



## Delivering priorities for the Gippsland Lakes

The Gippsland Lakes are important to the Gippsland community and support important cultural, social, environmental and economic values. Most of the Gippsland Lakes system has international recognition as a Wetland of International Importance through the Ramsar Convention.

Recognising the importance of the Lakes to the community, in 2015 the Victorian Government invested \$12.5m for the period 2015–2020 to protect and improve the ecological and community values supported by the Lakes. In 2021 the Victorian government committed an additional \$7.5 million over three years to implement projects to improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes. This builds on significant, ongoing government investment since 1998.

Between 2015 and 2020:

- 40 individual groups and partner organisations delivered 69 on ground and monitoring projects.
- Traditional Owners coordinated a program of works On Country, with approximately \$1 million allocated to GLaWAC through direct and indirect funding to lead projects highlighting Traditional Owner priorities.
- \$1.25 million was allocated in community grants with 14 groups delivering 34 projects.
- More than 25,000ha of habitat in and around the lakes was improved by working with landowners to control pest plants and animals, and revegetate important areas.
- More than 600ha of wetlands and fringing vegetation was protected helping improve habitats for important species including threatened birds and frogs.
- Projects supported farmers to reduce the input of phosphorus (by 19,000kg / yr) and nitrogen (by 100,000kg / yr) to the lakes.
- Over 70km of fencing was built to protect rivers, wetlands, and other important habitats.

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The task to maintain the health of the Gippsland Lakes is a long term commitment by government in partnership with Traditional Owners, the community and other organisations and groups.

A robust approach is currently in place to manage and improve our understanding of the lakes including:

- coordinated management through the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee and Ramsar site coordination;
- strategic planning through the *Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan* and the *Gippsland Lakes Priorities Plan*;

- working collaboratively with Traditional Owners and other land and waterway managers to deliver priority projects across the Lakes;
- regular monitoring of the Lakes and values of the Ramsar site;
- partnering with the community to deliver projects on the ground;
- improving knowledge through learning as we go; and
- sharing information through the Love our Lakes website and other forums.

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## The Gippsland Lakes Environment Report

This assessment of the Gippsland Lakes represents a snapshot in time of the condition of the system. The assessment is based on the best available data, obtained from a wide range of sources including community social science and project monitoring.

Overall, the lakes can be considered to currently be in fair to good condition and they continue to support significant social, economic and ecological values. The site remains recognised as a Wetland of International Importance and the values leading to that listing (coastal saltmarsh, waterbirds, fish) all continue to be maintained by the site.

The Gippsland Lakes Environment Report captures a wide range of information in three products:

- the Report card that provides a summary of the results and a description of relevant actions and projects underway;
- a Technical report that describes all results and the details of the method used including indicator selection, data analysis and limitations; and
- a web tool that provides access to all levels of information, including references used in the report, through an interactive map based interface.

All the products above are available from the Love Our Lakes website ([www.loveourlakes.net.au/learning/environment-report](http://www.loveourlakes.net.au/learning/environment-report)), with documents able to be downloaded as PDF files, and a link to the web tool able to be viewed on desktop and mobile devices