waterlogging and water quality in agricultural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to Agriculture projects and programs, continued partnerships with East Gippsland Shire Council Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued employment of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator.
	CMA's to provide commentary actions taken to improve flexibility for agriculture to continue to adapt to change and help the sector to increase water use efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to Agriculture projects and programs, continued partnerships with East Gippsland Shire Council Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee. Continued employment of Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator.
Customer Data Protection	Activities and actions identified within the Victorian Data Security Framework, including plans to improve the information security maturity of the business, and protect customer information from loss and exploitation by employees, contractors, or malicious third parties. Also, plans in place for response to breach that has, or had potential to, compromise customer information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority has an ongoing commitment to ensure its data and systems are secure and continues to improve its data security through identifying opportunities for improvement through an independent review process.
Cyber Security	<p>The State Emergency Management Plan – Cyber security sub-plan states that entities should adopt one of, or a combination of two, internationally recognised approaches to reduce cyber security risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Essential Eight' maturity model provided by the Australian Cyber Security Centre. Cyber Security Framework by the National Institute of Standards and technology, USA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority independently benchmarks itself against the Essential Eight maturity model. An action plan will be developed to meet Level 1 requirements in all categories.
	Demonstrate progress and an ongoing commitment to integrating cyber risk management capacity, capability, process and system improvements into planning and decision making across the business. This includes activities and actions that will reduce the business exposure to cyber-attack, minimise the impacts of service disruption to customers, and restore services promptly following an attack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyber security risk is an element of the EGCMA's strategic risk register. Cyber security is as factor in the risk management approach to all activities the EGCMA undertakes.

2.4. REPORTING AND REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

The Board monitors progress against objectives of the Corporate Plan at each meeting. Shortly after completion of the planning year, the Board again reviews organisational performance against the Corporate Plan and reports the results in the Annual Report to the Minister.

If the Board identifies the need for a significant change in direction and/or changes to key strategies, it will amend the Corporate Plan at any time during its life as required.

3. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The EGCMA has identified a range of opportunities and challenges that will be the focus over the next 12 months and beyond. These are listed below.

3.1 Bushfire Recovery and Prevention

Following the 2019/20 bushfires the EGCMA secured State and Commonwealth funds to undertake bushfire recovery activities. The Commonwealth projects are complete, and State Government Phase 1 Bushfire Recovery is complete.

The remaining Phase 2 Bushfire Recovery project is underway. Since the 2019/20 bushfires East Gippsland has had multiple large floods and storms, continuing to impact waterway health.

The EGCMA is focusing on the following recovery activities for 2024/25:

- Control of emergent woody weeds in burnt areas. After fire, woody weeds such as English Broom and Willow can establish at a quicker rate than natural plants, hampering natural recovery efforts.
- Continue to construct fencing along waterways to keep stock out, following revegetation.
- Additional activities following floods, includes prioritised bank stabilisation works.

The EGCMA is working with partner agencies to ensure bushfire prevention becomes a major focus. GEA has agreed to a bushfire prevention action development as one of its major priorities. This is a significant step in garnishing greater support for our strategic priority. The EGCMA is continuing to work closely with partner agencies to discuss future management options.

3.2 Supporting self-determination of Traditional Owners and First Peoples

Supporting Traditional Owner Self-determination is a key priority for the EGCMA. There is a significant opportunity for the EGCMA to continue demonstrating leadership in supporting self-determination of Traditional Owners and First Peoples in East Gippsland.

The EGCMA has a strong relationship and partnership with GLaWAC that includes a range of projects and initiatives across the areas of governance and leadership; strategy and planning, and delivery of on-ground works.

A long-term partnership with Moogji Aboriginal Co-operative involving work crews on the Snowy, Buchan and Far East Rivers has been in place since 2004.

Key priorities for this year is to continue to strengthen partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations People; working together to support self-determination and deliver State and Commonwealth Government initiatives where this is alignment.

3.3 Wyung (Mitchell) River Rehabilitation

The EGCMA's major priority and focus for the 2024/25 year is the rehabilitation of the lower Wyung (Mitchell) River. The Restoring our Wyung (Mitchell) River strategy strives for a healthy river and floodplain that can support regional economic development and community wellbeing. The strategy proposes a program of management actions to address issues along the lower Wyung (Mitchell) from the Glenaladale Bridge to Bairnsdale. The program will work closely with the Traditional Owners, Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation, to support; the journey of self-determination, employ local people, involve farmers and the community to control willows and weeds, phase out stock grazing along the bank of the river, plant native vegetation and improve access for community to undertake recreation activities and enjoy the river.

3.4 Improving environmental condition of the Talikatoor (Gippsland Lakes)

The Gippsland Lakes are a series of coastal lagoons and fringing wetlands that cover approximately 60,000 hectares; fed by five major rivers spread across a catchment of over 20,000 square kilometers connected to the ocean at Lakes Entrance. The Gippsland Lakes are part of the Traditional Lands and Waters of the Gunaikurnai People, who have cared for Country for tens of thousands of years.

The current and future environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of the Gippsland Lakes is considered as part of the greater management of the Lakes. Over 40 agencies and community groups work together to improve the health and sustainability of the lakes system. The focus over the coming years' is to continue to build on this work.

3.5 Capacity to deliver services

The EGCMA relies heavily on state and federal government funding to maintain capacity to deliver its planned programs and statutory functions. In the current environment of constrained budgets and increasing costs, it is a challenge to maintain capacity to deliver meaningful programs.

The Authority is working with other CMAs to develop initiatives to deliver efficiencies through shared services where it is appropriate and sustainable.

3.1. STRATEGIES TO MEET SERVICE DEMANDS AND OUTCOMES

The EGCMA considers risk management as an important aspect of corporate governance and therefore a significant contributor to embedding our culture and values and in turn, delivering on our vision.

The EGCMA's Risk Management Framework is reviewed annually and encompasses the:

- Context for organisational risk management at the Authority.
- Overarching documentation structure and risk review requirements.
- Governance structure and accountabilities that are in place.
- Procedure for identifying and assessing enterprise risks, and the response required to mitigate risks that may impact the organisation.

The EGCMA's risk appetite has the following core risk appetite themes:

- Compliance and Governance (areas of low tolerance to risk; averse).
- Sustaining our Business (areas that balance risk and reward outcomes).
- Leadership, Collaboration and Empowerment (areas of increased appetite for risk taking; high rewards).

The EGCMA's Audit and Risk Committee meets quarterly to review risks and associated mitigating controls. Risks assessed with a consequence rating of catastrophic and major that may affect EGCMA objectives are included in the Authority's risk register. These areas of risk include:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Statutory Planning Advice
- Observed Impacts and Effects of Climate Change

The framework provides for the monitoring of controls, implementation of treatments and review processes to mitigate these risks and their potential impact on the EGCMA achieving its strategic objectives. Risk considerations are integral and embedded in the various EGCMA strategies and plans, including this Corporate Plan. Several planned activities set out in this Plan, such as towards net zero emissions and resilient and sustainable agricultural practices, link explicitly to, and contribute to, controlling these risks. Other controls are embedded in the risk register and addressed through other linking strategies and plans.

4. ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

A. OPERATING STATEMENT ('000)

	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast	2027/28 Forecast
Revenue				
Local				
Interest	325	244	183	146
Other	119	122	125	129
Grants				
State	6,944	5,519	5,599	5,599
Commonwealth	2,568	2,037	1,094	1,001
Total Revenue	9,956	7,921	7,001	6,875
Expenditure				
Labour	3,608	3,308	3,405	3,500
Overheads	1,124	1,145	1,101	1,028
Depreciation	190	192	194	196
Amortisation	9	9	-	-
Authority Projects	4,009	2,555	1,826	1,507
Partner Projects	2,561	1,712	1,176	844
Total Expenditure	11,502	8,921	7,701	7,075
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,546)	(1,000)	(700)	(200)

B. CASHFLOW ('000)

	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast	2027/28 Forecast
Cash and cash equivalents and term deposits at the beginning of the financial year				
Revenue				
Local				
Interest	325	244	183	146
Other	119	122	123	129
Grants				
State	6,944	5,519	5,599	5,559
Commonwealth	2,568	2,035	1,094	1,001
Total inflows	9,956	7,919	6,999	6,875
Expenditure				
Labour	3,588	3,294	3,390	3,485
Overheads	1,124	1,123	1,101	1,028
Authority Projects	3,809	2,545	1,834	1,511
Partner Projects	2,361	1,712	1,176	835
Lease Repayments	20	20	-	-
Net Capital Outflow	300	200	150	110
Total outflows	11,203	8,894	7,650	6,969
Net inflow (outflow)	(1,247)	(975)	(651)	(94)
Cash and cash equivalents and term deposits at the end of the financial year	6,905	5,929	5,278	5,184

C. BALANCE SHEET ('000)

	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast	2027/28 Forecast
Assets				
Current				
Cash and cash equivalents	6,905	5,929	5,278	5,184
Receivables & Prepayments	102	104	106	108
Contract Assets	200	200	200	200
Total Current	7,207	6,233	5,584	5,492
Non-Current				
Fixed Assets @ Fair Value	1,752	1,740	1,696	1,611
Intangible Assets	12	3	-	-
Other Financial Assets	50	50	50	50
Total Non-Current	1,814	1,793	1,746	1,661
Total Assets	9,021	8,026	7,330	7,153
Liabilities				
Current				
Creditors & Accruals	400	410	418	428
Employee Provisions	716	720	745	760
Borrowings Lease Liability	20	20	-	-
Total-Current	1,136	1,160	1,163	1,187
Non-Current				
Provisions	10	10	10	10
Borrowings Lease Liability	20	-	-	-
Total Non-Current	30	10	10	10
Total Liabilities	1,166	1,170	1,173	1,197
Net Assets	7,855	6,856	6,157	5,956
Equity				
Contributed Capital	6,987	6,987	6,987	6,987
Reserves	1,256	1,256	1,256	1,256
Accumulated Funds at beginning of Year	1,159	(387)	(1,387)	(2,087)
Net Result for the Period	(1,546)	(1,000)	(700)	(200)
Total Equity	7,855	6,856	6,157	5,956

NOTES

The estimates for revenue are based the best available information at the time from the Victorian Government. At the time the revenue estimates were developed, the EGCMA did not have any signed Agreements with DEECA for the forecast period.

In addition, the EGCMA was also in negotiations with the Commonwealth government for funding for additional projects for Biodiversity, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Services.

The forecast deficits represent the delivery of projects in that year, where funding was received in previous Financial years.

Assumptions underpinning the financial forecasts

- All financial statements prepared for the Corporate Plan are from accounts kept on a basis consistent with the *Financial Management Act 1994* and comply with Australian Accounting Standards.
- State and federal government policy continue to support the funding of natural resource management projects. State and federal funding has been based on details of forward funding amounts that have been received by the Authority.
- The State Government continues to provide resources to support the Authority to fulfil statutory obligations and corporate responsibilities.
- Expenditure, including salaries and wages, has been increased year on year by a forecast CPI of 3.00%.
- Project costs have been estimated to increase by 2.00%-3.00% per year.
- The forecast deficit \$1,546K in 2024/25 reflects expenditure of cash funds held in the bank to deliver the on-ground works programs that have been delayed due circumstances beyond the control of the Authority including wet weather, regular flood events and pandemic restrictions. Delivery of these projects will depend on a stabilisation of conditions allowing contractors and partners to deliver the delayed projects.

Corporate overheads allocated to projects

Corporate overhead costs include occupancy, IT support, printing, telephones, training and depreciation of information technology and office equipment. The estimated cost for the Authority for the 2024/25 year is \$965,329 The cost of operating and maintaining the plant, equipment and vehicles owned by the Authority is estimated to be \$206,855 for the 2024/25 year.

The key cost driver for incurring plant and vehicle overhead is the employment of people to manage the affairs of the Authority and deliver the funded projects. Corporate overhead costs are variable but more stable in nature than project costs. The Authority works with key partners to control costs through areas such as shared services with other agencies, information management platforms, internet service providers and staff training.

The financial objectives of corporate overhead and plant costs recovery are twofold:

- To fully recover the Authority's actual costs against current projects, and
- To ensure that the method of allocation fairly distributes costs to individual projects based on how they are incurred.

The most appropriate method is the allocation of overheads to projects based on a rate per labour hour. In the case of vehicles, a role based in the office using a pool car will be different to a role in the field with an allocated vehicle. As the EGCMA has a plan to employ 26.97 FTEs over 2024/25, on average each FTE will cost the organisation \$35,792 in corporate overheads and \$7,670 in vehicle and plant expenses.

By following this principle, an FTE employed to deliver a single project will allocate all their time to, and thus incur corporate overheads and plant costs against that project. As a result, this project will bear its appropriate share of the EGCMA's total costs. In the case of an employee who contributes to the delivery of multiple projects the varied allocation of their time will result in their total plant and corporate overhead costs being spread appropriately across these projects.

The EGCMA plans to utilise 15% of funded programs to provide sufficient resources to fund our engagement, monitoring, evaluation and reporting obligations, and the balance of funds required to provide governance, management, and operating functions. The EGCMA is committed to the state-wide reporting framework and its responsibilities under the Statement of Obligations.

Project Costing Principles

The EGCMA project costing principles include:

- Maintaining transparency within our costing model;
- Keeping overhead costs to a minimum;
- Nominating staff hours required by the project;
- Allocating specific staff to the project;
- Applying individual staff costs per hour including salaries and overheads (as described above);
- Allocating contractors from the Authority's approved panel at agreed rates;
- Paying incentives to partners with agreed deliverables via service level agreements; and
- Identifying and costing other direct project costs, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Corporate Allocation

The EGCMA expects to receive \$668,000 in the 2024/25 year as a contribution towards the following governance, management, and operating functions:

- Board
- Sub Committees and Reference Groups
- CEO and Support
- Corporate Services
- Meeting the statements of obligations for both the CaLP Act and Water Act.

The functions funded by the corporate allocation are essential to the sound governance, management, administration, and financial control of the organisation. Many of the activities undertaken within these functions fulfil the expectations of the Authority under the Statement of Obligations.

Capital Expenditure

The Capital expenditure that the EGCMA plans for 2024/25 is \$280,000. This is based on the delivery of the Authority's Net Zero Carbon Emissions program and the asset replacement plan for 2024/25 which includes vehicles and IT equipment.