



# Victorian State of the Environment 2018 Report

## Regional Road Show 2019



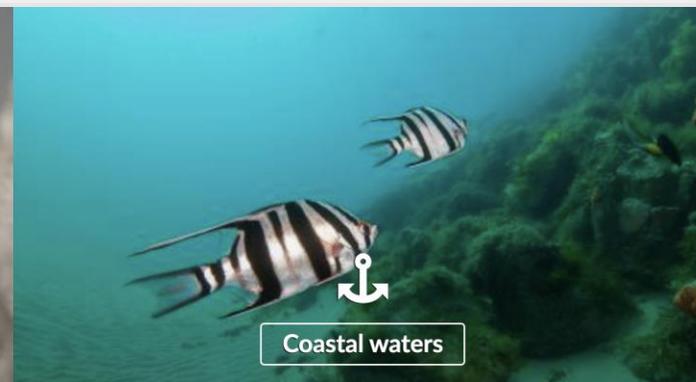
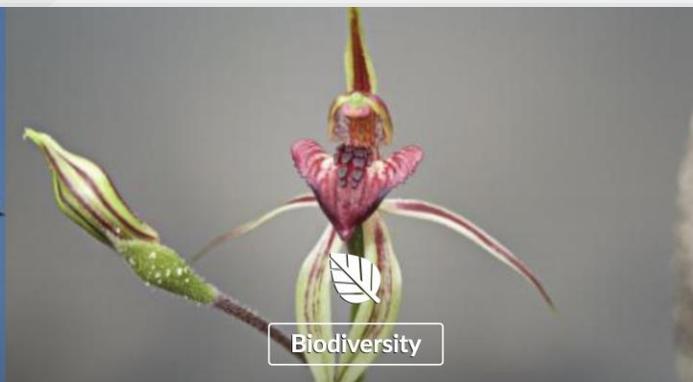
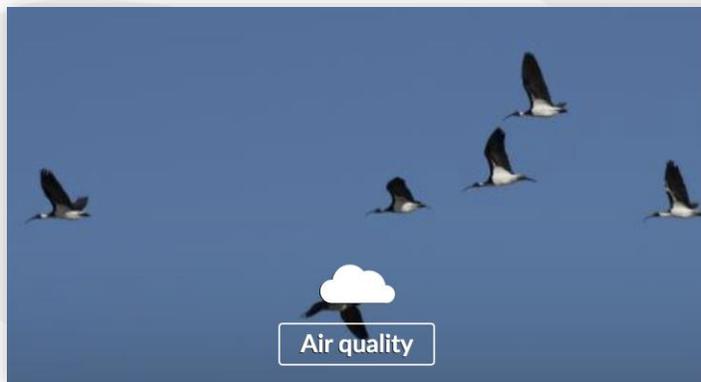
Commissioner  
for Environmental  
Sustainability  
Victoria



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We report on the state of Victoria's environment to help government, business and the community take practical action



# Agenda

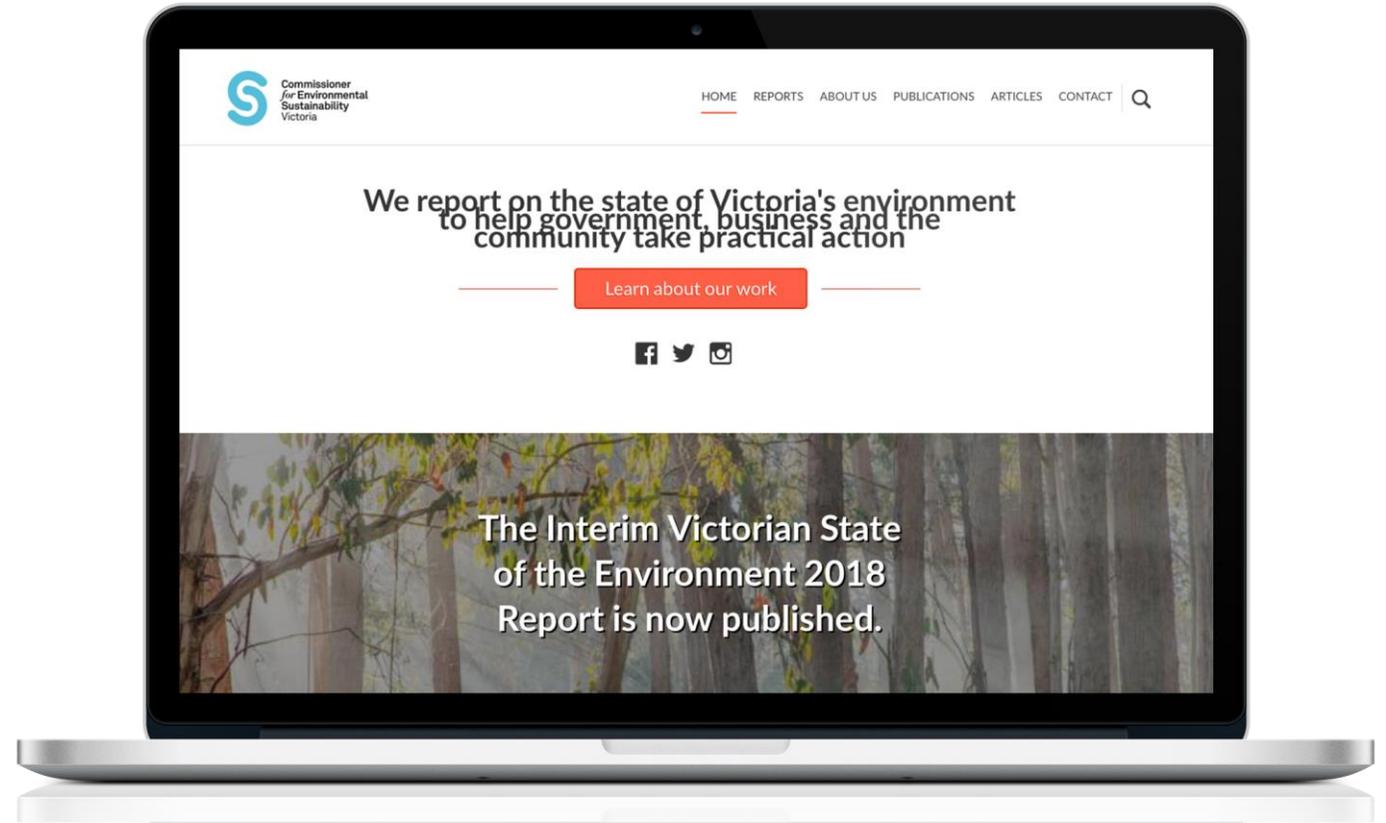
CES Act 2003

SoE 2018 Report

- Assessment Summaries
- Developing recommendations
- Summary of recommendations

State of the Yarra 2018

State of the Forests 2018





# *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*

# *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*

## Objectives

1. Report on matters relating to the condition of the natural environment of Victoria.
2. Encourage decision making that facilitates ecologically sustainable development.
3. Enhance knowledge and understanding of issues relating to ecologically sustainable development and the environment.

#### 4. *What is ecologically sustainable development?*

- (1) Ecologically sustainable development is development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends.

#### 7. *Objectives of the Commissioner*

The objectives of the Commissioner are to—

- (a) report on matters relating to the condition of the natural environment of Victoria;
- (b) encourage decision making that facilitates ecologically sustainable development;
- (c) enhance knowledge and understanding of issues relating to ecologically sustainable development and the environment;

#### 10. *Accountability of the Commissioner*

- (1) In performing the functions and exercising the powers under this Act, the Commissioner must have regard to the following principles—

# Ecologically sustainable development

# *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*

## **How are the objectives applied?**

- Five-yearly Framework for Environmental Reporting in Victoria (due June 2020)
- Five-yearly State of the Environment Report
- Five-yearly State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report (inc. State of the Bays)
- Five-yearly State of the Yarra and Its Parklands Report
- Five-yearly State of the Forests Report
- Five-yearly State of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Report (Action 3 and Recommendation 9, GOR Action Plan)
- Framework for reporting on the benefits of environmental watering (Action 3.6, Water Plan)
- Annual Strategic Audit Reports of the implementation of environmental management systems by mandated Victoria Government agencies
- Working and consulting with all sectors across the Victorian community.



# Victorian State of the Environment 2018 Report

# State of the Environment 2018 Report

**170 Indicators**

**13 Themes**

**20 Recommendations**

## **3 Stories:**

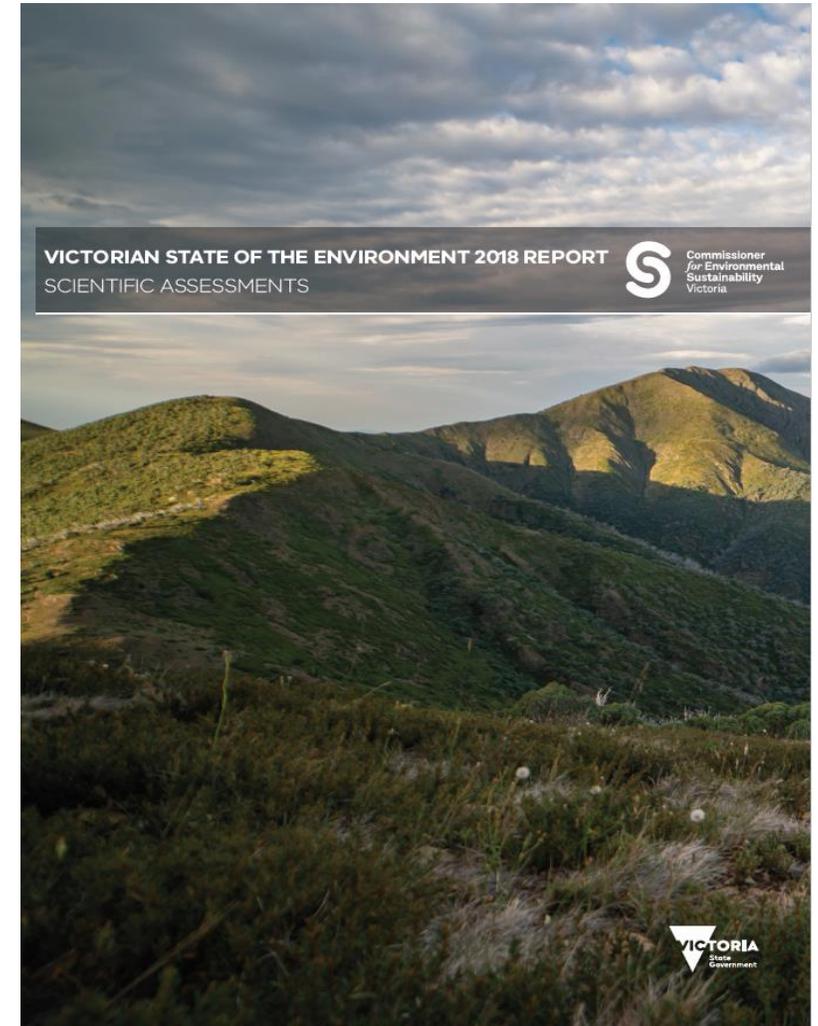
1. Current health of Victoria's natural environment.

2. Adequacy of our science.

3. Future focus: what we need to do.

# Scientific Assessments - Themes

- Cultural Landscape Health and Management
- Climate Change Impacts
- Air
- Biodiversity
- Land
- Forests
- Fire
- Marine and Coastal Environments
- Water Resources
- Water Quality
- Waste & Resource Recovery
- Energy
- Transport





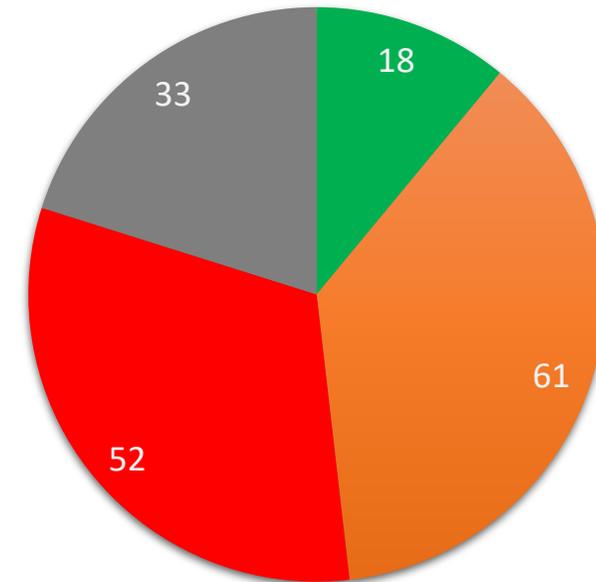
# Indicator Assessment Summaries

# SoE 2018 Indicator Assessment Summary

## Status

- 11% of the indicators are assessed as 'Good'
- 32% of the indicators are assessed as 'Poor'
- 20% of the indicators have 'Unknown' status

SoE Status Summary



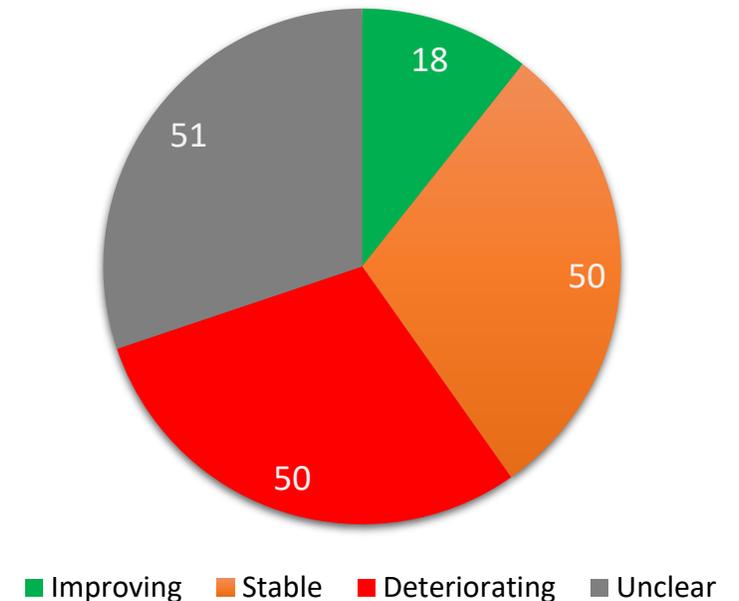
Good Fair Poor Unknown

# SoE 2018 Indicator Assessment Summary

## Trend

- A similar proportion of indicators (30%) have been assessed as 'Stable', 'Deteriorating' and 'Unclear'
- 11% of indicators have been assessed as 'Improving' status in this reporting cycle

SoE Trend Summary

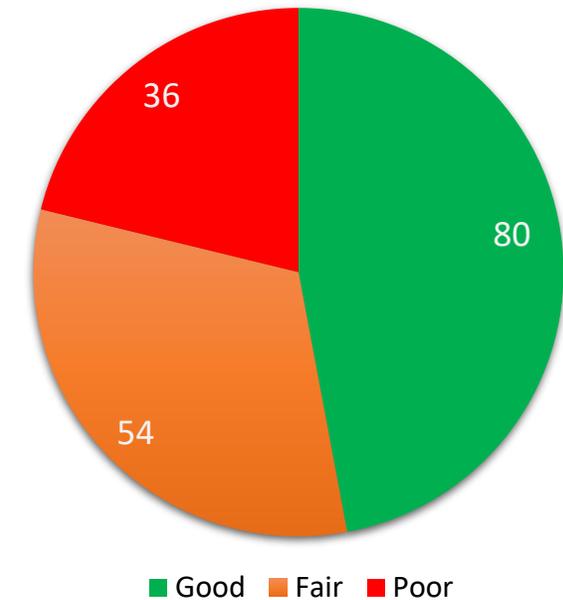


# SoE 2018 Indicator Assessment Summary

## Data quality

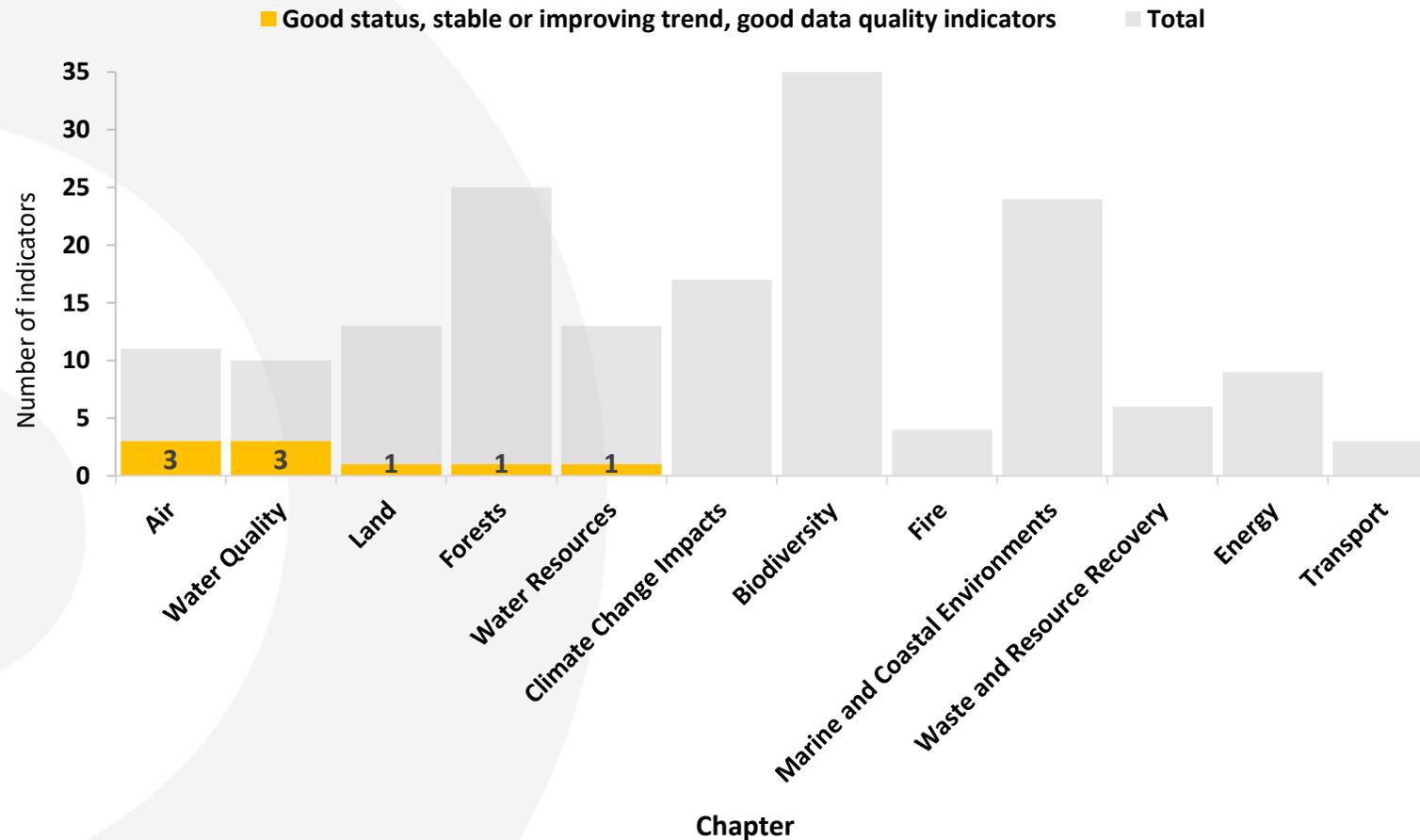
- 47% of indicators (80) have sufficient data coverage to assess trends and status
- 90 indicators have been assessed as requiring improved data coverage for future reporting

SoE Data Quality Summary



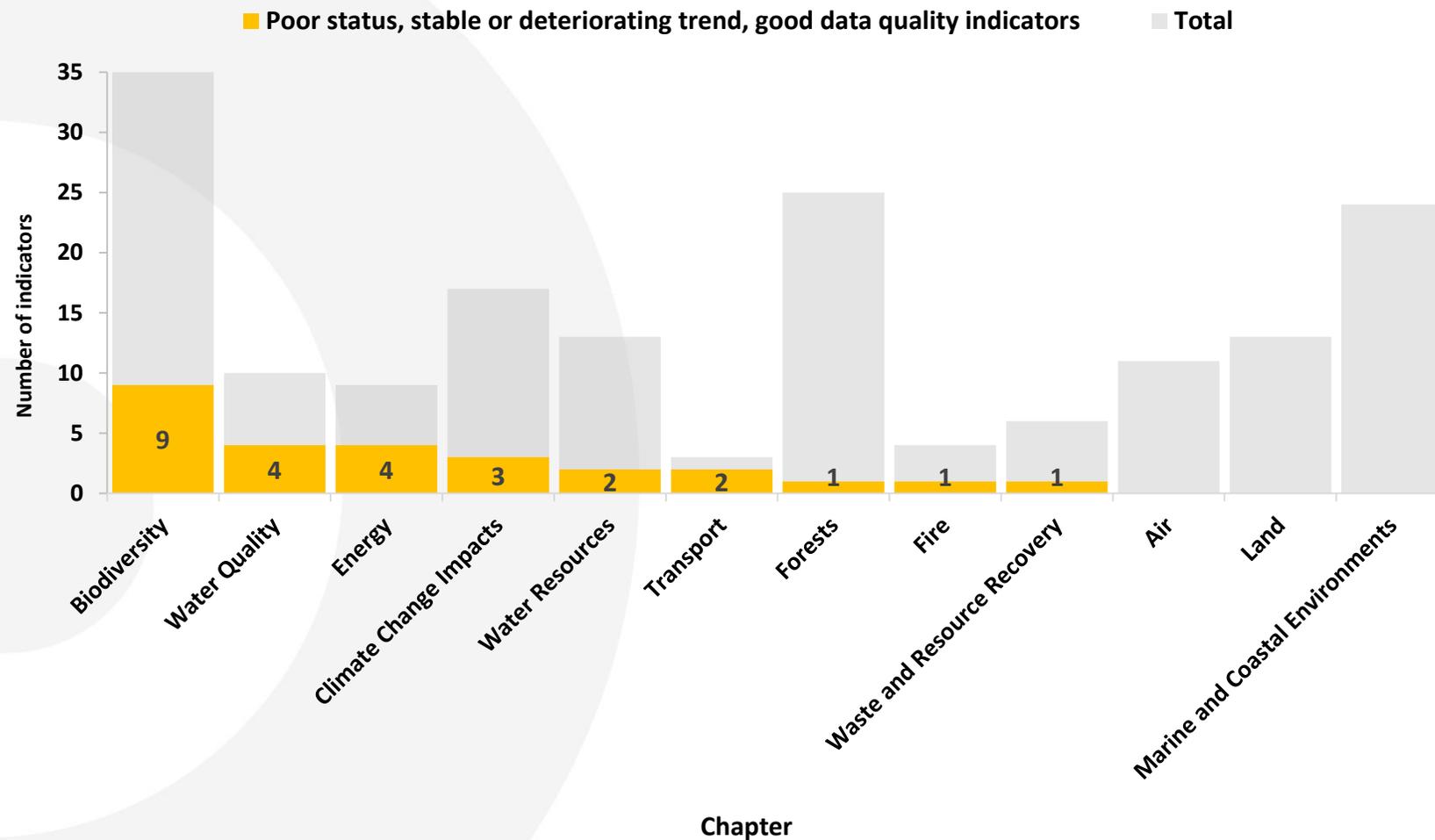
# SoE 2018 Indicator Assessment Summary

## High performing areas



# SoE 2018 Indicator Assessment Summary

## Low performing areas



# Developing Recommendations

# Principles

- Prioritise recommendations which improve multiple environmental outcomes (e.g. biodiversity, climate change and water).
- Focus on delivery of key policy and legislative actions and targets (e.g. *Climate Change Act 2017*, *Water Plan*, *Biodiversity 2037 Plan*, *SWRRIP*, *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*).
- Informed by recommendations from other respected reports (e.g. *VEAC*, *VCMC CCMR*, *VAGO*, *EPA Inquiry*, *Finkel Review*, *Independent Panel for Climate Change*).
- Align recommendations with achieving SDG environmental (or ESD) targets by 2030 and supporting the development of a system of environmental economic accounts for Victoria.

# Future Focus

- Analyses priorities for action to shift from reporting on “*what we know*” to “*what we need to know*”
- SoE 2018 recommendations enable the Commissioner to provide thought leadership and influence focus, effort and investment by government.
- Government has 12 months from tabling to respond to recommendations (19/3/2020).





# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALIGNMENT WITH SDG TARGETS



# Cultural Landscape Health and Management

1. That the Victorian Government, in consultation with Traditional Owners and relevant agencies, develop contemporary cultural indicators to inform future environmental reporting. These indicators must reflect the priorities of Traditional Owners, have practical and cost-effective data-collection methods, be meaningful, and demonstrate change within a five-year reporting period.

## UN SDG targets - 1.5 / 4.7 / 11.4



# Climate Change Impacts

2. That DELWP, in coordination with research partners, conduct further analysis to improve localised climate projections (particularly in agricultural regions). These projections would aim to reduce the uncertainties associated with rainfall projections as a minimum.

UN SDG targets – 2.4 / 6.5 / 9.5 / 13.2, 13.3



# Air

3. That EPA Victoria prioritise the implementation of the EPA Inquiry Recommendations 6.3 and 7.2 to develop a publicly accessible, real-time assessment of air quality across Victoria that incorporates air-quality monitoring data, citizen science observations, air-quality modelling and an up-to-date air-pollution inventory. Future monitoring and assessments would also be expanded to include ultrafine particles and data on indoor air quality.

UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.6



# Air

4. That Victoria's Chief Environmental Scientist, supported by relevant government agencies and research partners, lead the establishment of a contemporary pollen-monitoring network to enable community access to information on pollen levels in the air in a timely manner, through actions including increasing the number of locations monitored, the frequency of the monitoring, and automating the monitoring process.

UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.6



# Biodiversity

5. That DELWP streamline the governance and coordination of investment in the science and data capability of all government biodiversity programs and improve the coherence and impact of the publicly-funded, scientific endeavour. Further, that DELWP establish the position of the chief biodiversity scientist to oversee this coordinated effort and provide esteemed counsel to the DELWP Secretary and the Minister for Environment to improve the impact of investment in biodiversity research across the Victorian environment portfolio. That DELWP improve biodiversity outcomes on public land by streamlining and coordinating governance arrangements.

**UN SDG targets - 2.5 / 4.7 / 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.b / 11.4, 11.7 / 12.2, 12.8  
13.1, 13.3 / 14.4 / 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9 / 16.6 / 17.14, 17.17**



# Biodiversity

6. That DELWP improve biodiversity outcomes on private land by accelerating private land conservation. This will require resourcing permanent protection measures that focus on high-priority ecosystems and landscapes, and investing in local government capability to enforce the existing Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation and the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework.

UN SDG targets - 4.7 / 6.6 / 12.2, 12.8 / 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.8



# Land

7. That Agriculture Victoria lead the design and delivery of a state soil and land condition monitoring program, that includes analysis of the threats and impacts of land use and land-use change, to improve decision-making across a variety of sectors including agriculture, planning and water management.

UN SDG targets – 2.4 / 6.5 / 9.5 / 12.2 / 15.3



# Forests

8. That DELWP maintain their commitment to resourcing and maintaining the VFMP and enhance it to: (i) improve statewide understanding of the impacts of forest fragmentation on forest-dependent species (including the development of an authoritative list of Victorian forest-dependent species), and (ii) improve assessment of protected areas by conducting detailed research to identify the benefits of various types of IUCN-protected areas for target species. Any amendments to the VFMP must not disrupt future trend analyses.

## UN SDG targets –15.1, 15.5



# Fire

9. That the Victorian Government establish a structured framework based on the findings of the dual-scale ecosystem-resilience monitoring program, piloted by DELWP in 2017–18, and undertake a detailed analysis of the persistence of key fire-response species to increased fire frequency in Victoria, particularly in areas where below-minimum Tolerable Fire Interval exists.



## UN SDG targets – 1.5 / 13.1



# Marine and Coastal Environments

10. That DELWP expand the Marine Knowledge Framework to include all state marine and coastal environments.

UN SDG targets - 6.3, 6.5 / 11.3, 11.4, 11.7 / 12.2, 12.5, 12.8 / 13.1, 13.3  
14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.b / 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9 / 16.6 / 17.7



# Water Resources

11. That DELWP use the current long-term water resource assessment (LTWRA) to identify metrics for monitoring the condition of, and risks to, Victoria's water resources and waterway health for reasons related to flow, and commit to long-term monitoring. Complementary thresholds would also be established for these metrics, and actions determined for circumstances when thresholds are crossed. Further, in a changing climate, it is recommended that DELWP review the 15-year period between LTWRAs, as more frequent assessments may be required to maintain ecosystem health and function.

## UN SDG targets - 6.4, 6.5 / 9.5 / 13.2



# Water Quality

12. That DELWP, working with its portfolio agencies, implement an agile water-quality monitoring framework that: (i) clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and the community, (ii) improves monitoring of pollution hotspots, and (iii) builds on EPA Victoria's implementation of EPA Inquiry recommendations 6.3 and 7.2.

UN SDG targets - 6.3, 6.6 / 9.5



# Waste and Resource Recovery

13. That Sustainability Victoria, in 2019, develop indicators and implement a comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework to measure delivery of the current Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan and Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plans against their circular-economy design principles. From July 2020, that Sustainability Victoria expand that monitoring and reporting framework to track the progress of the implementation of the strategy and publicly report, at least annually, on Victoria's transition to a circular economy.

UN SDG targets – 12.3, 12.4, 12.5



# Waste and Resource Recovery

14. That the Victorian Government, commencing within the metropolitan region as a minimum, align the institutional planning and procurement processes (including leveraging Victorian Government procurement) to support the delivery of the circular economy strategy from July 2020. Ultimately, this alignment would be adopted statewide and enable an orderly transition to a circular economy in Victoria by 2030. In developing the action plan to deliver the circular-economy strategy, the roles and responsibilities of all agencies should be clarified to nominate those agencies responsible for delivering policy, procurement, program, reporting and regulatory roles. Further, that the Victorian Government commit to long-term, systemic, statewide community education to support this transition and assist the change in behaviours that will be required to improve long-term system outcomes. Reducing consumption and contamination levels in kerbside recycling would be the initial focus.

**UN SDG targets**  
**12.4, 12.5, 12.7**



# Energy

15. That DELWP establish a set of indicators, and implement measures to collect appropriate data, to track the impact of energy emissions reduction to meet interim targets set under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. The reporting should also track the transition of Victoria's grid, transport and industry infrastructure to support a low-carbon future.

UN SDG targets – 13.2, 13.3



# Energy

16. That DELWP implement measures to collect data and track the impact of the transition to a low-emissions electricity system on:

- (i) consumer sentiment and behaviour,
- (ii) investment in distributed, low and zero-emissions electricity generation, and
- (iii) the associated markets, governance and business models.

## UN SDG targets – 7.2, 13.3



# Transport

17. That EPA Victoria, in coordination with other Victorian Government agencies, improve transport-related air and noise monitoring, including: developing a real-time noise-monitoring network across Melbourne (with a view to expansion across larger cities in regional Victoria), focusing on monitoring near major transport hotspots that include busy roads, flight paths and along public transport routes, increasing the number of roadside air-monitoring stations and publishing the noise and air data on the internet in real-time.



UN SDG targets – 3.9 / 9.5 / 11.3, 11.6





# Recommendations 18-20

## Systems Approach for Reporting

# Megatrends

18. That DELWP develop its spatial information capability and database, and ensure it is regularly and routinely updated, to inform decision-making across the environment portfolio.

UN SDG targets – 6.6 / 9.4 / 12.2, 12.8 / 15.1, 15.2, 15.5



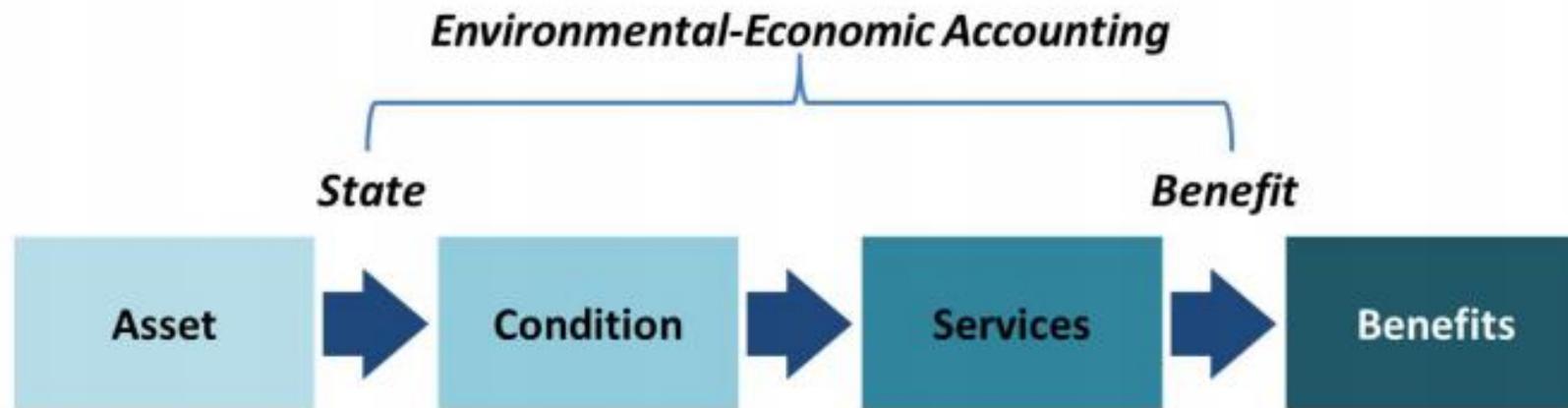
# International Frameworks: UN SEEA

19. That DELWP establishes environmental-economic accounting as a core capability and delivers a set of environmental-economic accounts for Victoria by 2022, consistent with the SEEA guidelines, DELWP Valuing and Accounting for Victoria's Environment strategy and aligned with the agreed common national approach. Further, that the Minister for Environment include in the Statement of Expectations to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability a requirement to incorporate reporting against Victoria's environmental-economic accounts in State of the Environment reporting for Victoria from 2023.

## UN SDG targets – 15.9



Environmental-Economic Accounting will build on the scientific baseline (asset and condition) reporting of the SoE to include information and analysis of the services and benefits provided by Victoria's natural assets.



# International Frameworks: UN SDGs

20. That the Minister for Environment include in the Statement of Expectations to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability a requirement to adopt the SDGs as an operating framework for SoE reporting in Victoria from 2023. This will require that DELWP support the Commissioner by leading a portfolio review of the data requirements to assess Victoria's progress against the selected SDG targets, which will include a complementary analysis of current legislation, policy and programs against the SDG targets, and the development of a plan to improve data-acquisition processes for socio-economic indicators by 2021.

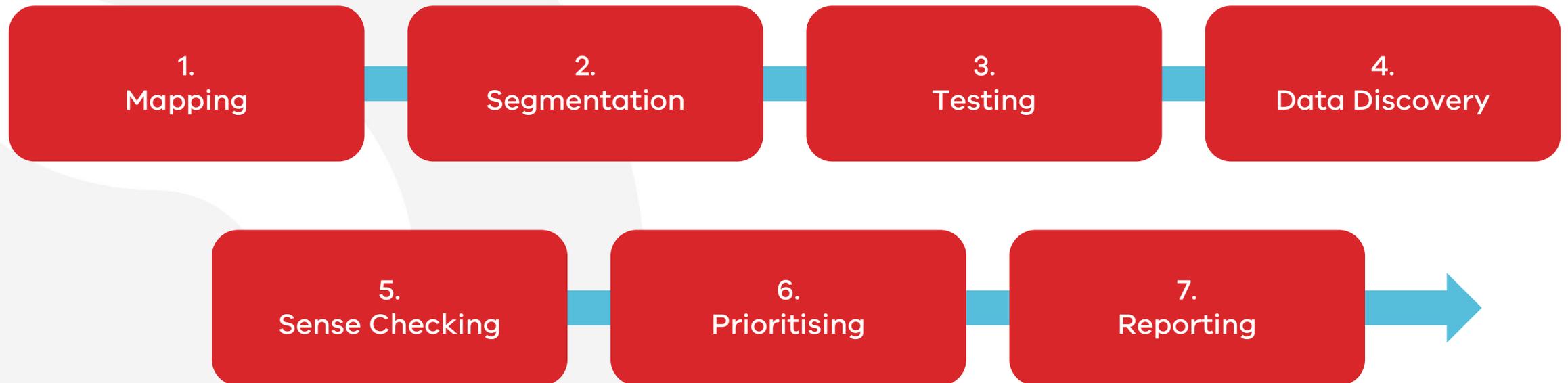
## UN SDG targets – 16.6 / 17.14, 17.17



# SDGs and SoE 2018

- Legislative prerogative
  - ESD defined in CES Act
- Authorising environment
  - State and Benefit Framework tabled in Parliament in December 2015
- Process of alignment was consultative and democratic
  - Multi-stage process and broader engagement with experts/stakeholders
- Embraces spirit of SDGs as a systems approach to ecologically sustainable development
  - Federal National Review 'environment and energy' response focusses on indicators across 8 SDGs
  - A different methodology to that adopted for the National SDG report card

To apply the SDG targets to our environmental reporting framework we developed a seven-stage process



Aligning Victoria with international environmental reporting frameworks and improving the efficacy of our collective environmental monitoring and reporting effort.





# STATE OF THE YARRA AND ITS PARKLANDS 2018 REPORT



# Biodiversity

That DELWP, in collaboration with local government and private property owners, maintains and improves threatened species populations, and their habitats, by connecting Crown land in the upper and lower Yarra rural reaches, through a system of parks, reserves and private protected areas.

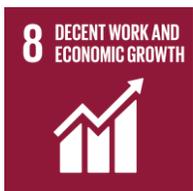
UN SDG targets - 4.7 / 6.6 / 12.2, 12.8 / 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.5 / 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.8



# Population Growth and Development

That DELWP, in collaboration with Melbourne Water and local governments, extend the geographic scope of the current interim Yarra River Protection Planning Controls (Amendment GC48) along the Yarra River corridor ranging from Warrandyte to the boundary of the Yarra Ranges National Park in support of appropriate urban development.

**UN SDG targets –8.4 / 11.3, 11.a / 15.1, 15.5**





# STATE OF THE FORESTS 2018 REPORT



Commissioner  
for Environmental  
Sustainability  
Victoria



# A review of the current criteria and indicators, and minimising knowledge gaps

That DELWP review the current criteria and indicators for State of the Forests reporting especially socio-cultural indicators, and align reporting with relevant Victorian legislation, policy and programs and the UN Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Further, identification of the knowledge gaps in monitoring the social benefits of forests will be critical for managing forests for all Victorians.

## UN SDG targets – 11.4 / 12.2 / 15.2



# THANK YOU

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