

Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (WMCIC) 2026

Canonical:

<https://northmoregordon.com/grants-and-programs/water-ministers-climate-innovation-challenge-wmcic-2026/>

Details:

[Summary](#) | [Article](#) | [Current use](#) | [Related guidance](#)

Funding program archive

This page preserves a dated funding-program record and links it to current project-planning guidance.

Publication date: 22 April 2026.

Status note: This archive does not confirm that applications are open, funds remain available or the earlier eligibility and co-funding settings still apply. Verify the current administrator page and guidelines.

What this article reported

The Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (WMCIC) 2026 is now open, offering funding to support innovative, collaborative solutions that address climate change across Victoria's water sector. With a strong focus on sustainability and emissions reduction, this challenge is designed to accelerate forward-thinking projects -particularly those transforming how biosolids are managed and reused.

Backed by the Victorian Government, the WMCIC provides a structured pathway for water corporations to develop and implement scalable, climate-positive initiatives that deliver long-term environmental and community benefits.

Funding Available

Total funding pool: \$320,000

Funding may be awarded to one or multiple successful projects

Delivered as part of a Ministerial Innovation Award

Who is this for?

State: Victoria Industry: Water sector / Utilities / Environmental & Sustainability

This opportunity is designed for Victorian water corporations looking to develop innovative, climate-focused solutions.

Collaborative projects are strongly encouraged, particularly those involving:

Research institutions

Government agencies

Private sector partners

Eligibility: You can apply if you:

You are a Victorian Water Corporation

Your submission is led by a Victorian Water Corporation

Your project aligns with the 2026 challenge theme (biosolids management)

Applications were due before the 22 July 2026 closing date

Your proposal is endorsed by an Executive-level representative

All required submission criteria are completed

What can the funding be used for?

The 2026 challenge is centred on future-focused and sustainable management of biosolids-a key emissions and resource recovery opportunity within wastewater treatment.

Funding can support projects that:

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from wastewater processes

Enable carbon sequestration and circular economy outcomes

Improve resource recovery (e.g. nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus)

Develop solutions to remove or manage contaminants

Address compliance and environmental risks

Deliver scalable, long-term sustainability outcomes

These project types align strongly with Northmore Gordon's expertise, including:

Sustainability and decarbonisation strategy

Commercialisation of innovative technologies

Grant funding strategy and application support

Business case development and project planning

Key Dates

Applications open: 22 April 2026

Applications close: 22 July 2026 (5pm AEST)

Finalists announced: 10 August 2026

Final pitch event: 2 September 2026

Award ceremony: 30 September 2026

How the program works

The WMCIC follows a structured, competitive process:

Eligibility review - ensuring submissions meet requirements

Shortlisting - based on innovation, impact, scalability, and delivery capability

Final pitch - shortlisted applicants present to a judging panel

Successful projects will also be required to provide progress and impact reporting post-award.

How to apply

Northmore Gordon can support your application from concept through to submission-helping you shape a competitive proposal that aligns with the challenge criteria and maximises your chance of success.

Get Support with Your Application

If you're a Victorian water corporation looking to develop an innovative solution in biosolids management or broader climate resilience, now is the time to act.

Contact Northmore Gordon today to discuss your eligibility and prepare a strong submission for the Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (WMCIC) 2026.

How to use this information now

Before relying on a grant, confirm the current round, applicant and project eligibility, eligible expenditure, co-contribution, assessment process, closing date and evidence obligations. Build the technical case so the project remains understandable with grant support shown separately.

Separate source-reported facts from forecasts, targets and commentary. For a current project, retain the official source, version, effective date, assumptions and decision record in the evidence file.

Related guidance

Carbon advisory

Current articles and guidance

Contact Northmore Gordon

What is the Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge (WMCIC) 2026 and why should water corporations participate?

The WMCIC 2026 is a Victorian Government-backed funding challenge offering \$320,000 to support innovative solutions addressing climate change in Victoria's water sector, with a specific focus on sustainable biosolids management and emissions reduction. Water corporations should participate because the challenge aligns with operational priorities in wastewater treatment, offers competitive funding for projects that might otherwise lack capital, and provides recognition and support for scalable sustainability outcomes. The challenge encourages collaborative delivery with research institutions and private-sector partners, expanding the reach of innovations across the sector.

What types of projects and outcomes does WMCIC 2026 funding support?

WMCIC 2026 funding supports projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from wastewater processes, enable carbon sequestration and circular-economy outcomes, improve resource recovery such as nutrient extraction (nitrogen and phosphorus), develop solutions to remove or manage contaminants, address compliance and environmental risks, and deliver scalable, long-term sustainability outcomes. Projects must demonstrate innovation and climate benefit. The funding is particularly suited to biosolids-focused initiatives that transform how waste streams are managed and reused, creating both environmental and resource-recovery value.

Who is eligible to apply for WMCIC 2026 funding and what are the key submission requirements?

Applicants must be a Victorian Water Corporation, with the project submission led by a Victorian Water Corporation. Key requirements include alignment with the 2026 challenge theme (biosolids management), submission before the 22 July 2026 closing date at 5pm AEST, endorsement by an Executive-level representative, and compliance with all submission criteria. Collaborative partnerships with research institutions, government agencies, and private-sector partners are strongly encouraged. The submission process is competitive, with applications subject to eligibility review, shortlisting based on innovation and impact, and a final pitch presentation.

How does the WMCIC 2026 competitive process work, and what should applicants prepare?

The WMCIC follows a structured competitive process: an initial eligibility review confirms submissions meet requirements; shortlisting occurs based on innovation, impact, scalability, and delivery capability; finalists are announced 10 August 2026 and present to a judging panel on 2 September 2026. Applicants should prepare a competitive proposal articulating the business problem, proposed solution, expected climate and resource-recovery outcomes, scalability, and delivery capability. Successful projects must also provide post-award progress and impact reporting. The competitive timeline from applications (closing 22 July) to announcement (30 September) requires early planning.

What is the relationship between WMCIC 2026 funding and water corporation energy and emissions strategy?

WMCIC 2026 funding directly supports water corporations' emissions-reduction and decarbonisation goals by providing capital for innovative wastewater-treatment solutions. Biosolids management is a significant emissions source and resource-recovery opportunity within wastewater operations. Successful WMCIC projects contribute to facility-level and organisation-wide greenhouse-gas reduction targets, support resource circularity, and demonstrate climate leadership. For corporations with existing energy-management systems or transition planning underway, WMCIC funding can accelerate the implementation of priority opportunities identified in feasibility assessments or opportunity registers.

How can Northmore Gordon support a water corporation's WMCIC 2026 application?

We can support WMCIC applications from concept development through to submission, helping shape a competitive proposal aligned with challenge criteria. Our expertise spans sustainability and decarbonisation strategy, commercialisation of innovative technologies, grant funding strategy and application support, and business-case development and project planning. We can assist in articulating the climate and operational case, strengthening feasibility evidence, developing robust financial projections, identifying and engaging collaborative partners, and preparing pitch materials. Craig Morgan, Sales & Marketing Director, is available as a contact expert for WMCIC 2026 support.

How does WMCIC 2026 funding fit within a broader water-sector energy and carbon-management program?

WMCIC 2026 is a targeted innovation-funding opportunity within Victoria's broader water-sector sustainability landscape. Water corporations implementing organisation-wide energy management systems, conducting facility assessments, and identifying opportunities across their estates may identify WMCIC-eligible biosolids projects as priority interventions. WMCIC funding complements other mechanisms such as Victorian Energy Upgrades for efficiency projects, environmental certificates for eligible activities, and internal capital allocation. A structured approach—beginning with energy assessment, opportunity identification, and business-case development—increases competitiveness for WMCIC and other funding rounds.

What evidence and planning should precede a WMCIC 2026 application for a biosolids innovation project?

Strong WMCIC applications are supported by: current understanding of biosolids handling, treatment, and disposal practices; quantified baseline data on volumes, composition, and associated emissions or costs; identification of the specific climate, emissions, or resource-recovery opportunity; feasibility assessment of the proposed solution; preliminary cost estimates and financial assumptions; confirmation of required partnerships and roles; and a clear description of scalability and long-term sustainability. Our carbon advisory, transition planning, and project-development services can help establish this evidence base, ensuring applications demonstrate credible problem definition, technical viability, and realistic delivery capability.