

COUNCIL

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No: 1791

Asked by: Mr Hayes

Asked to: Minister for Training and Skills

QUESTION:

In relation to the Victorian wetlands on the Ramsar Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance:

- (1) What action has the Government taken to protect the wetlands in Victoria.
- (2) Are the wetlands signposted so that visitors can identify that they are visiting a Ramsar listed wetland.

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to maintaining or improving the health of waterways across Victoria, including at Ramsar sites. The *2013 Victorian Waterway Management Strategy* sets out policies and actions to protect and manage Victorian wetlands and Ramsar sites.

The 2016 Victorian Auditor General's Office audit report *Meeting Obligations to Protect Ramsar Wetlands* provided useful direction to build on the Ramsar program in Victoria. The Government committed \$2.0 million to respond to the audit recommendations and a further \$3.235 million since the report was tabled to increase management activities at Ramsar sites. This is in addition to the Government's record \$222 million investment in catchment and waterway health. Government actions to protect wetlands include delivering water for the environment, weed and pest control, and fencing for livestock management.

Signs are provided at most Ramsar sites to educate and inform visitors on the international significance of the site and the values they support.



Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Water

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No: 1792
Asked by: Mr Hayes
Asked to: Minister for Training and Skills

QUESTION:

In relation to the tabled answer to Question on Notice No. 383 which referred to 'implementation of on-ground actions at Ramsar sites': Who decides what actions are undertaken and who implements these actions.

REPLY:

All Ramsar sites in Victoria have a management plan that has been developed with agency and community stakeholders. The management plans set out the strategies and activities required to maintain or improve the ecological character of each Ramsar site.

A coordinating committee for each Ramsar site oversees implementation of management plans and annual action plans. Key agencies involved in delivering on-ground actions include catchment management authorities, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.



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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No: 1793
Asked by: Mr Hayes
Asked to: Minister for Training and Skills

QUESTION:

In relation to recommendations 2 and 3 in the Auditor-General's Report on Meeting Obligations to Protect Ramsar Wetlands, September 2016: What action has been taken to implement these recommendations.

REPLY:

The Victorian Government accepted the findings of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report *Meeting Obligations to Protect Ramsar Wetlands* and committed \$2.0 million in May 2017 to respond to the recommendations. All actions tabled with the report are now complete and evidence provided to VAGO.

In response to recommendations 2 and 3 the following actions have been undertaken:

- site management plans have been finalised for the Western Port and Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites;
- each Ramsar site has a dedicated Ramsar site coordinating committee to ensure alignment of onground actions and resources;
- an online tool has been developed to allow site coordinators and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to track the implementation of Ramsar site management plans and trends in each site's ecological character; and
- monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement plans have been developed for each site to guide condition monitoring and adaptive management. The development of these plans also included program logic mapping to ensure management actions are linked to ecological values.



Hon Lisa Neville MP
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