Curdies River COORDINATING COMMITTEE

2024-2026 SNAPSHOT

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Kirrae Whurrong People of the Maar Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of the Curdies River and its catchment. We honour their deep, long-held and enduring connection to Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents the cultural obligations, rights and assertions of the Eastern Maar. The Eastern Maar Nation Statement in the Water is Life Roadmap shares their position on parreeyt (water) and promotes the opportunity for a greater collaborative bio-cultural values-based approach for the future.

We commit to walking alongside Eastern Maar, listening deeply, and supporting their vision for Country as outlined in the Water is Life Roadmap and Meerreengeeye ngakeepoorryeeyt (Eastern Maar Country Plan). We recognise that caring for Country is caring for community, and that the wisdom of the Eastern Maar is essential to the health of our shared future.

About the Curdies River Coordinating Committee

Established in 2022, the Curdies River Coordinating Committee provides a transparent and effective platform for knowledge sharing, consultation and collaboration to improve the health of the Curdies River catchment and its tributaries.

Initially formed in response to blue-green algae outbreaks in the Curdies River estuary, the Committee has evolved to adopt a whole-of-catchment approach, recognising that the health of the estuary depends on the condition of the broader catchment.

The Committee brings together representatives from government agencies, Traditional Owners, local councils, water corporations, industry, Landcare and the community to coordinate projects and programs, share knowledge and research, strengthen partnerships, and engage with the broader community to improve catchment health.

This report highlights the Committee's collective achievements during 2024–26 and the progress made towards a healthier and more resilient Curdies River catchment.

Membership of the Curdies River Coordinating Committee includes:

- Agriculture Victoria
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- Corangamite Shire Council
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
- Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority
- Heytesbury & District Landcare Network
- Moyne Shire Council
- Parks Victoria
- Southern Rural Water
- Wannon Water
- West Vic Dairy
- Community Representatives

2024-26 Key results

58,643
Plants planted

92
Landholders engaged with projects

3,000 ha
Sustainable farm management practice change achieved

868
Attendees to community events

10
Citizen Scientist actively participating in EstuaryWatch
135 EstuaryWatch site visits

60
Communications and engagement materials released to the public

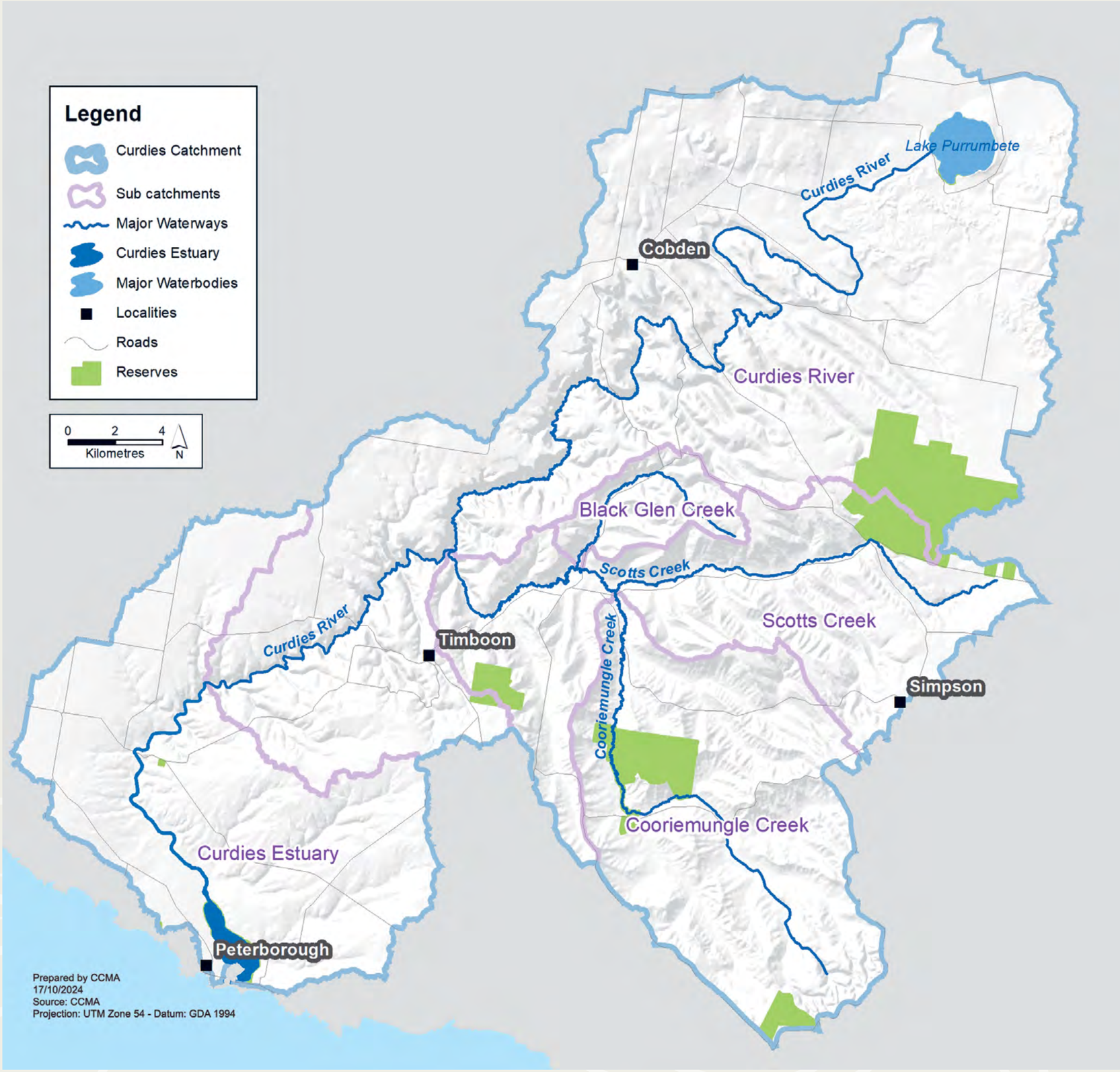
19
Presentations from industry experts

2
Joint funding proposals developed by the committee

8
Curdies River Coordinating Committee meetings held
14 partner agencies and community groups.

Over 80 attendees
First ever Curdies Family Fun Day

Figure 1: Curdies Catchment Map (Source: CCMA)



Catchment stewardship

Sustainable Dairies Program supporting catchment stewardship in the Curdies Catchment

Since 2016, the Sustainable Dairies Program has played an important role in strengthening catchment stewardship across the Curdies Catchment.

Delivered through a partnership between WestVic Dairy, Corangamite CMA, Agriculture Victoria and the Heytesbury District Landcare Network, the program supports dairy farmers to improve nutrient management, soil health, and effluent use and management on their properties.

Since its inception, almost 80 dairy farmers have participated in the program, demonstrating a strong commitment from the local dairy industry to the long-term health of the catchment. By working directly with landholders, the program helps farmers adopt practical farm management practices that improve productivity while reducing potential impacts on waterways and surrounding landscapes.

The Sustainable Dairies Program is a strong example of how the Curdies River Coordinating Committee is delivering on its commitment to catchment stewardship. Through advocacy, coordination and collaboration, the Committee is helping to bring together organisations, expertise and funding to support positive outcomes across both private and public land. This integrated, whole-of-landscape approach recognises that the health of the Curdies River is closely linked to the management of the farms and communities that surround it.

Importantly, the program is building a network of informed and engaged land stewards who are taking ownership of the long-term sustainability of the catchment. By increasing knowledge, skills and confidence, participating farmers are better equipped to make decisions that protect soil and water resources while maintaining productive farming enterprises.

The success and longevity of the Sustainable Dairies Program demonstrates the value of partnerships in achieving shared environmental outcomes. It highlights how investing in local people and practical actions can create lasting benefits for the Curdies Catchment, supporting the long-term function, resilience and health of the river system.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR 2030 TARGETS:

58,643
Number of plants planted (2024-26)

92
Number of landholders engaged with projects (2024-26)

3,000.2 ha
Area of sustainable farm management practice change achieved (2024-26)

13.6 km
Length of waterways protected (2024-26)

Image courtesy Dairy Australia

Education and engagement

Curdies Family Fun Day connecting community with the catchment

The Curdies Family Fun Day exemplifies how the Curdies River Coordinating Committee (CRCC) is delivering on its commitment to education and engagement by increasing community awareness, understanding and connection to the Curdies River and its catchment.

The free community event, held in Peterborough in May 2026, brought together residents, landholders, families and visitors to celebrate the river and learn about its importance to the region.

Designed to be both educational and engaging, the event combined cultural learning, community discussion and hands-on experiences. Activities included a community forum exploring the history and future of the Curdies River, citizen science experiences, water bug displays, wildlife and bird monitoring activities, guided Landcare walks and canoeing on the Curdies Estuary. These activities helped participants better understand the values, challenges and opportunities within the catchment while encouraging active involvement in its care.

The event also showcased the strength of local partnerships, with support from community groups, volunteers and organisations including the Heytesbury District Landcare Network, Friends of the Bay of Islands, OzFish Unlimited and EstuaryWatch volunteers. Through these connections, the CRCC was able to bring together local knowledge, science and community experience in an accessible and meaningful way.

Importantly, the event encouraged participants to consider their role in caring for the river system. Interest from attendees in becoming involved with the CRCC demonstrated the event's success in building community ownership and stewardship of the catchment.

By creating opportunities for learning, conversation and participation, the Curdies Family Fun Day helped foster an informed and engaged community that understands the importance of the Curdies River and is motivated to contribute to its long-term health and sustainability.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR 2030 TARGETS:

178
Number of community engagement events and activities (2024-26)

868
Number of attendees to events (2024-26)

60
Number of communications and engagement materials developed (2024-26)

Planning and continuous improvement

Using science and community feedback to guide action in the Curdies Catchment

The Curdies River Coordinating Committee (CRCC) is committed to improving the health of the Curdies Catchment through informed, coordinated and adaptable action.

A recent geomorphic assessment of Scotts Creek and Cooriemungle Creek helped identify areas contributing to erosion and sediment entering local waterways. The study was commissioned following earlier research by Deakin University, which found these creeks were the major source of nutrients entering the Curdies catchment.

The assessment found that land management practices continue to influence erosion and nutrient levels in the river system. While historical land clearing from the 1940s to 1960s contributed significantly to these issues, the study also found many waterways have become more stable in recent decades and are showing positive results from rehabilitation efforts.

This has reinforced the importance of the Catchment Stewardship programs being undertaken through Pillar 1 of the Strategic Plan.

Community feedback has also played an important role in shaping the Committee's work. In 2023, more than 200 people took part in the Curdies Catchment Community Survey, sharing their values, concerns and aspirations for the catchment.

Respondents identified river health, water quality, biodiversity, native vegetation and recreational opportunities as key priorities for the future of the catchment. They also highlighted concerns about ecosystem health and water quality, while expressing strong support for revegetation, sustainable farming practices and community stewardship.

These priorities helped shape the CRCC Strategic Plan 2025-2030 and continue to guide annual work programs. Between 2024 and 2026, the Committee supported projects including sustainable agriculture initiatives, streamside revegetation, water quality monitoring, citizen science activities and community engagement events.

By combining scientific evidence with community input, the CRCC is ensuring its work remains focused on the issues that matter most to local people and the long-term health of the Curdies Catchment.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR 2030 TARGETS:

1
Number of Snapshot Reports produced

19
Number of presentations from industry experts (2024-26)

Partnerships and advocacy

Craters to Coast Landscape Action Plan

The Craters to Coast Landscape Action Plan, developed by Heytesbury District Landcare Network, provides a strategic roadmap for building climate resilience, strengthening natural capital and delivering measurable environmental outcomes across the Heytesbury region. Spanning a diverse landscape of volcanic plains, crater lakes, forests, wetlands and coastal environments, the Plan recognises both the environmental significance of the region and the challenges posed by changing climatic conditions, including altered rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, declining water quality and ecosystem change.

With more than 80% of the region managed by farmers, the Plan emphasises the importance of collaboration between landholders, Traditional Owners, industry, government and community partners to achieve landscape-scale outcomes. It identifies practical opportunities for investment in nature that support both environmental and agricultural objectives, while helping businesses and supply chains respond to increasing sustainability expectations and climate-related risks. Key priorities include riparian restoration, native vegetation and habitat enhancement, improved farm dam management, and the adoption of climate-adapted land management practices informed by science and ongoing monitoring.

For the Curdies River catchment, the Action Plan provides an important foundation for collaboration across organisations and landholders, helping to align restoration efforts, identify priority investment areas and support a long-term vision for improving river health, biodiversity and connectivity throughout the landscape.

The Plan was developed with support from The Ian Potter Foundation and the Natural Resources Conservation Trust through Landcare Victoria's New Futures for Victorian Landcare project.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR 2030 TARGETS:

8
Number of Curdies River Coordinating Committee Meetings (2024-26)

14
Number of stakeholders, partners and sponsors involved with Curdies River Coordinating Committee (2024-26)

2
Number of joint funding proposals developed by the committee (2024-26)

3
Number of related projects or initiatives by partner agencies that support Curdies River Coordinating Committee Strategic Directions (2024-26)

Monitor and review

Monitoring and review driving continuous improvement

The Curdies River Coordinating Committee (CRCC) is committed to ensuring its actions deliver measurable outcomes for the health of the Curdies Catchment through a strong focus on monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Recognising that effective catchment management requires ongoing learning and adaptation, the Committee has established processes to regularly assess progress, identify emerging priorities and ensure accountability to partners and the community.

A key part of this commitment is the annual monitoring and review process undertaken in partnership with Committee members and stakeholders. This process tracks progress against the Strategic Plan's key focus areas, measures progress towards the targets, providing a clear understanding of what is working well, if anything needs adapting and where additional effort may be required. Findings are shared with partner organisations and the wider community through annual reporting, helping to maintain transparency and build confidence in the Committee's work.

Importantly, monitoring and review are embedded within the Committee's governance processes. The Strategic Plan is reviewed every five years to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to changing environmental, social, cultural and economic conditions, while the Action Plan is reviewed and updated at each Committee meeting. This adaptive approach enables the Committee to respond to new information, emerging challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Through regular monitoring, transparent reporting and ongoing review, the CRCC is creating a culture of continuous improvement. This ensures that investments, partnerships and on-ground actions remain focused on achieving long-term outcomes for the health, resilience and sustainability of the Curdies River and its catchment.

Looking forward

In 2026-27, the Curdies River Coordinating Committee will continue delivering on the targets outlined in the Strategic Plan, working in partnership with the community to improve the health of the Curdies River.

To support this work, a Curdies River Report Card will be developed to provide a clearer understanding of river health, track trends over time, and support evidence-based decision making by identifying where management efforts can have the greatest impact. Committee members will also collaborate on landscape-scale and whole-of-farm approaches that align agricultural productivity, environmental resilience and catchment outcomes, with the aim of attracting new investment.

Everyone who lives, works and recreates in the Curdies River catchment has a role to play in improving its health, and by working together we can achieve more.

Scan the QR code to stay up-to-date with what's happening in the Curdies catchment.

Curdies River COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Our members include community representatives and the following organisations:

wannonWATER

CORANGAMITE CMA

CORANGAMITE SHIRE

WestVic Dairy

Dairy Australia

MOYNE SHIRE

Southern Rural Water
Managing Water. Serving Communities.

EPA VICTORIA

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Heytesbury District Landcare Network

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

Parks VICTORIA

GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

VICTORIA State Government | Energy, Environment and Climate Action