

## **Minister's Foreword**

Salinity is a major threat to key assets across Victoria. Water quality, agricultural land, biodiversity and the built environment can all be impacted by the threatening process of salinisation.

Managing salinity is complex as it requires a clear understanding of land and water use across the landscape. Experience demonstrates that the mitigation of salinity can best be achieved through integrated catchment management and using a partnership approach between all levels of government and the community. The Bracks' Government is committed to working with the community to protect and enhance Victoria's land and water resources to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Salinity has been identified as a priority issue within the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy. With extensive community and stakeholder input the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority has developed the West Gippsland Salinity Management Plan. The salinity planning process aligns projects and works to be undertaken by a range of land and water management agencies, organisations and individuals, ensuring the best outcome and maximising the benefits to the community.

The salinity management plan identifies the causes of salinity in the West Gippsland region and outlines a strategic plan to manage the impact of salinity on our assets. This approach ensures that key assets such as groundwater, surface water, biodiversity and agricultural land are identified and their social, economic and environmental values are quantified. This means that the salinity management action plan is actively working to reduce the effect of salinity on iconic regional assets such as the Gippsland Lakes, Ramsar wetlands, urban townships and the Macalister Irrigation District.

The salinity plan strongly emphasises the protection of regional production such as irrigated and dryland agriculture. Integrated management actions take into account the protection of natural resources such as waterways and wetlands, whilst providing a practical approach to living with salt in the landscape.

I would like to commend the efforts of the West Gippsland community in the development of this plan and I am sure this will be a positive step forward in the management of salinity within the region.



**JOHN THWAITES MP**  
**Minister for Environment**