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| Victorian Koala Management Strategy Implementation Plan |
| Version 2 – June 2024 |

### Introduction

The Victorian Koala Management Strategy (VKMS) sets out actions to address issues affecting Victoria’s koala populations and habitat over the next ten years.

This document outlines the implementation plan for the actions in the VKMS.

### Delivery phases

The implementation of the VKMS will be in phases.

**Phase 1** refers to actions or specific deliverables that will commence delivery in years 1-3.

**Phase 2** refers to actions or specific deliverables that will either commence in years 4+, or that rely on results from Phase 1 actions or deliverables and will commence following the completion of those actions or deliverables.

### Monitoring the delivery of actions

Action 11.1 establishes an implementation working group who will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the actions in the strategy.

### Implementation plan updates

The information in this implementation plan is indicative and may be subject to change due to a range of factors such as the results of procurement processes, budget availability and government priorities. It is intended that this implementation plan will be a live document and will be updated by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) as needed throughout the life of the VKMS. The current version of the implementation plan will be available on the DEECA website at: <https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/koalas>. Please ensure you are referring to the most recent version of the plan.

The indicative commencement date of some deliverables in this first version of the implementation plan relies on the outcome of procurement processes. Once the procurement processes have been completed and the timing of the deliverables has been agreed with the delivery partners, the implementation plan will be updated.

**Theme 1 – Traditional Owners and koalas**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 1.1 Partner with Traditional Owners to undertake actions on Country that will benefit koalas or their habitat** | 1.1.1 Meet with Traditional Owners to discuss their priorities for Country and how these could benefit koalas or koala habitat. | DEECA  Traditional Owners |  | Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities | October 2021 (discussions commenced during development of VKMS) | Ongoing | 1 |
| 1.1.2 Work with Traditional Owners to identify linkages between actions in Country Plans (or similar documents) and the VKMS and determine how to implement actions so that the goals of both the Country Plans and VKMS can be achieved. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria | Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |
| 1.1.3 Establish partnership arrangements with interested Traditional Owner groups to deliver relevant actions on Country. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria |  | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |
| 1.1.4 Work with Traditional Owners to build their capacity to deliver actions on Country that will benefit koalas or habitat. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria  Universities  TAFEs | Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |
| **Action 1.2 Support Traditional Owner groups to protect culturally and environmentally significant areas from koala over-browsing** | 1.2.1 Meet with Traditional Owners to determine culturally and environmentally significant areas that may require protection from the impacts of overabundant koalas. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria | Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |
| 1.2.2 Establish partnership arrangements with Traditional Owner groups to undertake koala management activities on Country including habitat and koala assessment and monitoring, and koala management program planning and delivery. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria | Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |
| 1.2.3 Work with Traditional Owners to build their capacity to undertake koala and habitat monitoring and koala management programs. | DEECA  Traditional Owners | Parks Victoria  Universities  TAFEs | Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring | Ongoing | Ongoing | 1 |

**Theme 2 - Koala overabundance**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 2.1 At key high-density koala population sites, undertake habitat monitoring to detect change in condition and implement evidence-based management programs to protect habitat and koala welfare** | 2.1.1 Identify sites with high-density koala populations. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Universities  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry | Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring | June 2023 | Ongoing | 1 |
| 2.1.2 Use ARI’s previous habitat health trigger work to develop a habitat monitoring program to detect changes in habitat health at sites prone to overabundance. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process |  | To be confirmed (TBC) | TBC | 1 |
| 2.1.3 Implement the habitat monitoring program at relevant sites. | DEECA | Universities  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry |  | Will be determined based on completion date of 2.1.2 | Ongoing, frequency to be determined by 2.1.2 | 1 |
| 2.1.4 Develop an evidence-based framework for koala management programs that:   * identifies trigger points for intervention prior to significant impacts on habitat or koala welfare occurring * identifies appropriate management interventions for different scenarios that consider habitat, land-use, carrying capacity, koala welfare, disease risk and genetic management * includes a standard protocol for data collection and management * includes a process for evaluating koala management programs * considers the development of regional koala management plans. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process, but input will be sought from:  Vets  Wildlife carers  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry |  | July 2024 | TBC | 1 |
| 2.1.5 Develop a database to store data from management programs that will enable data sharing and data analysis to inform improvements to the koala management framework. | DEECA | Parks Victoria |  | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 2.1.6 Undertake koala management programs at high-density populations, as needed, in accordance with the framework. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Vets  Wildlife carers  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry |  | Programs are ongoing but new framework will be used once finalised following completion of 2.1.4. | Ongoing | 1 |
| 2.1.7 Undertake research into the causes of overabundance and the potential for novel contraceptive methods that have not been used in Victoria. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process | Action 4.1 - Genetic surveys | Phase 2 deliverable, timing TBC | Phase 2 deliverable, timing TBC. | 2 |
| 2.1.8 Identify impacted sites and support re-vegetation projects at these sites. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Landholders/managers  Councils  General public  Community groups  Landcare  Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)  Non-government Organisations (NGO) | Action 6.2 - Support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and improve habitat connectivity | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| **Action 2.2 Revise the 2004 translocation protocol** | 2.2.1 Review the translocation protocol from the 2004 VKMS to determine what changes may be needed based on the outcomes of previous translocation programs and existing research into translocations.  Identify additional information/data needed to develop a new translocation protocol. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process; input will be sought from:  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Universities  Vets  Wildlife carers |  | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 2.2.2 Develop a new translocation protocol that considers:   * minimum habitat requirements and habitat availability for release sites, including identifying areas of suitable habitat that can be used as release sites * expertise of personnel involved in the translocation * disease risk * genetics * selection of individuals for translocation * translocation methods including capture, handling, transport and release requirements and equipment * post-release monitoring requirements * data recording requirements * community consultation requirements * requirements for future planned burns near release sites * guidance for relocation of koalas following bushfires. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process; input will be sought from:  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Universities  Vets  Wildlife carers | This action requires data from:  Action 4.1 - Genetic surveys  Action 5.1 -Disease surveillance  Action 6.1 -Decision support tool  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring. | TBC | TBC | 2 |
| 2.2.3 Use the new translocation protocols to inform koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA  Parks Victoria  Traditional owners |  |  | Will be determined based on timeline for 2.2.2. | TBC | 2 |

**Theme 3 – Koala rehabilitation**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 3.1 Develop standards for koala rehabilitation to encourage a consistent, best practice approach to koala rehabilitation across the state.** | 3.1.1 Engage with vets, animal welfare experts, wildlife carers and Animal Welfare Victoria to finalise the standards of care for koala rehabilitation. | DEECA | Vets  Zoos Victoria  Animal welfare experts  Wildlife carers  Animal Welfare Victoria |  | Ongoing | Released August 2023 - | 1 |
| 3.1.2 Support opportunities for post-release monitoring to investigate the success of rehabilitation. | DEECA | Universities  Zoos Victoria  Wildlife carers  Vets |  | TBC | TBC | 1 |

**Theme 4 – Koala genetics**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 4.1 Undertake state-wide genetic surveys of Victorian koala populations.** | 4.1.1 Develop a genetic survey program to better understand:   * the genetic diversity of koala populations across Victoria * the significance and spatial boundaries of the unique Strzelecki/South Gippsland genome * whether other populations of genetic significance exist * the level of gene flow between populations * population structure * disease prevalence. | DEECA | Universities  Vets | Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management (if citizen science is used).  Results from this action will inform:  Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol  Action 4.2 - Genetic management plan.  This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with:  Action 5.1 - Disease surveillance  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring. | Commenced July 2023 | Completed August 2023 | 1 |
| 4.1.2 Implement the genetic survey program. | DEECA | Universities  Vets  Opportunistic samples (e.g. scats) for the program may be collected by:  Vets  Wildlife carers  Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry  General public | Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management (if citizen science is used).  Results from this action will inform:  Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol  Action 4.2 - Genetic management plan.  This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with:  Action 5.1 - Disease surveillance  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring. | Commenced August 2023 | Surveys completed June 2024.  Final results expected December 2024. |  |
| **Action 4.2 Develop a genetic management plan for Victorian koalas.** | 4.2.1 Develop a genetic management plan for Victorian koala populations, based on the results of the genetic surveys undertaken for action 4.1. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process | This action relies on data from Action 4.1 – Genetic surveys | Relies on data from Action 4.1. Timing TBC. | TBC | 2 |
| 4.2.2 Use the genetic management plan to inform koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners |  | Will be determined based on the timeline for 4.2.1 | TBC | 2 |

**Theme 5 – Koala disease**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 5.1 Develop and implement a systematic koala disease surveillance program across Victoria that will enable early detection of new diseases and ongoing monitoring of established diseases.** | 5.1.1 Develop and deliver a systematic koala disease surveillance program that includes clinical sign/syndromic reporting of koala health observations (which may trigger sample collection or field investigation), submission of samples for targeted disease testing and pathological examination of dead koalas. | DEECA | Universities  Vets | This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with:  Action 4.1 -Genetic surveys  Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring.  This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol | Commenced December 2023 | December 2024 | 1 |
| 5.1.2 Use the information gained through the disease surveillance program to inform koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA  Parks Victoria  Traditional owners |  | This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol | January 2025 | Ongoing | 2 |
| **Action 5.2 Review the National Koala Disease Risk Analysis (DRA) to identify priority diseases, effective mitigation strategies and knowledge gaps for Victoria.** | 5.2.1 Review the National Koala DRA to determine the priority diseases and effective mitigation strategies for Victoria. | DEECA | Universities  Vets  Australian Government | This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 5.2.2 Consider whether there are different factors in Victoria that may impact disease that were not considered in the National Koala DRA that warrant an additional DRA process to fill the knowledge gaps. | DEECA | Universities  Vets |  | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 5.2.3 Use the results of the DRA to inform koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA  Parks Victoria  Traditional owners |  |  | TBC | TBC | 1 |

**Theme 6 – Habitat conservation**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 6.1 Develop a comprehensive koala population and habitat decision support tool for Victoria to inform koala and habitat management activities, including koala translocation programs, fire management and habitat protection and restoration.** | 6.1.1 Use the results of the koala population surveys in Action 7.1 to develop koala population distribution maps and population models. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process | This action relies on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population monitoring | This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC. | This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC. | 2 |
| 6.1.2 Undertake koala habitat modelling to develop koala habitat maps and determine habitat availability. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process |  | This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC. | TBC | 1 |
| 6.1.3 Develop the decision support tool that can be used to identify:   * priority areas of habitat for protection or restoration * potential climate refuge areas * koala populations at high risk of requiring management to protect habitat * potential translocation release sites. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process | This action relies on data from:  Action 4.1 – Genetic surveys  Action 5.1 – Disease surveillance  Action 7.1 – Koala population monitoring | This action relies on data from Actions 4.1, 5.1 and 7.1, timing TBC. | This action relies on data from Actions 4.1, 5.1 and 7.1, timing TBC. | 2 |
| 6.1.4 Use the decision support tool to inform koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners |  | This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol. | TBC | TBC | 2 |
| **Action 6.2 Develop and support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and improve habitat connectivity.** | 6.2.1 Identify areas where koala habitat should be increased, or habitat connectivity improved | DEECA | Councils  Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry  General public  Community groups  Landcare  CMAs  NGOs | This action will be informed by (but is not reliant on): Action 2.1 – Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs  Action 6.1 – Decision support tool. | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 6.2.2 Work with Councils, CMAs, NGOs, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, landholders/managers, the Blue gum industry, community groups, Landcare and the community to develop and support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and increase habitat connectivity. | DEECA | Councils  Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry  General public  Community groups  Landcare  CMAs  NGOs | Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management | TBC | TBC | 1 |
| 6.2.3 Develop and provide information to landholders about how to increase koala habitat. | DEECA | Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Universities  Councils  General public  Community groups  Landcare  CMAs | Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management | TBC | TBC | 1 |

**Theme 7 – Understanding populations**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 7.1 Establish a long-term state-wide monitoring program to improve knowledge of koala population distribution, abundance and population trends.** | 7.1.1 Develop a koala population monitoring program that complements the National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) and will survey koala populations throughout Victoria. | DEECA | Universities | This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with:  Action 4.1 -Genetic surveys  Action 5.1 -Disease surveillance.  This action will inform: Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol  Action 6.1 – Decision support tool. | Commenced July 2023 | Completed August 2023 | 1 |
| 7.1.2 Implement the monitoring program across all land tenures where permission is granted. | DEECA | Organisation responsible for delivery of survey will be determined by procurement process.  Other partners include:  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Landholders/managers  Blue gum industry  General public  Community groups | Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management (if citizen science is used). | Commenced August 2023 | Surveys completed June 2024. Final results expected December 2024. | 1 |
| 7.1.3 Use the results of the monitoring program to inform koala management programs and habitat protection and restoration activities. | DEECA  Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners |  |  | January 2025 | Ongoing | 1 |
| 7.1.4 Publish the results of the monitoring program on the DEECA website and provide to the Australian Government for input into the NKMP. | DEECA | CSIRO  Australian Government |  | January 2025 | January 2025 | 1 |

**Theme 8 – Climate change and managing fire impacts**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 8.1 Use existing climate change models to better understand what a changed climate means for koalas and habitat across the whole of Victoria.** | 8.1.1 Identify existing climate change models that are relevant to koalas and koala habitat and determine if refinements to the models are needed. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process. |  | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | 2 |
| 8.1.2 Consider how the predictions from the models can be incorporated into koala management programs and habitat protection and restoration activities. | DEECA | Will be determined by procurement process. |  | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | 2 |
| **Action 8.2 Use koala population data to inform planned burning activities and the wildlife welfare response during bushfires.** | 8.2.1 Use the koala population data obtained from Action 7.1 to inform:   * planned burning activities * standard mitigations during planned burning activities, such as designation of wildlife welfare arrangements * the wildlife welfare response initiated during bushfires | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Vets  Wildlife carers | This action relies on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population surveys | This action relies on data Action 7.1, timing TBC. | This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC. | 2 |

**Theme 9 – Koalas in blue gum plantations**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 9.1 Investigate options to manage koala populations in blue gum plantations that protect koala welfare and ensure the industry remains viable and can continue to operate.** | 9.1.1 Work with the blue gum industry to investigate options to manage koala populations in blue gum plantations.  Factors that will be considered when investigating options include:   * results of koala population surveys * habitat availability modelling * industry knowledge and experience * technology and infrastructure options available. * cost implications. | DEECA | Blue gum industry  Universities | This action requires on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population surveys  Action 6.1 – Decision support tool. | TBC | TBC | 1-2  (Commences in phase 1 but relies on data from other actions) |
| **Action 9.2 Investigate options to manage the impact of koala displacement on koala welfare and other values and incorporate them into management.** | 9.2.1 Undertake research to better understand koala movement from plantations following harvesting and associated impacts on koala welfare and other values. | DEECA | Blue gum industry  Universities  Landholders/managers  Wildlife carers  Vets |  | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | 2 |
| 9.2.2 Identify and assess options to manage the impacts identified under 9.2.1. | DEECA | Blue gum industry  Universities  Landholders/managers  Wildlife carers  Vets |  | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | Phase 2 action, timing TBC | 2 |

**Theme 10 – Community perception and socioeconomic significance**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 10.1 Develop and implement a community and stakeholder education and engagement program that promotes the VKMS and the issues it addresses.** | 10.1.1 Work with experts to develop an education and engagement program about the VKMS and the issues it addresses. | DEECA | Universities  Vets  Traditional Owners  Wildlife welfare organisations  Parks Victoria  Wildlife carers  Communication experts  Blue gum industry  Councils  Schools  Community groups  General public |  | June 2023 | TBC | 1 |
| 10.1.2 Implement the education program in the community. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Universities  Vets  Traditional Owners  Wildlife welfare organisations  Wildlife carers  Communication experts  Blue gum industry  Councils  CMAs  Schools  Community groups  General public |  | TBC | Ongoing | 1 |
| **Action 10.2 Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management.** | 10.2.1 Identify active community-based conservation and management programs and how they can be supported. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Councils  CMAs  Landcare  Community groups  Landholders/managers  General public |  | June 2023 | Ongoing | 1 |
| 10.2.2 Identify new opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management activities. | DEECA | Parks Victoria  Traditional Owners  Councils  CMAs  Landcare  Community groups  Landholders/managers  General public |  | July 2023 | Ongoing | 1 |
| 10.2.3 Facilitate community involvement in these activities and support communities to conserve and manage koalas in their local area by providing information and support. | DEECA | Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Councils  CMAs  Landcare  Community groups  General public |  | July 2023 | Ongoing | 1 |
| 10.2.4 Develop and provide information to the general community about how they help to conserve koalas. | DEECA | Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Councils  CMAs  Landcare  Community groups  General public |  | July 2023 | Ongoing | 1 |

**Implementation action**

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| **Action** | **Deliverable** | **Lead** | **Partners** | **Linked actions** | **Indicative commencement date** | **Indicative completion date** | **Delivery phase** |
| **Action 11.1 Establish a working group that includes government and non-government representatives to facilitate the delivery of actions in the VKMS and monitor its implementation.** | 11.1.1 Identify government and non-government representatives to be part of a working group that will be responsible for:   * assisting in the development of a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework * facilitating the delivery of actions in the VKMS * monitoring the delivery of actions and progress towards the strategy's goals * publishing progress reports on the delivery of the strategy. | DEECA | **Potential group members:**  DEECA  Traditional Owners  Parks Victoria  Zoos Victoria  Animal Welfare Victoria  Wildlife carers  Wildlife welfare organisations  Blue gum industry  Melbourne Vet School  Universities  CMAs  Local Government |  | May 2023 | Group established June 2023 | 1 |
| 11.1.2 Develop the terms of reference for the group and formally establish the group. | DEECA |  |  | May 2023 | Group established June 2023 | 1 |
| 11.1.3 Schedule and hold group meetings throughout the life of the strategy to monitor implementation of the VKMS. | DEECA | Group members |  | June 2023 | Ongoing throughout the life of the VKMS | 1 |
| 11.1.4 Develop the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework for the strategy | DEECA | Group members |  | June 2023 | August 2023 | 1 |
| 11.1.5 Review progress towards delivering the strategy’s vision, goals and actions. Determine the priority actions for the next phase of delivery. | DEECA | Group members |  | First review 2025, future review schedule will be determined by group | Ongoing | 1 |
| 11.1.6 Develop and publish reports about progress towards the delivery of actions under the VKMS on the DEECA website. | DEECA | Implementation working group members |  | First report will be published in 2025 following the 2-year review, future review schedule will be determined by group | Ongoing | 1 |