

## WATER

### Question on Notice, Transcript page 12

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Just checking another matter as well, *Water Is Life*: is it true that three years on, none of the commitments on that road map have been achieved?

**Gayle TIERNEY:** Thank you. I am absolutely committed to traditional owners roles in the decision-making on access to water in Victoria. We announced in the last Victorian budget \$41 million over the next four years, and that was made in response to the needs articulated by traditional owners across Victoria. It demonstrates a commitment to increasing traditional owner participation. I can go through the exact investments.

**The CHAIR:** I am going to cut you off there, Mr Puglielli. Apologies.

**Gayle TIERNEY:** I am happy to provide that to you.

### Response:

I am committed to increasing Traditional Owners' role in decision-making and access to water in Victoria.

The announcement in the 2024 Victorian Budget of \$41 million over the next 4 years was made in response to the needs articulated by Traditional Owners across Victoria and demonstrates a continued commitment to increasing Traditional Owner participation.

This investment will:

- renew dedicated funding for Aboriginal Water Officers and Traditional Owner-led projects
- invest in Traditional Owner participation in the Water is Life pilot and research projects, and
- enable Traditional Owner oversight of Water is Life implementation, facilitation of the Aboriginal Water Officer Network, and coordination of Water is Life policies, actions and reform.

*Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap* sets out the Victorian Government commitments and policy pathways in the short, medium and long term to increase decision-making and resources for Traditional Owners in the management of water landscapes, as well as increasing Traditional Owner access to water.

As outlined in *Water is Life*, we are making progress on water returns to Traditional Owners across Victoria.

As at 31 May 2025, the total volume of water entitlements held by known Traditional Owner or Aboriginal organisations in Victoria is 9,528 megalitres (ML). Of which the total volume returned to Traditional Owners by government commitments is 6,910 ML.

In addition, 16 gigalitres of the Latrobe 3-4 Bench bulk entitlement water has been reallocated for farming, the environment and Traditional Owners, including 5.3 gigalitres for the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

Further commitments to return water are progressing including the return of 1,360 ML in northern Victoria from the Connections Project.



Hon Gayle Tierney MP  
Minister for Water