Responding to challenges

Regional Catchment Strategies (RCs) are strategic plans that guide catchment management in Australia. They are developed in partnership with community members and incorporate a range of socio-economic and environmental considerations. RCs are important tools for assessing and addressing the impacts of climate change, land use, and other factors. They provide a framework for guiding decision making and prioritizing actions that help build resilience and sustainability in catchments.

RCS priorities are established under six strategic objectives of the RCS Framework to Responding to challenges:

1. **RCS in Action**: High profile projects such as the Catchment and Farmland Resilience Project in the Goulburn Broken CMA. This project focuses on building resilience to climate change by improving soil health and water management.

2. **Adapting to Land Use Change**: This involves land use planning and management, including the recognition of traditional Owners' rights and cultural practices. It also includes the integration of grazing systems with cropping practices to improve soil health.

3. **Adapting to Water Policy Reform**: This objective aims to enhance water resource management, including the implementation of water trading and the development of water efficiency programs.

4. **Adapting to Climate Variability**: This involves managing the impacts of climate variability, such as drought and flooding, to ensure the resilience of ecosystems and human communities.

5. **Adapting to Increased Population**: This objective addresses the impacts of population growth on the natural environment, including the provision of green spaces and the conservation of water resources.

6. **Adapting to Increased Urbanisation**: This involves managing the impacts of urbanization on the natural environment, including the provision of green spaces and the conservation of water resources.

**An evolving understanding**

The Goulburn Broken RCS 2013-2029 provides the next step in supporting sustainable economic, social and environmental characteristics of the Catchment. It builds on decades of work, beginning with a focus on the single threat of salinity in the 1990s, leading to integrated Catchment management in the 2000s, and promoting the value of ecosystem services in the early 2000s, and realizing to the current resilience-based approach.

**From strategy to action**

Success will depend on Catchment partnerships developing and delivering projects. Partnerships across the six RCs will be strengthened and developed, including local communities, industry, landholders, community groups, land managers, and government agencies. The partnership will focus on improving soil health, ensuring sustainable grazing practices, and protecting natural resources. Opportunities for engaging local and land and water managers to develop initiatives to improve the natural environment.

**Summary for the Community**

The Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy 2013 – 2019 builds on previous efforts for the coming six years and beyond to sustain and restore the natural environment that underpins our way of life, wellbeing, prosperity and future. Since European settlement our relationship with the natural environment has been transformed. The current RCS builds on the 1997 and 2003 RCSs. The Catchment’s people have worked together to improve their environment in areas such as soil health, salinity, water quality, biodiversity, and tourism. The past decade of drought, fire, floods, and 2018-19 floods have highlighted our inter-connections with the environment, its land, and water resources.

The RCS builds on the long history of community and agency partnerships and strong leadership.

**Embracing the Resilience Approach**

Because SESs are complex, with many uncertainties and ever-changing circumstances, building resilience requires the knowledge, skills and efforts of a variety of people and organizations to plan and manage in an adaptive way. Important thresholds (or tipping points) for what makes an SES resilient have been identified, such as community collaboration levels, native vegetation cover and nutrient loads in waterways. From this RCS, we will continue to be updated so that emerging changes are identified and acted upon.

**Stronging Partnerships**

Recognizing local differences across the Catchment, partnerships with local communities have been important in developing this RCS and will be critical in its implementation, including planning within the six regional Catchment Sub-Strategies. This RCS builds on the long history of community and agency partnerships and strong leadership.
Planning and action at whole of Catchment and sub-Catchment social-ecological system scales

Respecting issues such as climate variability, floods and fire requires a Catchment-scale approach and local action. Across the Catchment, the landscape, people, processes and plans differ. So social-ecological system (SES) have been identified through consultation and research. These SESs don't have sharp boundaries, but they do share similar characteristics and issues which give them a unique identity. Why are they important? They shape what can be done to build and maintain resilience so that the bare combination of people, land, biodiversity and water outcomes, valued by the local community, can continue to be provided. Types of actions have been identified for each SES as examples of what will be prioritised through the life of the RCS.

This RCS will:

**URBAN CENTRES**
- **Participants**: Local councils, regional councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Health, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Adopt a diverse set of change drivers, including social change, economic change, ecological change, governance change and technological change.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.

**SOUTHERN FORESTS**
- **Participants**: Local councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Healthy, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Landscape highly modified for agriculture with remaining vegetation fragmented and found on larger properties.
  - Promote the conservation of remnant and remnant agricultural landscapes and larger floodplain ecosystems with a view to enhancing their resilience to climate change.
  - Protect the unique assemblage of Banksia Forest and the forests, such as the Lower Goulburn Basin and the Northern floodplain with Murray River along boundary with NSW.
  - Address agricultural and fire management for protection and expanding remnant vegetation.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.

**AGRICULTURAL FLOODPLAINS**
- **Participants**: Local councils, regional councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Healthy, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Landscape highly modified for agriculture with remaining vegetation fragmented and found on larger properties.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.

**RURAL CENTRES**
- **Participants**: Local councils, regional councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Health, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Landscape highly modified for agriculture with remaining vegetation fragmented and found on larger properties.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.

**UPLAND SLOPES**
- **Participants**: Local councils, regional councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Health, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Landscape highly modified for agriculture with remaining vegetation fragmented and found on larger properties.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.

**COMMITTING MILLS**
- **Participants**: Local councils, regional councils, local land managers, local groups, landcare groups, heritage organisations, community groups, environment organisations, local businesses
- **Vision**: Health, resilient and increasingly productive systems supporting diverse cultures.
- **9-year strategic objective(s):**
  - Landscape highly modified for agriculture with remaining vegetation fragmented and found on larger properties.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
  - Prioritise water and environmental outcomes at the whole-of-Catchment scale.
- **80-85 year strategic priority(s):**
  - Strengthen leadership, diversity and voice.
  - Strengthen local capacity for leadership, diversity and voice.