

Southern Rivers

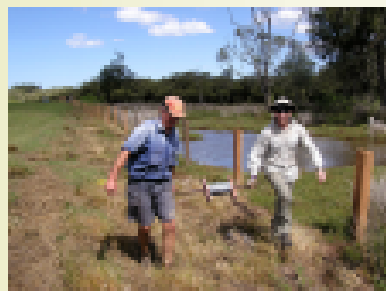
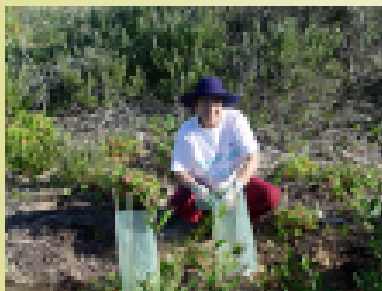
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Catchment Action Plan



SECTION 2:

Community and Partnerships Program

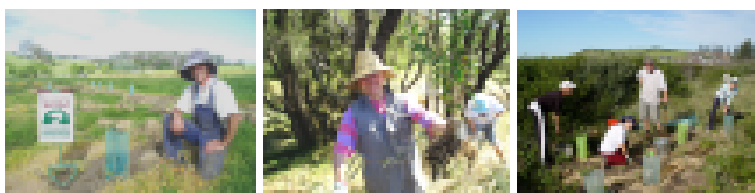


COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Community support for and participation in sustainable natural resource management is the foundations for the delivery of the Catchment Action Plan.

Change “on the ground” requires individuals, groups and large organisations to actively involve themselves in bringing about improvements in the condition of our water, land, coastal and marine resources, and biodiversity.



Southern Rivers CMA acknowledges that considerable and valuable work has been undertaken across the region over the past 15 years to bring about an improvement in resource condition. People are now more aware of natural resource issues and the sorts of practices that will, if adopted, improve the situation. In many instances groups now feel they have enhanced capabilities to tackle problems and implement solutions. Partnerships and networks have been formed across government, industry and community sectors to enhance our ability to communicate and collaborate on natural resource management.

The number of individuals and groups undertaking natural resource management planning and on-ground works has increased. For example, the number of Landcare groups in the region has grown to over 150 in the past 15 years, with several local governments also supporting Bushcare programs to protect and restore local biodiversity.

Incentives have been provided to rural landholders for a range of sustainability improvements (farm planning, erosion control works, revegetation, water use efficiency measures, protecting remnant vegetation) which have been actively taken up by individual landholders and are supported by major industry partners.

Local government now plays a large role in natural resource management, with twelve local government areas either wholly or partially within the Southern Rivers CMA region.

The state of the region’s biodiversity resources, the continuing pressure on these, and the way the Catchment Action Plan will

directs effort to improve their condition is described in Table 2. The factors considered in developing the strategic direction and targets for the catchment action plan’s community and partnerships program are discussed below.

2.2 COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The community targets have been developed through an extensive period of consultation with our communities. At the conclusion of the former catchment management boards’ terms, discussion groups about community engagement were held with a range of key individuals and organisations involved in natural resource management across the region.

The feedback from these meetings helped Southern Rivers CMA develop principles for working with communities. It also provided a list of key actions that were crucial to involving people in natural resource management, building knowledge and skills, fostering more collaboration and sustaining our efforts to ‘care for country’. These targets and actions were also reviewed with reference to social targets within the catchment blueprints for Southern and South-east Catchment Management Boards.

In 2005, Southern Rivers CMA was one of four natural resource management regions to be studied as part of a national project to examine how natural resource management regional bodies were going about their work with communities. The recommendations of the project reinforced the need for clear targets for engaging groups and individuals, investment in building capacities, and a support system that motivates and builds commitment.

2.3 LINKS WITH AGENCIES

Successful partnerships between the Southern Rivers CMA, state government agencies and communities are the key to implementing the catchment action plan and achieving its community targets.

A range of agreements are already in place at the state level between CMAs and other agencies with natural resource and environmental management responsibilities.

At the regional level, Southern Rivers CMA is complementing this by establishing agreements with local governments, district Landcare associations, the Sydney Catchment Authority and other organisations.

At an implementation level, state government natural resource management agencies and local governments will also be engaged through a range of implementation committees, many of which are already in place.

In the first year of implementing the catchment action plan the Southern Rivers CMA will prepare an engagement and partnership strategy which will provide more detail on the way agencies and other organisations will support the achievement of targets.

2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The community and partnership program must be underpinned by an excellent understanding of how to target the intended audience, and what motivates and inspires them to make positive changes to their environment.

The challenge in monitoring and evaluating community targets for natural resource management is to determine the linkage between real environmental change and management actions such as training events, Landcare support and partnership programs. Information about the number of clients, number of training events, number of Landcare groups plus other outputs are collected quarterly. Information is also collected to examine the link between capacity building and natural resource management outcomes. Community Support Officers annually collate "stories" on shared experiences with their communities to provide more detailed qualitative information about changes to natural resource management.

Southern Rivers CMA is undertaking a social benchmarking project during 2006 which will establish a set of indicators for the community targets and provide a benchmark of the current levels and quality of engagement processes. This project will help Southern Rivers CMA to adopt specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound targets.

This project is being conducted with reference to work being conducted at the state and national levels on indicators for assessing the social foundations of natural resource management and the capacity of land managers to change and adopt sustainable management practices. The suite of indicators provided below are thus only a guide to the type of indicators that may be adopted.

2.5 LINKS BETWEEN TARGETS

Achieving our community targets will contribute directly to the achievement of the state target which positions natural resource management decision-making at the core of maintaining sustainability.

Our community targets have been developed with reference to the national Natural Resource Management Capacity Building Framework. This framework states that awareness, information and knowledge, skills and training and facilitation and support activities are crucial for good decision making

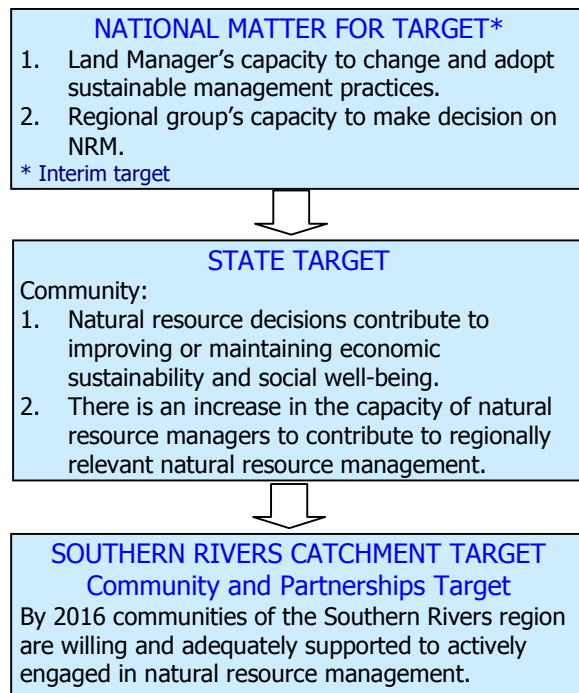


TABLE 2

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM -
Current state and pressures and proposed action plan responses

State of key human resources in the Southern Rivers region	Pressure on human resources condition	Response of the Catchment Action Plan
<p>The region supports a high level of community organising and activity on natural resource management. For example, the community Landcare movement has empowered local communities and landholders to develop and drive gains in natural resource management; local government has a clear agenda to deliver healthier urban, rural and coastal environments, and many industries have reshaped their businesses to deliver quality products and sustain the natural resource base.</p> <p>A diverse range of partnerships and networks has been established and nurtured to implement sustainable natural resource management. The capacity of many individuals, groups and organisations to undertake sustainable natural resource management has also increased over the past 15 years.</p> <p>However many in the community are yet to be engaged in a meaningful way and additional opportunities and incentives for participation will be needed. Capacity building for those closely engaged and those yet to be engaged will be needed if we are to continue to realise substantial and sustainable gains.</p> <p>In painting a “rosy” picture of the human potential and capability within the region, there is also a current of uncertainty, cynicism and distrust prevalent among many in the community. Years of reform processes within natural resource management (and other spheres of government) have taken a toll, with some feeling disengaged, or simply wary of the regional natural resource management model.</p>	<p>All landowners and land managers are experiencing increasing pressure to protect and sustain natural resources, whether due to government regulations or community expectations. For example, farmers across the region have experienced many years of drought, seen declining commodity prices and had increasing demand to produce “environmental services” for the public good.</p> <p>Coupled with an expanding population, particularly along the coast, the demand for extension, capacity building and community support services is growing.</p> <p>Many stakeholders have a limited ability to further undertake sustainable natural resource management due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs associated with changing to more sustainable practices • over-commitment and burnout of community volunteers • lack of confidence, knowledge, skill and sufficient incentive or motivation to change practices • organisational failure to deliver a whole-of-government approach to natural resource management leading to duplication, gaps or a lack of co-ordination. 	<p>Acknowledgment and on-going support for the natural resource management work being undertaken by individuals, groups and organisations (<i>see management target C2</i>).</p> <p>Extend and build on existing partnerships and networks and continue to build community capacity and confidence (<i>see management target C1</i>).</p> <p>Foster increasing community knowledge of natural resource management issues through co-ordinated education and communication (<i>see management target C4</i>).</p> <p>Provide opportunities for more diverse participation from across our regional community (<i>see management targets 1 and C1, C3</i>).</p> <p>Directly engage others in the community who have a significant influence on the state of natural resources, to build shared natural resource management goals and an agenda for action (<i>see management target C1</i>).</p> <p>Actively listen, build trust and involve local people in natural resource management decision-making processes and the implementation of natural resource management programs (<i>see management target C1, C2</i>).</p> <p>Encourage social learning by bringing groups of stakeholders together to learn from each other and to deepen our understanding of community and social processes through social research (<i>see management target C2</i>).</p> <p>Adopt a critical stance to the implementation of all natural resource management programs by refining, adapting and improving them as we go (<i>see management target C5</i>).</p>

2.6 TARGETS OF THE CATCHMENT ACTION PLAN'S COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Set out below are the community and partnerships catchment target, five management targets and detail on the intent, performance indicators and examples relevant to each management target.

The community and partnerships catchment targets

<p>By 2016 communities of the Southern Rivers region are willing and adequately supported to actively engage in natural resource management.</p>	
<p>Intent</p>	<p>The ongoing ability of people to respond to new information, to adapt and change to new natural resource management practices, to plan, implement and monitor on-ground works is dependent on how successfully Southern Rivers CMA engages and supports the community. It is critical that the Southern Rivers CMA invests in quality engagement processes and continues to build community capacity to practice sustainable natural resource management.</p> <p>This program thus responds to the key challenges of implementing the catchment action plan, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building partnerships (premised upon sharing power and boosting motivation of partners) • enhancing co-ordination (beyond short-term ad hoc informal cooperation) • fostering communication (premised upon two-way conversations more than mass media) • managing change (using visioning and innovative planning methods) • resolving conflicts (or using them as opportunities for new terms of engagement) • sharing data and information (with the right audience for timely decision-making) • building confidence in the Southern Rivers CMA (contributing to effective leadership and trust in catchment wide decision-making about natural resource management). <p>Implementation of the management targets will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on and increase networks (Landcare and other "care" groups, Aboriginal communities, local government, industry, agencies etc) • strengthen and build on existing partnerships with Landcare, the dairying and other industries, local government, state agencies, Aboriginal organisations etc • extend the level of engagement, capacity and partnership development in natural resource management into other stakeholder groups not previously engaged (eg tourism, the fishing industry) • increase the level of understanding and involvement of the broader community in natural resource management • build confidence and capabilities in natural resource management decision-making and in the regional model.
<p>Performance indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for engagement • satisfaction rate with engagement • number of partnership agreements/MOUs • partners satisfaction rate with partnership negotiations, support and capacity building • scale and quality of participation (key stakeholder groups) • number of collaborative forums established/supported • awareness of regional natural resource management process

TABLE 3

The community and partnerships management targets

Community and partnerships management target C1 – engagement

C1 From 2006 the willingness of communities to engage in natural resource management and the quality of that engagement will be enhanced, with the number of people working collaboratively maintained or increased.

Community and partnerships management target C2 – community support

C2 From 2006 the support system that resources local communities to contribute to natural resource management will be improved.

Community and partnerships management target C3 – Caring for Country

C3 From 2006 indigenous communities will be better engaged in natural resource management planning and resources and opportunities to “Care for Country” are increased.

Community and partnerships management target C4 – capacity and practices

C4 By 2016 there will be an increase in community awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to natural resource management and an increase in the adoption of practices that improve natural resource outcomes.

Community and partnerships management target C5 – social and economic

C5 By 2016 an effective mix of incentives, regulation, education and community support programs will be in place to achieve the biophysical targets of the Catchment Action Plan.

Details on community and partnerships management target C1 - engagement

<p>Management target C1: From 2006 the willingness of communities to engage in natural resource management and the quality of that engagement will be enhanced, with the number of people working collaboratively maintained or increased.</p>	
<p>Intent</p>	<p>The intent of this target is to provide opportunities for people to work together in partnership to address shared goals. Establishing and nurturing natural resource management partnerships and networks will be critical to sharing and building understanding, translating ideas into action on-the-ground and providing a basis for longer term commitments to sustainable natural resource management to be made.</p> <p>Confidence and trust in the regional model across community, industry and government sectors must also be built. Trust and confidence will be built through the Southern Rivers CMA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being transparent, open and accessible • investing in long-term relationships with our partners • providing more opportunities for local community involvement in decision-making • facilitating better interactions between government and communities • building a public profile through quality communication • using resources effectively and efficiently • adopting quality monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes
<p>Performance indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of opportunities for engagement • effectiveness of engagement processes • achievement of engagement outcomes (ie improved project outcomes) • scale and quality of participation (key stakeholder groups together with a broader cross section of the community) • numbers of formal partnership agreements/MOUs • satisfaction rate: partnership negotiations • satisfaction rate: support and capacity building • % of target groups willing to be engaged in natural resource management
<p>Examples of catchment activities that would support this target</p>	<p>Capacity building and information sharing through measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry forums and networks • local government forums and networks • local management teams in each subregion • inter- agency co-ordination groups <p>Plans and strategies such as engagement strategies and opportunities for specific groups (industry, local government, Landcare and other care groups, Aboriginal communities etc).</p>
<p>Related targets</p>	<p>B1, B2, B3, SLC1, W1, CM1</p>

Details on community and partnerships management target C2 – community support

Management target C2:	
From 2006 the support system that resources local communities to contribute to natural resource management will be improved.	
Intent	<p>It is the intent of this target to foster sustained participation in natural resource management from across our diverse regional community. This requires a system in place that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitates community involvement in natural resource management planning • fosters the use of scientific, local and other knowledge in natural resource management decision-making • provides resources to get action on-the-ground • supports social learning from our work together • recognises it is important to celebrate our achievements along the way.
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of care and other groups supported • number of training opportunities provided • number of community funding submissions • amount of additional investment leveraged by community • number of community support positions
Examples of catchment activities that would support this target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capacity building and information • community support and project staff • Landcare/Bushcare action planning • partnership initiatives • establish and support peer-to-peer networks • natural resource management communications • catchment forums and celebrations • technical advice and extension • targeted training and education programs • leadership programs • participatory monitoring and evaluation
Related targets	B2, B3

Details on community and partnerships management target C3 – Caring for Country

<p>Management target C3: From 2006 indigenous communities will be better engaged in natural resource management planning and resources and opportunities to “Care for Country” are increased.</p>	
<p>Intent</p>	<p>Natural resource management planning and implementation should light a path towards reconciliation between Indigenous and other Australians. Since European colonisation the land and river systems have been exploited, and natural resources have been a major revenue stream for the government and non-indigenous communities. Aboriginal people have received few real benefits from the use of the land, rivers and sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As custodians of the land, Aboriginal people will be actively involved in natural resource planning and in land management on the ground. To participate as partners in planning, resourcing is needed to ensure that Aboriginal communities are properly equipped to take their custodian’s role in natural resource management. We recognise indigenous spiritual and cultural connections to land and waters and call for a new relationship based on partnerships and a respect for traditional knowledges and perspectives.
<p>Performance indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities for engagement Aboriginal communities natural resource management skills, confidence; and satisfaction rate with support services number of groups supported number of natural resource management enterprises established number of cultural sites under active management by communities number of training and employment opportunities in natural resource management number of joint management arrangements or similar land management agreements
<p>Examples of catchment activities that would support this target</p>	<p>Capacity building and information sharing measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal reference groups and local forums cultural awareness programs natural resource management training and education programs <p>Plans and strategies such as natural resource management employment strategies</p> <p>Develop and implement projects such as natural resource management enterprises (ecotourism, aquaculture, bush tucker etc) and cultural heritage mapping, protection and restoration programs</p>
<p>Related targets</p>	<p>B2, B3, SLC1, W5, CM1, CM2</p>

Details on community and partnerships management target C4 – capacity and practices

<p>Management target C4: By 2016 there will be an increase in community awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to natural resource management and an increase in the adoption of practices that improve natural resource outcomes.</p>	
<p>Intent</p>	<p>The intent of this target is to build community capabilities through investing in awareness raising, knowledge and skill building and other capacity building activities within the community. It also recognises that the adoption of best management practices will be enhanced if we recognise and incorporate the social and economic drivers and barriers to change that are facing natural resource managers and users.</p>
<p>Performance indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants: accepted norms • Participants: confidence • Participants: awareness, knowledge, skill • Participants: information sources used • Satisfaction rate with communications, capacity building, technical assistance, incentives • % adoption of sustainable management practices
<p>Examples of catchment activities that would support this target</p>	<p>Plans and strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building strategies • Communication and media strategies <p>Capacity building and information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public information forums on key catchment issues • Targeted education and training of individuals, groups and land holders • Build capacity of natural resource management professionals in government • Promote development and adoption of farm planning.
<p>Related targets</p>	<p>B1, B2, B3, SLC1, SLC6</p>

Details on community and partnerships management target C5 – social and economic

Management target C5: By 2016 an effective mix of incentives, regulation, education and community support programs will be in place to achieve the biophysical targets of the catchment action plan.	
Intent	<p>The community expects that we reduce inefficiencies in natural resource management by integrating and co-ordinating our efforts and by implementing programs that provide for maximum change in the state of our natural resources.</p> <p>This target recognises that the right mix of incentives, regulation, extension and capacity building programs can bring about accelerated behaviour and practice change towards sustainable natural resource management. In developing this mix we must take into account the social and economic issues that either drive change or act as a barrier to change across the diversity of our community. To do this we must understand the people across our region – prevailing social norms and attitudes towards natural resource management and the key social and economic factors affecting decision making. We must design our programs in response to what we learn and be ready to adapt our programs as we implement them.</p>
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take up of incentives • satisfaction rating from program participants and partners • number of incentive packages made available • number of cooperative arrangements between agencies/authorities
Examples of catchment activities that would support this target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research, monitoring and evaluation • social and economic research • social benchmarking • program evaluation and re-design. <p>Develop and implement projects such as incentive and support programs for biodiversity conservation, river corridor management, weed and pest animal control, soil management, coast and estuary management etc.</p>
Related targets	B2, B3, B4, W3, W4, CM3

2.7 RISK TO TARGET ACHIEVEMENT

Low level of community and landholder acceptance and involvement

The degree of success in achieving the community and partnership targets will rely on the level of community involvement and ultimately uptake of incentives and adoption of best practice.

Targets at risk: All

Response: Southern Rivers CMA is responding to this risk through its engagement and partnership strategy, to be adopted in late 2006. The strategy will identify changes in community needs, methods of engagement, and development and identification of partnership opportunities.