

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



Wednesday, 10 October 2018

PROTECTING THE ICONIC BARWON RIVER

The Andrews Labor Government has announced a new body to protect and improve the Barwon River.

Minister for Water and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville joined Member for Geelong Christine Couzens today at the South Geelong Rowing Precinct to announce the new Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) for the Barwon, Moorabool and associated waterways.

The MAC will develop recommendations for the Minister for Water and Minister for Planning in 12 months to develop a community vision for the river, associated waterways and their landscapes – building on recent community engagement and focusing Aboriginal cultural heritage and recreation, among other priorities.

The MAC will be led by independent Chair, Christine Forster - who has significant experience in natural resource management - to oversee governance and engagement processes that support the plan over the next 18 months.

In addition, the Labor Government will improve visitor facilities and recreational access to the iconic Barwon River, as part of a new initiative to improve the health of the River.

In partnership with the Victorian Fisheries Authority and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, \$480,000 will fund the building of all-ability platforms for fishing, paddling, pet-swimming and small boat access through various sites of the Geelong section of Barwon River.

The River was selected as one of nine priority areas receiving funding as part of the Labor Government's \$3.2 million Boosting Recreational Water Use Initiative to protect and enhance waterways across Victoria.

The Barwon MAC process announced today mirrors the announcement made in August to develop a Waterways of the West Action Plan for the urban rivers in the west of Melbourne.

The Labor Government's *Water for Victoria* policy recognises the connection that communities, Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal Victorians have to waterways and their landscapes.

The project will also improve fishing access to the Barwon River as part of the Labor Government's *Target One Million* commitment to get more people fishing, more often.

More information about the Ministerial Advisory Committee and Barwon River Action Plan is available at: water.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Water and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"The new Action Plan will lay out comprehensive and meaningful steps to ensure the iconic Barwon River can thrive and be enjoyed as a natural treasure for many years to come."

Quote attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

"Today we launch the concept for a community vision for the Barwon region. The recreational values and health of these waterways is essential to the livability of these neighborhoods and the broader environment."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"A healthy Barwon River is essential as a recreational space for the Geelong locals and visitors to our great city."

Media contact: Jessica Evans 0437 779 243 | jessica.evans@minstaff.vic.gov.au