



Catchment strategy on right track

A mid-term review of the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-2019 (RCS) has highlighted its successful implementation, with 33 of the 36 strategic actions currently being delivered by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) and its regional partners.

The review was conducted over three months from October - December 2016 and involved a series of targeted stakeholder workshops across the region, one-on-one interviews, and an online survey.

The aim of the review was to assess the performance of the RCS, which provides the overarching framework for natural resource management in the WGCMA region.

The review also assessed the learnings from the RCS over the first three years of the six-year implementation program, and identified potential changes required, such as new technologies to be considered, and areas no longer relevant.

Opinions were sought from some 100 stakeholders as part of the review process, with 45 people actively participating.

Those involved included members of the WGCMA Board and community advisory groups, WGCMA staff, Traditional Owners, and representatives from industry groups, water authorities, local government, Landcare, the general community, non-government organisations, and government partner agencies.

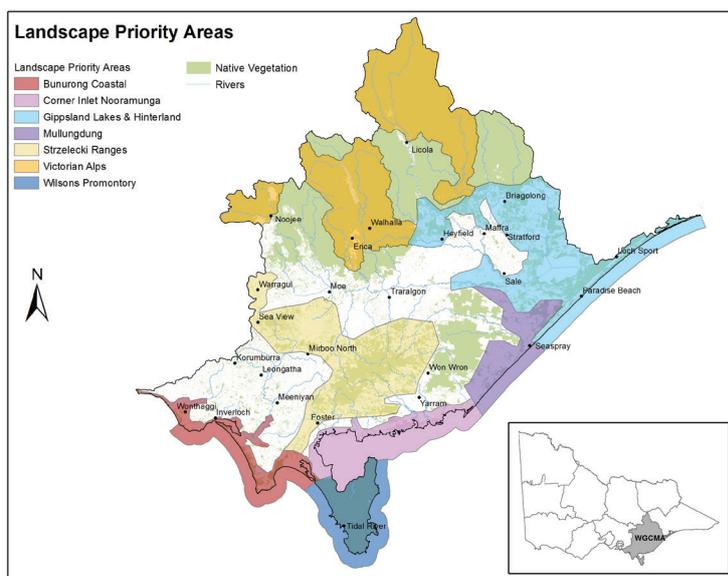
Key findings

The review found:

- The RCS is performing well to support delivery of its priority strategic actions. Many regional stakeholders said they refer to the RCS up to six or more times per year to guide partnerships, action and investment in natural resource management in the region. This highlights the RCS as a valuable tool.
- Of the 33 strategic actions currently underway, many are being delivered through collaborative projects, which have become integral parts of ongoing regional programs.
- Stakeholders have confidence in the strategy's development process, the information that underpins it, and find it easy to read and use.
- Stakeholders feel ownership of the RCS and view it as a document to be implemented by various partners, not just WGCMA.
- The RCS is being used to help stakeholders understand regional priorities, prepare funding applications, plan projects or programs, integrate and coordinate with others, and is useful for communication purposes.
- The RCS provides stakeholders with clear direction in terms of priority areas of focus for natural resource management action, and the type of action required.
- The inclusion of natural asset and threat information in the RCS provides justification for stakeholders' work at the local and regional scale.



- The RCS is helpful in identifying opportunities for stakeholders to form partnerships with other groups and organisations to achieve mutual natural resource management outcomes.
- The integrated approach of the strategy and the use of Landscape Priority Areas with descriptions of the key assets and threats within them, is beneficial.
- The presentation of objectives and management measures in a discrete table is appreciated.
- The regional overview information and maps are good sources of information and easy to refer to.



Suggested improvements

While the review found end users are largely comfortable with the current RCS content and format, some areas for improvement were suggested. These included:

- Clarification that the 'white' areas represent areas of influence (e.g. areas where threats to assets within landscape priority areas are occurring).
- Development of a supporting Regional Biodiversity Strategy would assist partners providing justification for their work.

Partnership forum established

WGCM has committed to establishing a new ongoing Regional Catchment Strategy Implementation Partnership Forum in 2017.

The need for such a forum was a major finding of the mid-term review and its establishment will help drive communication, collaboration and shared learnings, while reporting on RCS progress.

If you would like to be involved in the new forum, please contact Paula Camenzuli, NRM Strategic Planner via PaulaC@wgcm.vic.gov.au.