



Community Engagement Network (CEN) Charter

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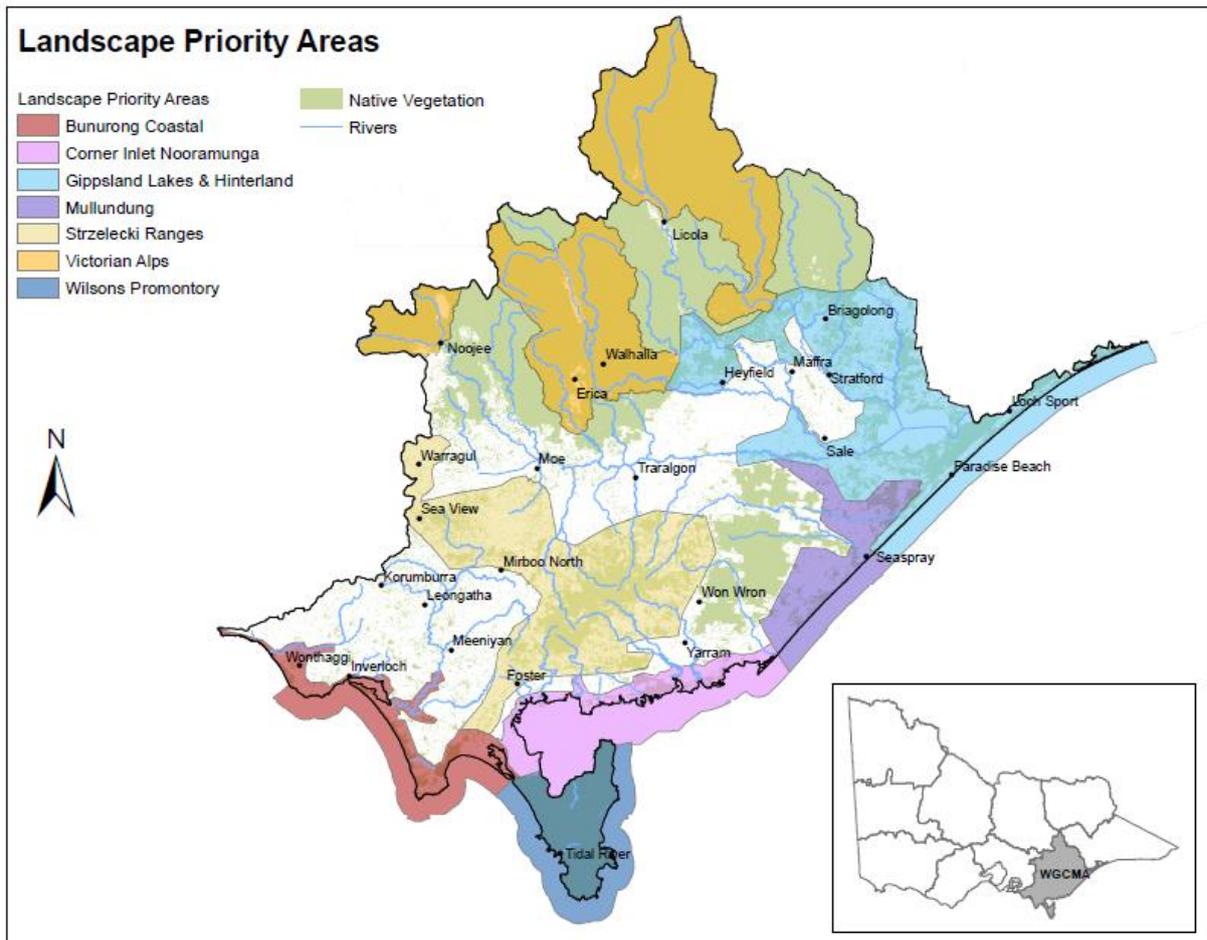
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Introduction

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) is one of ten CMA's across Victoria covering over 17,500 square kilometres from Warragul, to San Remo, Wilson's Promontory, Lakes Entrance and Mount Howitt, past Licola.

Our organisation was established by the state government in 1997 to manage land and water resources, and conserve cultural heritage in the West Gippsland region. We take this role seriously and our aim as a leader in natural resource management (NRM) is to inspire partnerships and action to achieve improved catchment health.



In 1997 Community Consultative Committees (CCC's) were mandated by Catchment and Land Protection (CALP Act). They had a formal role around expenditure of the water levy fee. WGCMA had 4 CCC's. WGCMA also began to engage community more broadly with a targeted/fit for purpose approach.

In the early 2000's the water levy was discontinued, and the CALP Act was changed, (CCC's were no longer mandated) but WGCMA continued with 2 Community Advisory Groups. (CAG's) Northern and Southern and continued to expand other forms of engagement.

The current WGCMA Strategic Plan 2019-2024 recognises that community engagement and partnerships are still a key area of focus, integral to the existence of CMA's and pivotal in achieving NRM outcomes and the delivery of the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).



Consistent with the Victorian Community Engagement and Partnership Framework (2016), the principles on which we base our approach are:

- 1. We will embed community engagement and build partnerships in all that we do.**
- 2. We will provide meaningful opportunities for our communities and partners to contribute to strategies and initiatives.**
- 3. Our community and partnership approach will be well planned, tailored, targeted and evaluated;**
- 4. We will collaborate with our communities and partners transparently, respectfully and establish clear roles and expectations.**

We currently engage with community and partners in multiple ways.

Forums

- Catchment Partnership Forums
- Traditional Owner Engagement Forums
- Regional Landcare Forum
- Project/Plan/Strategy Steering Committees, Advisory Groups, Stakeholder Reference Groups (Specific - fit for purpose)
- Engagement Networks
- Internally and Externally Managed Forums

Project delivery

- Directly with landholders through Land/Water program delivery

Statutory planning

- Directly with landholders through advice, referrals and compliance.

Communications

- Website, traditional and social media platforms, publications, newsletters,

In 2018, the CAG review made recommendations to the WGCMA board to change CAG's to a Community Engagement Network (CEN), that could be drawn on to provide advice as required, provide a forum for information exchange and increase advocacy for NRM in the region. The intention of the network is to provide a more modern and flexible approach to community engagement.

This Charter has been developed to provide:

- guidance and direction to CEN members about their roles and responsibilities;
- information for people interested in applying for a position on a CEN; and
- information for staff, broader community or partners about the CEN.

Purpose

The CEN will provide a forum for information exchange to:

- identify community NRM needs, issues and barriers to participation.
- provide community perspective into strategies, plans and projects,
- strengthen WGCMA's profile and reputation in the community through advocacy of NRM issues, solutions and WGCMA activities.

Membership

CEN members are appointed by the WGCMA Board after a formal expression of interest process, in which applicants can demonstrate their networks, skills and knowledge against the selection criteria.

Selection

The WGCMA board will select members with the aim of achieving:

- A geographic spread of individuals.
- Diversity and inclusion principles
- A range of industry experience, interests and demographics.
- A balance of skills, knowledge or community involvement in NRM.

The Board considers the following criteria in the appointment of CEN members:

- Familiarity with the West Gippsland region and preferably to reside within it.
- Community connection, networks and participation.
- Some understanding of NRM issues

Members do not represent a specific area, sector or group.

The WGCMA Board will annually appoint a Chair and Deputy of the CEN which creates a link for direct exchange between the community and the WGCMA Board.

The Chair and Deputy will be responsible for chairing CEN forums for a 24-month period.

Term

Members are appointed for a three-year term. Members may nominate for a further term at the end of this period.

New members may apply during the three-year term and will be appointed at the discretion of the Board.

Members may be co-opted and appointed to join the Network by the board as required.

Time Commitment

It is expected that CEN members will:

- attend an induction workshop at the commencement of their term.
- attend 2 CEN forums annually.
- read WGCMA information (e.g. catchment snapshot newsletters, social and traditional media)
- review material and respond where specific input is requested. (e.g. RCS renewal)

CEN forums will be held at different locations throughout the West Gippsland region as appropriate.

Termination of Membership

- The Board reserves the right to terminate the membership of any CEN member.

Administration Arrangements

Resourcing & Budget

An adequate and suitable budget for the operation of the CEN components of the WGCMA's community engagement program is developed and allocated annually.

The WGCMA Partnerships and Engagement Program Coordinator will manage coordination and communication with CEN members as required.

Where the input of members is requested by WGCMA staff in relation to a specific project, sitting fees will be met through the budget of the relevant project.

Members are fully covered by WGCMA Public Liability Insurance when at scheduled or approved forums as a CEN member.

Sitting Fees

Sitting fees are paid to appointed members in accordance with the relevant State Government legislation. Rates are reviewed annually by the Remuneration Committee of the Board, having regard to CPI increases. State Government legislation prohibits fees being paid to full-time employees of the State of Victoria.

Meetings where fees are payable:	Sitting fee	Authorisation Required
CEN Forums	Yes	No authorisation required
Any other meetings that a member is asked to attend to represent the CEN	Yes	Partnerships and Engagement Programs Coordinator
Any other meetings or events that a member chooses to attend	No	No authorisation required

Communications Protocol

The WGCMA Communications Policy outlines the normal responsibilities in relation to communicating with the Board, staff, the broader community and the media.

Pathways of communication outside meetings, forums and workshops should be directed through the Partnership and Engagement Programs Coordinator.

Code of Conduct

The Victorian Code of Conduct for Public Sector Employees and Boards applies.

Conflict Resolution

All conflict is resolved through the appropriate WGCMA policy and procedure mechanisms.

WGCMA and other Staff

CEN members are encouraged to communicate with staff through the appropriate forums and channels. This interaction also provides a resource for staff in relation to the community engagement and consultative requirements of their projects and plans. CEN members do not have power of instruction over staff.

WGCMA Representation

CEN members are not authorised to represent or talk on behalf of the WGCMA. All media contact regarding the WGCMA is to be referred to the CEO in the first instance.

Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement

Reporting on activities, achievements, performance and attendance of the CEN is an important function. The Partnership & Engagement Programs Coordinator is responsible for completing an annual review of CEN activities and performance and reporting this to the Board.

Performance measurement and reporting must involve CEN members and should include an element of self-assessment. This information will be used for improvement and to build on the success of the Network.

The Charter is reviewed at least every three years or on an as-needs basis.