

The Hon. Gayle Tierney Minister for Water



Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
2025-26 Budget Estimates Hearing
11 June 2025



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.

Water Sector enables Jobs and Growth

Victoria's water sector plays a critical role in delivering public health, economic development, environmental improvement, and community wellbeing



- Our water corporations are charged with keeping water bills affordable while investing over **\$3.2 billion** (2024-25) in infrastructure to meet growth, climate change, and keep water safe and secure.



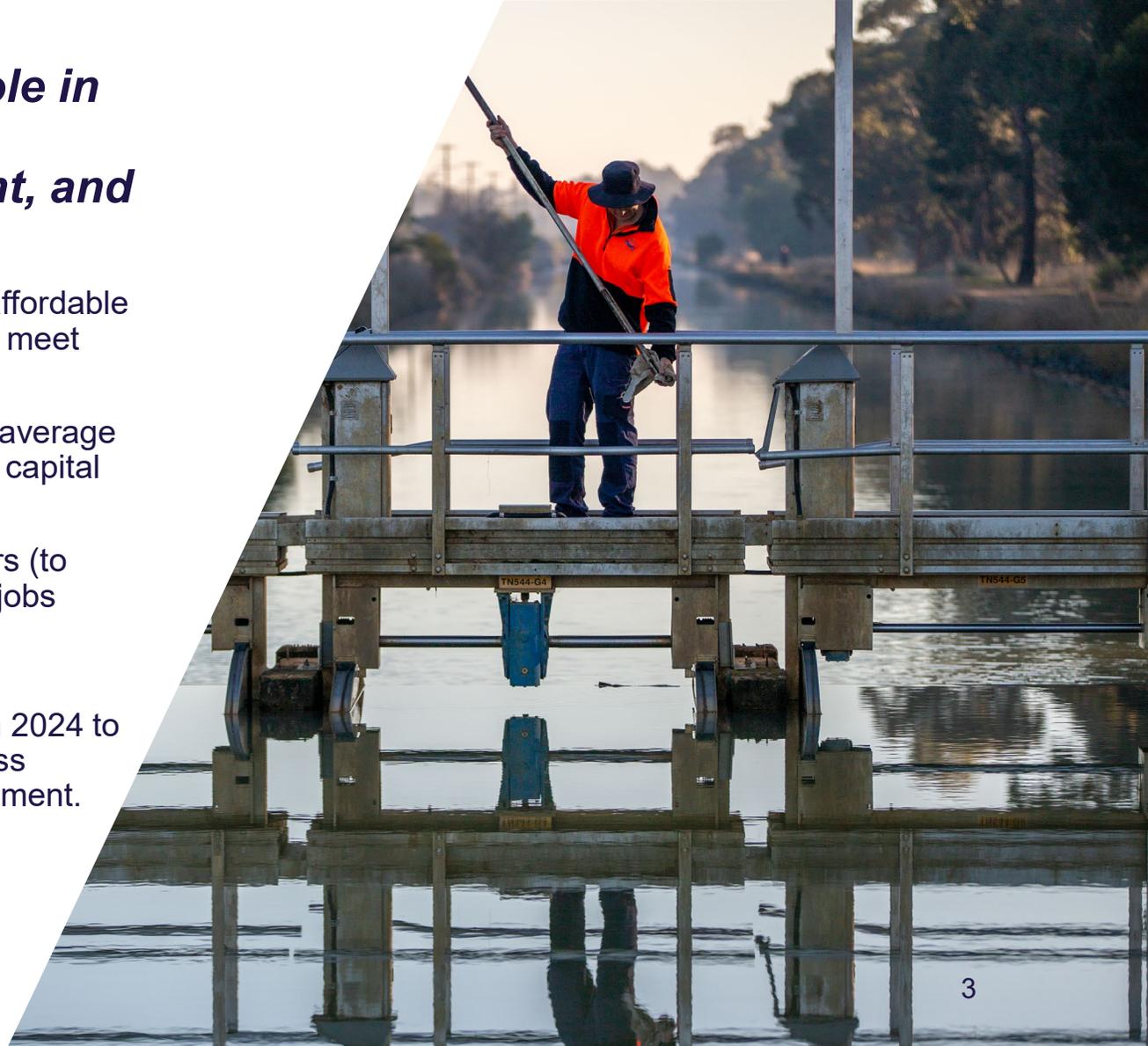
- Victoria has among the **lowest water bills in Australia**, with average household bills in Melbourne \$124 lower than the next lowest capital city, Canberra.



- Investing over **\$270 million** in waterway health over four years (to 2027-28) supports regional employment - approximately 325 jobs across regional Victoria, primarily within our 10 catchment management authorities (CMAs).

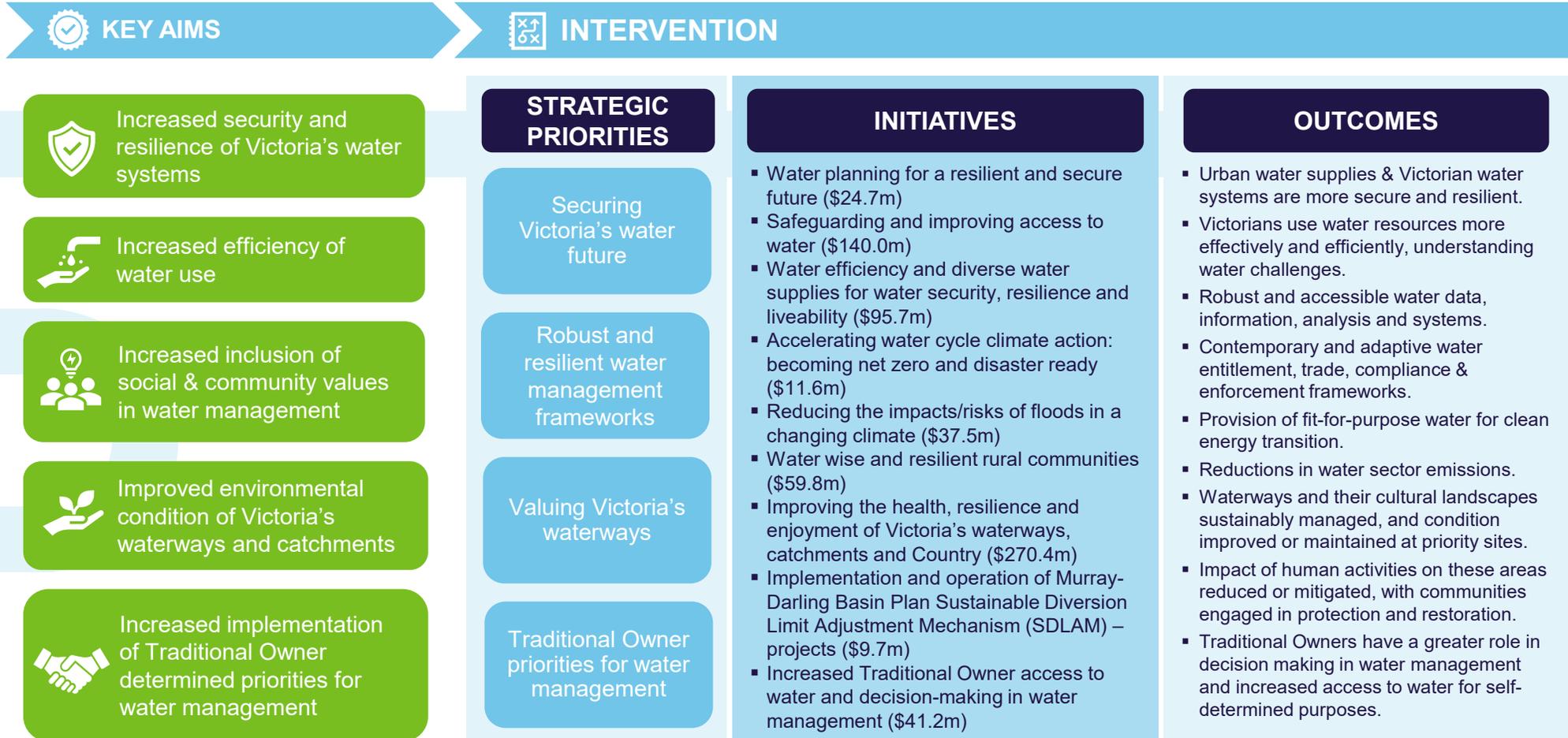


- Victoria's 18 water corporations invested over **\$905 million** in 2024 to meet the rapid increase in residential water connections across Victoria - playing a critical role in delivering the Housing Statement.



Safe, Sustainable and Productive Water Sources

EC6 Investments

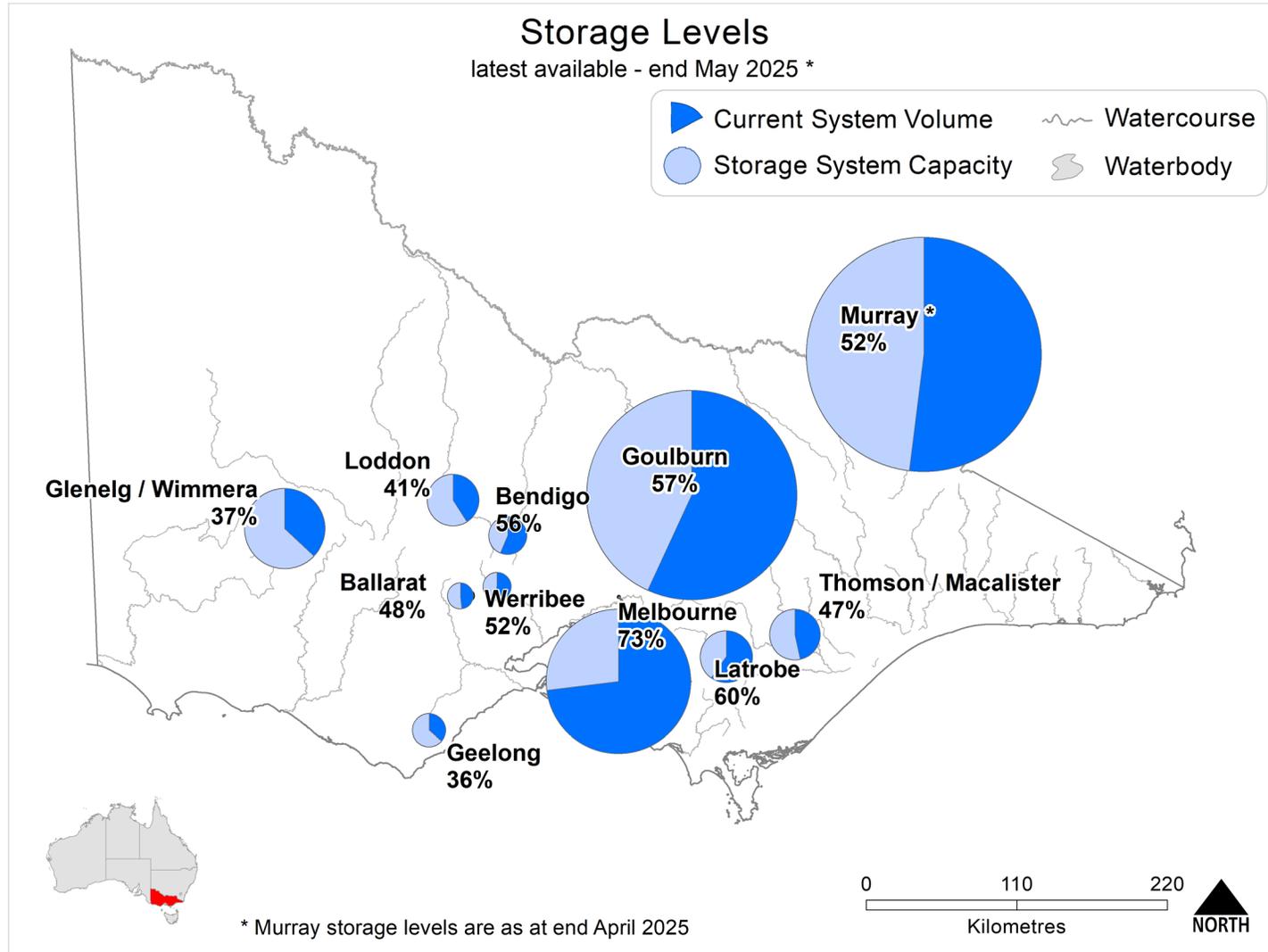


Investing **\$705 million** through 2024-2028

Promote sustainable water management

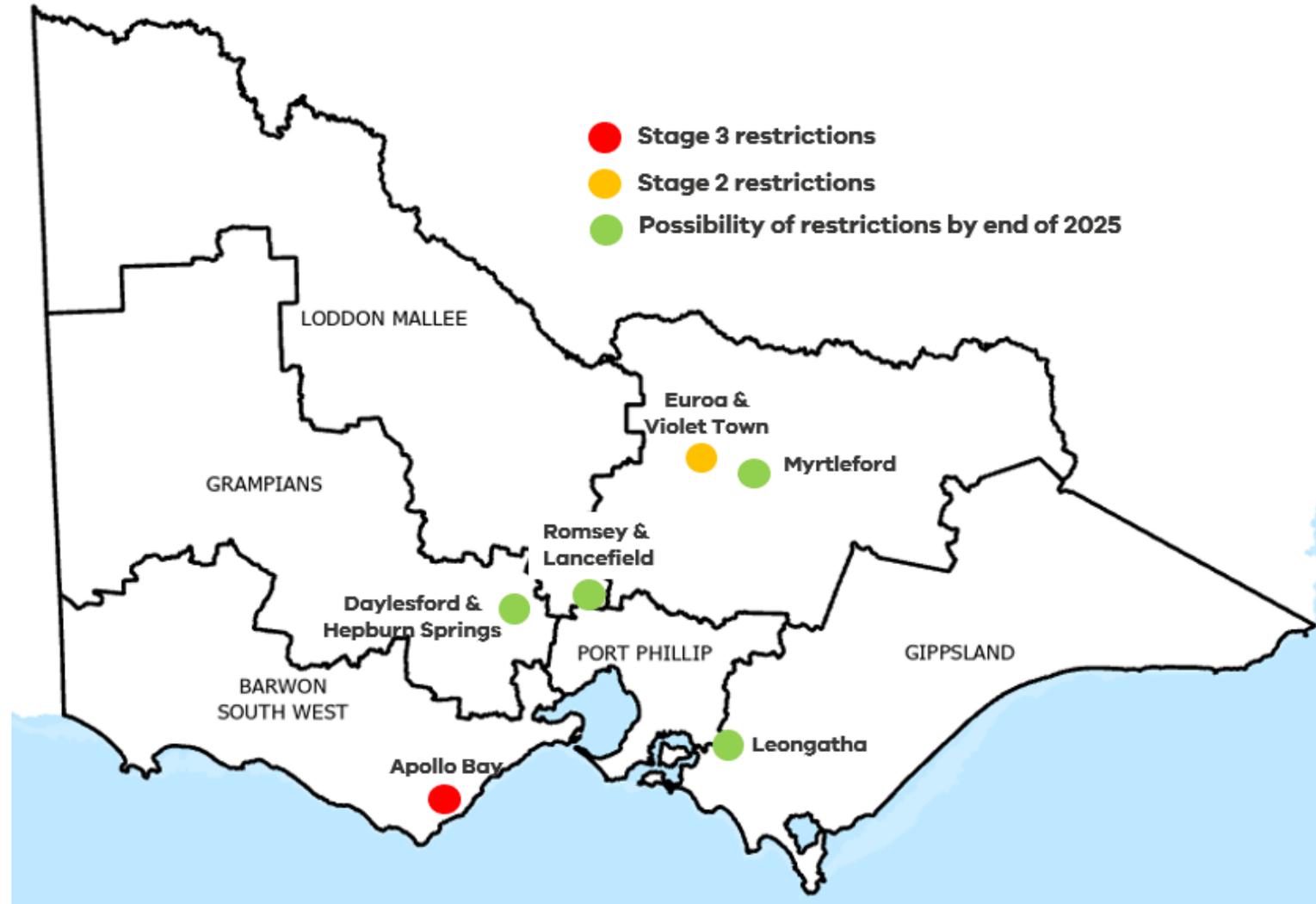
Address water-related adverse environmental impacts

Secure & Reliable Water



Water supply and the likelihood of water restrictions

- Water restrictions are not expected in Greater Melbourne for 2025.
- Apollo Bay triggered Stage 3 water restrictions on 10 May 2025 as storages continued to decline due to extremely dry conditions. Stage 4 may be triggered in late June 2025 if dry conditions persist.
- Euroa and Violet Town triggered Stage 2 water restrictions on 28 May 2025.
- Other regional systems at risk of triggering water restrictions during 2025 include:
 - Daylesford & Hepburn Springs (Central Highlands Water) by end of June
 - Myrtleford (North East Water) by late June
 - Leongatha (South Gippsland Water) by mid July
 - Romsey & Lancefield (Greater Western Water) by summer



Investing in water security

We have just experienced the largest drop in Melbourne's storages in a single year since the 2007 (millennium drought)

- The current total Melbourne system storage level as at 6 June is **72.8%**
- Geelong, has also seen a significant drop in water storage levels. As at 6 June 2025 storages had dropped from 59.7 per cent to 36.2 per cent in the space of 12 months.
- The Melbourne-Geelong pipeline upgrade is due for completion end of 2025 – to boost supply to the Geelong region.
- The desalination plant makes sure water supply doesn't fall to emergency levels – it's part of the grid and provides security and a buffer against drought and the economic cost of drought.
- This year I made a **50 GL** order to protect Melbourne and adjoining regions water supplies.
- The cost to customer will be \$11 on a typical annual bill for 150 kilolitres.
- Since 2016, the Victorian Desalination Plant will have contributed over **500 GL** of water – or equivalent to **320 MCGs**.



Water Portfolio Drought Response

- We've newly established a dedicated **Drought Response Taskforce** and I am leading the water sector's contribution.
- The Government committed an additional **\$37.7 M** to expand support to farmers and communities across our state (announced 30 May).
- This announcement builds on the Government's existing **\$29.4 M** investment.
- The Water portfolio and regional water corporations are supporting farmers and agricultural industries, through initiatives like:
 - updating the public database for water carting points,
 - sharing information on rules for taking and accessing water,
 - supporting market trades of water,
 - options for temporary infrastructure, recycled water use and operational supports
 - longer-term infrastructure, including a **further \$9.1 million for the East Grampians Rural Pipeline**, outlined in BP4, to further maximise connections.



2025-26 Budget Estimates Hearing Water Portfolio



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