

Remaining eight Recreational Area Management Plans

GMW is Australia's largest rural water corporation. We are responsible for managing 23 water storages under the [Victorian Water Act \(1989\)](#), of which 18 are determined recreational areas. These storages supply water for irrigation, and urban, rural and environmental use.

GMW has been working in consultation with Traditional Owners, councils, catchment management authorities, partnering agencies and stakeholders, special interest groups, local community members and recreational visitors to develop a series of Recreational Area Management Plans.

The plans are publicly available operational documents developed to support the day-to-day management of recreation areas in accordance with the *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023*.

Engagement purpose

The engagement set out to:

- gather feedback on existing operational arrangements that support safe and sustainable use and protect water resources at the recreational areas we manage, and
- ensure the remaining eight draft plans were comprehensive, easy to understand and reflected community needs and concerns in line with the *Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023*.

Engagement methods

Engagement on the remaining eight plans occurred between November 2025 and August 2026.

Engagement methods included face-to-face sessions (including on-Country days), telephone interviews with councils and catchment management authorities, written submissions, and two online engagement periods via YourSay@gmw. Feedback was invited and captured on recreational values, recreational area maps and our remaining eight draft plans.

The plans are living documents. They will be formally updated every 10 years or as needed based on the monitoring of recreational activities, and in consultation with key partners and stakeholders in accordance with state guidance.

GMW honours the principles of self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is committed to working with recognised Aboriginal parties to update the plans at any time.

What we heard

A number of key themes emerged from the engagement. The following table provides a summary, along with how GMW has incorporated the feedback into the finalised plans.

Access to the final recreational area management plans will be made available on GMW's website from late September 2026.

Table 1 – Feedback themes and GMW's response

Feedback theme	Outcome
Access, maps and signage were recurring practical themes. Respondents requested clearer identification of public access points, fishing and hunting areas, gates and stiles, water levels and activity areas.	GMW continues to review signage, information provision and maps to support recreational visitors. Information needs identified through the feedback will also be considered as part of ongoing localised signage management plans.
There are divergent views on hunting, and activity management. There were requests for clearer mapping of hunting zones and localised compliance concerns. Suggestions were also made about separating motorised watercraft from swimming and boat-ramp areas.	The plans continue to reflect lawful recreational activities and the local rules that apply at each storage under the <i>Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023</i>. GMW is working with partner agencies to ensure an appropriate long-term compliance management model is established. Hunting and duck shooting is included at storages where it is currently permitted as a lawful recreational activity. This approach aligns with Victorian State Government policy, which allows regulated hunting on designated public lands and water bodies. The Game Management Authority set the associated guidelines and rules to ensure hunting is undertaken in a safe and sustainable way (which includes signage and education). Safety and activity-management issues and concerns will continue to be managed locally and with agency bodies as needed. The inland Vessel Operating and Zoning Rules (VOZR) are reviewed by Safe Transport Victoria and updated on an as-needed basis when requested by designated waterway managers or prompted by emerging safety risks, changing recreational use, or community feedback. Where appropriate, the feedback captured will feed into GMW's upcoming VOZR review program.
Environmental protection and management of invasive species remain important.	The Cairn Curran plan has been updated to recognise the Wheel Cactus as a localised significant invasive species risk, ensuring the environmental risks and management responsibilities are accurately described. GMW will continue to work with Traditional Owners, catchment management authorities, community groups and other agencies on environmental management across all storages.
Respondents suggested improvements to recreational opportunities and facilities , including kayaking, fishing access and fish stocking, and upgraded facilities.	GMW recognises the importance of continually reviewing local recreational needs. Matters such as future infrastructure investment, fish stocking and broader recreation enhancement will continue to be considered through GMW's asset and recreation planning processes and in partnership with relevant agencies and local stakeholders.
Feedback indicated interest in community involvement and shorter formal plan review timeframes .	While the plans have a formal review period of 10 years in line with the <i>Water (Recreational Area) Regulations 2023</i> , they are living documents and can be updated as needed in response to changing conditions, emerging issues or stakeholder feedback. GMW will continue to engage with local communities, Traditional Owners and partner agencies as the plans are implemented and if updates are required.

*Please note: Where appropriate, any storage-specific feedback has been updated within the individual plans.