

River Detectives Program

Achievements Report 2017-20



"I will use my newly acquired knowledge to teach kids about waterway health and why it is important to look after the environment"

River Detectives educator

Our River Detectives program supports our younger generation to become actively involved in caring for our precious waterways. Today's young people are tomorrow's environmental stewards.

This thinking is at the heart of the River Detectives program. River Detectives is a statewide education and citizen science program that, at its core, is engaging and inspiring young people to become future stewards of the environment.

In 2017, the North Central CMA's Waterwatch program received Victorian Government funding to pilot the statewide River Detectives program, targeting 60 schools across four CMA regions including Wimmera, North East and Corangamite, together with Melbourne Water. A big task.

The program provided access to professional learning opportunities for educators and volunteers, water science and macroinvertebrate monitoring kits, and an online platform for classroom resources and data capture.

The pilot was a huge success, engaging more than 200 schools and groups and more than 5,000 students. This multi-regional approach provided consistent messaging across the state, it was a great way to foster collaboration of ideas between agencies and provides a broad network of support for all involved.

Waterwatch program facilitators train teachers and volunteers through our professional development workshops to become 'River Detectives educators'. Workshops cover training in how to monitor habitat, water quality and waterbugs and support educators to choose a monitoring site so they can monitor their local waterway.

River Detectives educators get their students actively involved in observing, testing and learning about their catchment and waterway health.

Data collected by our student citizen scientists is entered into the River Detectives portal and their data is shared with the Victorian Waterwatch database, making data easy to access.

Collecting water quality data through the River Detectives program is one way that natural resource management organisations can help young people connect with their local waterways.

Key features of the program include:

- CMA staff train educators in equipment use, monitoring methods and procedures
- Educators coordinate students to monitor their local waterway; activities supported by online resources
- Students build a connection and understanding of their local waterway through research, monitoring and analysis
- Monitoring equipment is provided to educators
- Citizen science data is added to the statewide Waterwatch database
- 'Ask the expert' online webinars are facilitated through the Virtual Learning team at the Department of Education and Training.



2016/17-2019/20 River Detectives Program achievements

5,967

students connected with their local waterway

- 1,485 Corangamite
- 1,404 Melbourne Water
- 1,809 North Central
- 513 North East
- 756 Wimmera

360

Educators trained to monitor the health of our waterways

- 73 Corangamite
- 97 Melbourne Water
- 120 North Central
- 28 North East
- 42 Wimmera



70

Professional Development Training Workshops Delivered

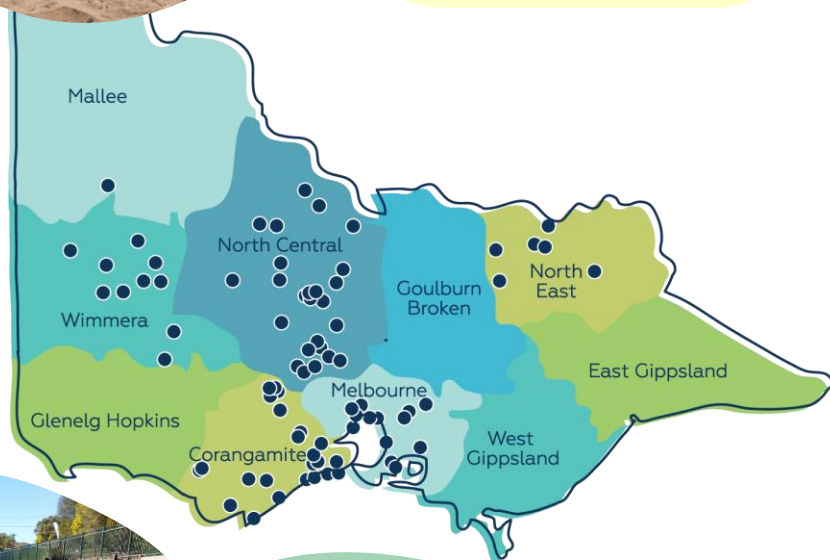
- 10 Corangamite
- 16 Melbourne Water
- 18 North Central
- 5 North East
- 21 Wimmera



221

Schools and groups participating in the program

- 55 Corangamite
- 52 Melbourne Water
- 67 North Central
- 19 North East
- 28 Wimmera



"I wanted the students to learn through the year to be able to do the testing and recording independently. They can now do the testing quickly and are capable of doing it themselves and being the experts, leading the younger kids."

Jayne, Bridgewater Primary School.



8
Publications developed

- Field Manual**
- Poster Presentation for Australian Citizen Science Conference
- Waterbug ID poster**
- Teacher Activity Book
- Annual Report 2017**
- Salinity in our Waterways Poster
- Promotional Flier**
- Style guide (Inc. logo)

5
Project partnerships created

- City of Greater Bendigo**
- National Waterbug Blitz
- Victorian University, Science Education Research**
- RMIT University, School of Science
- Department of Education and Training**

458
Students participated in Virtual Learning workshops

- Wonderful world of Waterbugs**
- Mr. John Gooderham
- Terrific Turtles**
- Mr. Graham Stockfeld
- Platypus**
- Tiana Preston
- Fascinating Fish**
- Dr Peter Rose



“They not only have developed their scientific skills, but their presentation skills, resilience, leadership and their ability to communicate to wide variety of audiences”

River Detectives educator



The River Detectives Program acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners across Victoria, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in land and natural resource management





The Victorian government is supporting community partnerships through Waterwatch and other citizen science initiatives to address local waterway priorities.

The River Detectives program directly aligns with the state government's plan 'Water for Victoria' as it nurtures community partnerships and promotes citizen science initiatives that address the waterway priorities in the Plan.

Our partners:



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning



North
Central
CMA



CORANGAMITE CMA



NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



Wimmera CMA



For more information

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www.nccma.vic.gov.au

