



Annual Achievements Report

2024-25



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Acknowledgement of Country

VicWater proudly acknowledges the rich culture of Victoria’s First Nations people and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise that First Nations people have been caring for Country and managing water resources sustainably for thousands of years.

We value the wisdom, knowledge and resilience of First Nations people and their ongoing contributions to the Victorian community.

VicWater is committed to supporting efforts by the water sector to work in partnership with Traditional Owners towards reconciliation, self-determination and restorative justice.



About VicWater

We are Victoria's peak industry association representing all 18 Victorian water corporations and related sector organisations.

Our purpose is to unite the water sector to deliver better outcomes for Victorian customers, community and the environment.

We understand that collaboration lies at the heart of what we do.

We know that our members are 'better together', united to influence policy and regulation, plan for future challenges, generate shared value, promote best practice and build an innovative and robust water industry.

Our organisation

In 2024-25 we farewellled board directors Andrew Jeffers, David Middleton and Ishara Saldin, and welcomed new directors Stephen Brown and Scott Williams. Therese Tierney and Stephen Brown were appointed Chair and Deputy Chair in April 2025.

We continued the integration with the Intelligent Water Networks (IWN) program, resulting in strengthened governance arrangements and improved operational efficiencies. We welcomed Isobel Decru to the VicWater team as Deputy IWN Program Director.

In late 2024, we relocated to a larger, more flexible office space which has improved our staff amenity and allowed us to expand our offerings to members. Our new location provides members with a convenient place to connect and collaborate in the Melbourne CBD.



Our strategy

During 2024-25, we continued to implement our 'Better Together' five-year Strategic Plan. This plan provides clarity on our strategic focus and boundaries, and identifies opportunities to create value and have impact across our four priority areas:

- Advocate to influence the regulatory environment
- Facilitate sector collaboration
- Advance member capability and performance
- Promote Victoria's water sector

These strategic priorities inform every project we undertake and every event or program that we run, to ensure we continue to deliver value for our members.

Our achievements

Advocacy

Advocacy strategy

Our Advocacy Strategy provides a high-level outline of VicWater's objectives, principles, approach and methods for our advocacy work. The issues that we advocate on range from short term, immediate issues which require a quick response from the water sector through to medium and long term issues which require a greater level of investigation and/or more sustained effort.

Financial resilience

VicWater continues to focus advocacy efforts on this key strategic priority for our members. In 2024-25 we achieved a major outcome on the tax front, with the ATO accepting the industry's submission that where the value of gifted assets is not included in the Regulated Asset Base, these assets will not be considered taxable income to the recipient water corporations. This revised tax treatment is expected to deliver a significant financial benefit to most water corporations, particularly those currently in a tax-paying position.

Growth and infrastructure

Water corporations are key enablers of the Victorian Government's Housing Statement. In 2024-25, at the request of the Minister for Water, VicWater produced a report on how the water sector is supporting delivery of the Government's housing targets. We also engaged with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and Infrastructure Victoria to ensure that the critical role of the water sector in the state's growth and infrastructure planning and development is recognised at a whole-of-government level.

Data centres

A new issue that emerged during 2024-25 is the impact of hyperscale data centres on Melbourne's water supply system. VicWater facilitated high level engagement between water corporations and data centre providers to better understand projected water usage and supply options, and also participated in the development of a whole-of-government response involving water, energy, planning and other sectors.

Regulator engagement

VicWater undertook regular engagement with the key sector regulators Essential Services Commission (ESC), Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Health (DH), as well as with Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA), Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), Department of Government Services (DGS), Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV), Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO), Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) and other agencies, to communicate members' views on a range of policy and regulatory issues impacting the sector.



Collaboration

Carbon offsets

During 2024-25 VicWater continued to work with 15 of our members on a collective approach to the carbon offsets market to help them meet their net zero emission targets. The project oversight committee worked on finalising the requirements for establishing a special purpose vehicle company limited by guarantee, and commenced planning to undertake the first market approach to acquire Australian Carbon Credit Units.

Workforce readiness

The Workforce Readiness Project working group continued to refine the model for the proposed Victorian Water Sector Training Academy. This included having discussions with Registered Training Organisations, the Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery and the Victorian Skills Authority. Consideration was also given to agreeing on a core set of units of competency from the National Water Package. VicWater represents the sector through membership of the Victorian Skills Authority's industry advisory group, and Buildskills Australia's water advisory body.

Safety and wellbeing

VicWater's Safety Executive Group supported the OHS Network to hold a hybrid one day forum which focused on change management, and ran a third successful round of the executive health and safety course which challenged participants to think about safety differently.

Diversity and inclusion

With the assistance of VicWater's Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee, we published the first annual performance report against the Water Industry Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (E,D & I) Strategy 2023-2028. The practitioners network continued to come together frequently to share and collaborate on E,D & I initiatives.

WaterAble Network

A program of VicWater, WaterAble is evolving to create greater impact for disability inclusion across the water sector nationally, and to ensure long term sustainability through private and public sector membership. This year's highlights included celebrating 2024 International Day of People with Disability, welcoming new WaterAble Committee members, and graduating eight participants from the second year of the leadership program.

IWN Program

IWN continued to deliver trials and pilots to support the exploration and adoption of innovative approaches and new technologies, with positive results in the program areas of circular economy, data and analytics, and asset intelligence. IWN members actively participated in the inaugural IWN Hackathon, circular economy site tours, leadership workshops and other networking and development opportunities.



Leadership

Chairs and MDs Forums

As the senior leaders of our industry, water corporation Chairs and MDs are an important part of VicWater's authorising environment. As part of the 2024 VicWater Annual Conference, we held an inaugural joint Chairs and Managing Directors Forum, which provided a dedicated space to canvass strategic, sector-wide issues and to provide guidance and oversight for VicWater's advocacy activities.

Insight: Executive Leadership for Women in Water

The third cohort of the Insight: Executive Leadership for Women in Water program graduated in April 2025. Twelve executive women successfully completed this program, challenging their thinking and building a collaborative and supportive peer network.



Events

VicWater Annual Conference, September 2024

The two-day conference was attended by senior leaders from the Victorian water sector including board chairs, directors and executives across all 18 Victorian water corporations. The conference theme focused on environmental stewardship, caring for Country and advancing sustainability in the Victorian water sector. Prof. Tim Flannery and Victor Steffensen gave keynote presentations, and there were several panel sessions which took a closer look into the environmental challenges and opportunities for the sector.



IWN Members Conference, July 2024

The one-day IWN members conference was attended by employees of member organisations from across the Victorian water sector and Tasmania. The conference theme of Collaborative Transformation focused on diverse stakeholders actively collaborating and working together cohesively to drive significant positive disruption across the sector for the communities we serve.

Risk Management Thought Leadership Seminar, May 2025

This half day seminar examined how contemporary risk management strategies can be applied across the water sector. The seminar finished with a networking lunch to encourage new connections and collaboration across the Victorian water industry.



International delegations

In 2024-25 VicWater hosted international delegations from China and Thailand interested in learning about economic regulation, environmental management, and innovation and technology in the Victorian water sector.

Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (WMCIC), December 2024

The winners of the second round of the WMCIC, delivered through the IWN program, were announced at a celebration event in December 2024. An increased funding pool of \$212,000 was allocated to three strategic projects that will deliver climate action opportunities.



Our sponsors

VicWater would like to thank our sponsors for their generous support during 2024-25.

Program Partners



Media Partner (*Inside Water* publication)



Event Sponsors



Our supporters

We are proud to work alongside so many passionate and dedicated individuals who are driving meaningful change across the Victorian water sector.

We extend our sincere thanks to our members, sponsors and partners for their continued support and contribution to VicWater's ongoing success and impact.

