



**GOULBURN  
BROKEN**  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation  
and  
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

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**John Patrick Kerr**  
**CEO, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Walters".

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**Carl Walters**  
**CEO, Goulburn Broken CMA**

August 2025



# Acknowledgement

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority acknowledges and respects all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We particularly acknowledge the First Nations of Yorta Yorta and Taungurung as the two Traditional Owner Nations of the land and waters in the Goulburn Broken catchment (and beyond). We recognise and respect each Nation's deep connection with their land, water and Country and their individual cultural practices.

We acknowledge and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owner obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their lands and waters. We support these rights including the right to self-determination.

We value our ongoing partnership with Yorta Yorta Nation for the health of Country and community.

## Purpose

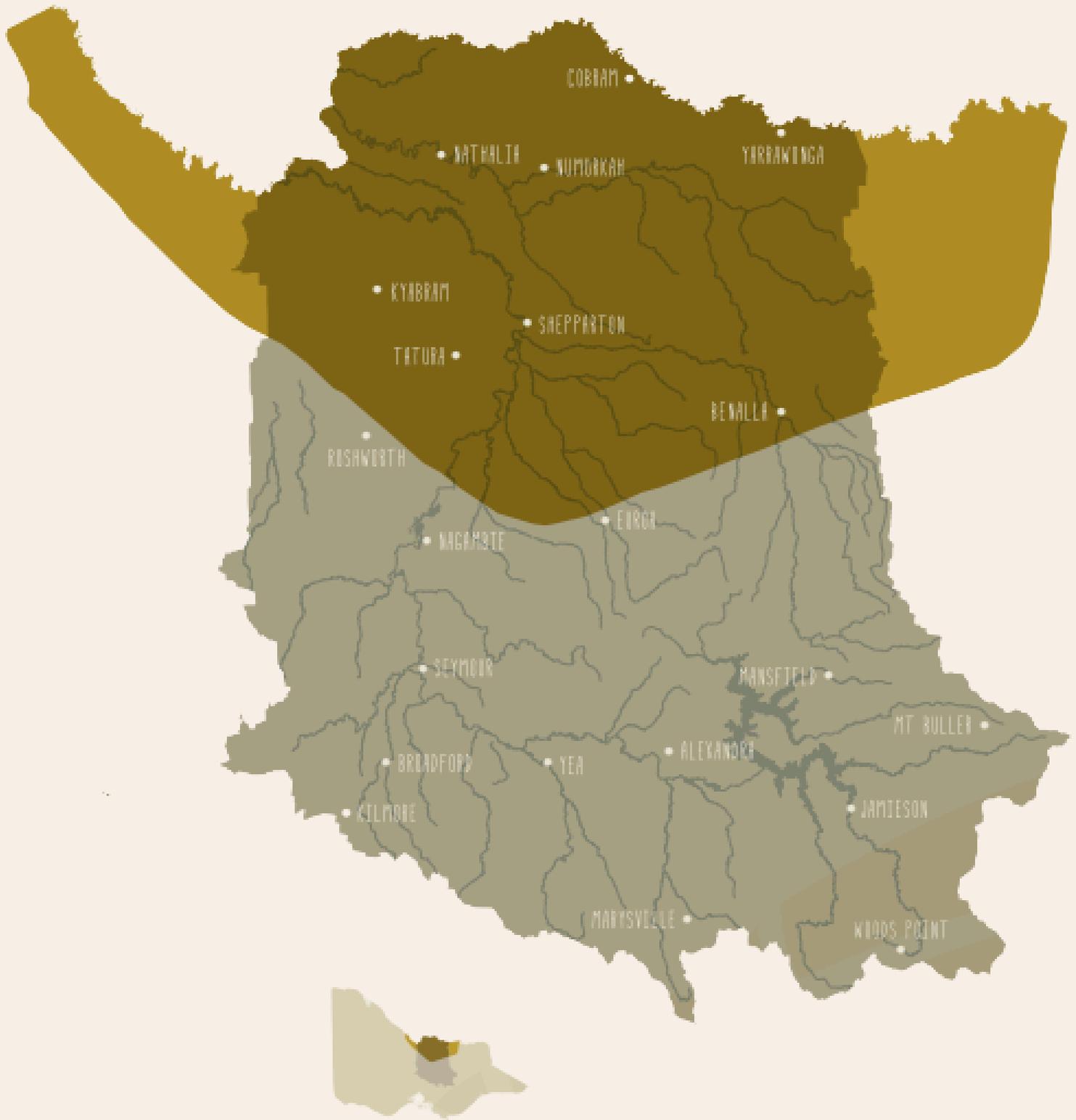
The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA) and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) will work together to care for Yorta Yorta Country through targeted planning, advocacy and implementation of natural resource management initiatives. While the political context will continue to evolve, the partnership will continue to focus on caring for Country and supporting Yorta Yorta Nation's right to self-determination. Both parties acknowledge that by working together the health of Country will be optimized.

This Memorandum builds on the original MOU developed in 2014, and an even longer history of working together to heal Country (since 2004). It expresses the agreed intentions and responsibilities within the cooperative relationship.

## Scope

The Memorandum is intended to guide a healthy and productive partnership. It is not intended to be legally binding or to impose financial obligation on either party. Both parties understand that all financial arrangements must be negotiated and depend upon the availability of funds.

The geographic area covered by this MOU is Yorta Yorta Country within the Goulburn Broken Catchment of Victoria.



**MAP LEGEND:**

- VICTORIAN YORTA YORTA REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY BOUNDARY**
- GOULBURN BROKEN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BOUNDARY**

# The Partners

## Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

- Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River (Dhungala – Yorta Yorta language and creation spirit name for the Murray River) North East Victoria and Southern NSW and radiates out North, South, East and West from the Murray and Goulburn River Junction (Kaiela –Yorta Yorta language name for father and name of the Goulburn River) takes in townships from Cohuna to a point West of Albury/Wodonga and includes Echuca, Shepparton/Mooroopna, Murchison, Benalla, Wangaratta, Yarrawonga/Mulwala, Finley, Cobram/Barooga, Corowa and extends Northward to a point around Deniliquin in NSW. (The majority of the towns named here have Yorta Yorta language names).
- Incorporated under the *Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) was established to represent descendants of the Yorta Yorta people; make decisions and act on any significant matters on their behalf; and to enter into agreements with any person/s, Government/s agencies or authority in relation to the betterment of Yorta Yorta people and protection of Yorta Yorta Country and interests.
- The YYNAC received Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) status in 2007 by the Victorian Government.

This status empowers YYNAC to manage and protect cultural heritage values in general and the cultural heritage of the Yorta Yorta Nation, their Traditional lands and RAP region in Victoria under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Under this Act the YYNAC (RAP) has legislative responsibility to monitor onsite development and advise and review cultural heritage management plan, (CHMP), and to safeguard the cultural heritage of Indigenous people.

- Other Agreements – The YYNAC also has joint management agreements with the Victorian and NSW State Governments to jointly manage, with the State NRM Agencies, Crown land areas and National Parks of the Murray/Goulburn Rivers and their smaller tributaries and other designated areas of the Yorta Yorta Nation Country/ area.

## Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA)

- The Goulburn Broken catchment stretches from close to the outskirts of Melbourne in the south to the Murray River in the north. The catchment includes Victoria's main water storage, Eildon and the popular Mt Buller Alpine Resort. It includes the municipalities of Moira, Campaspe, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Mansfield and Strathbogie Shires, Benalla Rural City and the City of Greater Shepparton. Approximately 1.4 million hectares is dryland agriculture, 270,600 hectares is intensive irrigated agriculture and 800,000 hectares is public land. Over 200,000 people live in the catchment, including a significant First Nations population (approximately 6000) as well as a larger number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds particularly from many parts of Europe and the Middle East.
- The GB CMA is a Statutory Authority established by the Victorian Parliament in 1997 under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The GB CMA is accountable for its performance to the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Water. One of its key responsibilities is to produce a Regional Catchment Strategy every six years.
- The Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy ([2021-2027](#)) sets out a vision and blueprint for improving catchment health. Through its leadership and partnerships, the GB CMA works to improve the resilience of the Catchment's people, land, biodiversity and water resources in a rapidly changing environment. Key functions of the GB CMA include integrated catchment management through a partnership approach, offering education and incentives to private landholders, public land and water management and overseeing floodplain statutory processes.

## Commitment statements from each party

### The GB CMA

- Acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples of this land;
- Acknowledges that colonisation has had significant impacts on Country, culture, and First Nations communities—particularly in the areas of health, education, and employment;
- Recognises the fundamental importance of self-determination;
- Is committed to ensuring opportunities for First Nations peoples to be involved in natural resource management through early decision-making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation;
- Is committed to reconciliation (noting that the Goulburn Broken CMA has completed its third Reconciliation Action Plan, 2025–2027); and
- Highly values the knowledge and involvement of local First Nations peoples and our ongoing partnership to care for Country.

### YYNAC

- Acknowledges that sustaining strong partnerships with the Goulburn Broken CMA will improve the resilience of the Catchment, people, land, biodiversity, and water resources;
- Values the technical knowledge of the CMA in working with Yorta Yorta to develop Seasonal Watering Plans;
- Highly values the CMA's knowledge and involvement, and our ongoing partnership to care for Country through initiatives aligned with the Whole of Country Plan;
- Acknowledges the commitments made by the CMA through the Shepparton Irrigation Region Land and On-Water Management Plan to support the healing of First Nations communities and culture—specifically by providing opportunities to connect with Country, collaborate with partners, build collective capacity, co-design planning and project delivery, and promote First Nations economic inclusion through implementation of the Plan.

# Principles and Objectives

There are four major principles underpinning this MOU and the GB CMA/YYNAC partnership. The objectives and associated measures are aligned to these principles. These have been developed through conversations between the two parties, reflection on the previous MOU and consideration of the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Self-determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025[1].

<b>Mutual respect and empowerment (including shared authority and decision-making)</b>
<b>Using a strategic approach</b>
<b>Effective collaboration</b>
<b>Continuous improvement of the partnership</b>

Aligned to these four joint principles, the objectives of the MOU and partnership are as follows:

## **Mutual respect and empowerment**

1. Demonstrate a commitment to supporting Traditional Owner self-determination on Country so that Yorta Yorta Nation's aspirations for land, water and culture are realized ("nature and culture are one"[2]).

## **Using a strategic approach**

2. To achieve a healthy partnership, ensure clear communications on the respective aspirations, strengths, rights, roles and responsibilities of the two parties.  
3. Link long-term strategy to short-medium term operational actions within the partnership.

## **Effective collaboration**

4. Embed collaborative practices that build the shared capacity of both parties to care for Country.

## **Continuous improvement of the partnership**

5. Take an adaptive management approach, ensuring that we have dedicated time and processes for reflection and ongoing evaluation of our partnership.

[1] Pupangarli-Marnmarnepu Aboriginal Self-determination Strategy 2020-2025 (DEECA 2020)

[2] Yorta Yorta Whole of Country Plan 2021-2030 (YYNAC 2021)

# Collaborative governance

## Term of the Agreement

The duration of the MOU will be five years, unless collective agreement is reached to extend or terminate the MOU.



## Management and review of the MOU

CEOs and relevant managers of YYNAC and GB CMA will meet annually to review the partnership and develop an operational plan aligned to the MOU. These annual meetings will be of a strategic nature to review the partnership (including measures of success) and related matters of a strategic, long-term nature. A more thorough review of the MOU will be undertaken mid-term (i.e. during Year 3 of the MOU). Any resulting modifications will be negotiated and determined by mutual agreement of the parties. A Consultation/Implementation Group will meet 2-4 times each year to identify operational priorities aligned to the MOU and associated strategies. This group will provide recommendations to the MOU Management Group. Meetings of either group may be conducted online or in person as agreed by both parties.

## Communication and information

Communication between the two parties will be two-way, open and timely in-keeping with the desire and goodwill to work together to achieve shared aspirations for Country and culture.

## Review and evaluation

It's important for both parties to evaluate if the partnership is effective and healthy. The MOU sets the foundation of achieving a great partnership.

The following **Review and Evaluation** framework provides a basis to measure the success and health of the GB CMA/YYNAC Partnership and this MOU. The indicators and measures are aligned to the Principles and Objectives.



## Review and evaluation framework

### Mutual respect and empowerment

Objective 1: Demonstrate a commitment to supporting Traditional Owner self-determination on Country so that Yorta Yorta Nation's aspirations for land, water and culture are realised.

Indicator (to succeed we must....)	Measures (evidence of indicators being achieved, e.g. size, amount or degree of change)
Support economic prosperity of First Nations through procurement of services e.g. Woka Walla Works crew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of GB CMA/YYNAC contracts employing services of YYNAC, e.g., Woka Walla Works Crew.</li> <li>GB CMA expenditure on procurement of services with YYNAC (and other local First Nations businesses)</li> </ul>
Establish ways for GB CMA and YYNAC to build knowledge, capacity and expertise related to managing Country or corporate functions and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of secondments, placements, mentoring enabled. (e.g. GBCMA supporting young YYNAC staff who have limited experience), training and shared/hybrid office arrangements investigated/implemented.</li> <li>No. of training events (including two-way) implemented.</li> <li>A phased approach to knowledge sharing is established and agreed.</li> <li>Evidence of support provided between the two parties (e.g. technical advice, data sharing, mentoring, letters of support)</li> <li>Representation and participation of Yorta Yorta people on Project Control Groups</li> <li>Evidence of support provided to Yorta Yorta community members to participate in leadership programs</li> <li>Evidence of YYNAC supporting/mentoring any First Nations staff that may be employed by GB CMA</li> </ul>

### Using a strategic approach

Objective 2: To achieve a healthy partnership, ensure clear communications on the respective aspirations, strengths, rights, roles and responsibilities of the two parties.

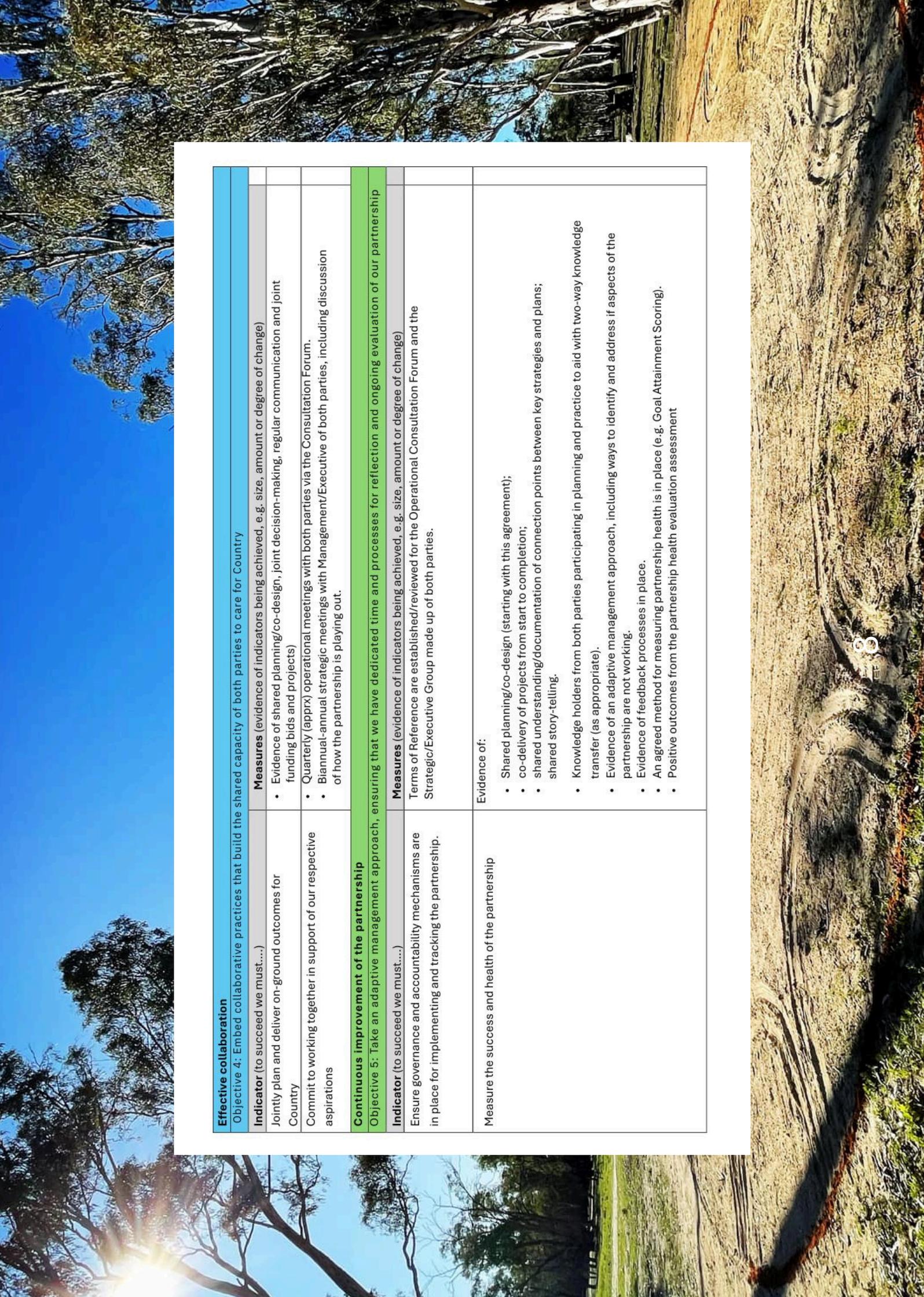
Indicator (to succeed we must....)	Measures (evidence of indicators being achieved, e.g. size, amount or degree of change)
Ensure mutual understanding of each party and the relationship of this MOU with other relevant agreements and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress against this MOU is discussed in the context of other key documents including YYNAC/GB CMA Consultation Forum Terms of Reference, and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreement (ACHLMA), GB CMA Indigenous Participation Plan 2024.</li> </ul>
Document partnership framework that identifies areas of mutual benefit and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion and documentation that helps both parties to navigate where they can be complementary and achieve more by working together, and identify key points of difference (including how we work together on strategy/policy, at the interface of private and public land, and GB CMA's contribution to the Joint Management Plan for Barmah National Park)</li> <li>No. of initiatives developed that demonstrate mutual/complimentary benefits</li> </ul>

### Objective 3: Link long-term strategy to short-medium term operational actions

Develop annual implementation plan that outlines what we will do together to make progress towards longer-term objectives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An operational plan that identifies immediate wins and more challenging, long-term goals, as well as emerging opportunities and barriers.</li> </ul>
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<b>Effective collaboration</b>	
Objective 4: Embed collaborative practices that build the shared capacity of both parties to care for Country	
<b>Indicator</b> (to succeed we must....) Jointly plan and deliver on-ground outcomes for Country	<b>Measures</b> (evidence of indicators being achieved, e.g. size, amount or degree of change) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of shared planning/co-design, joint decision-making, regular communication and joint funding bids and projects)</li> <li>Quarterly (approx) operational meetings with both parties via the Consultation Forum.</li> <li>Biannual-annual strategic meetings with Management/Executive of both parties, including discussion of how the partnership is playing out.</li> </ul>
Commit to working together in support of our respective aspirations	
<b>Continuous improvement of the partnership</b>	
Objective 5: Take an adaptive management approach, ensuring that we have dedicated time and processes for reflection and ongoing evaluation of our partnership	
<b>Indicator</b> (to succeed we must....) Ensure governance and accountability mechanisms are in place for implementing and tracking the partnership.	<b>Measures</b> (evidence of indicators being achieved, e.g. size, amount or degree of change) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of Reference are established/reviewed for the Operational Consultation Forum and the Strategic/Executive Group made up of both parties.</li> </ul>
Measure the success and health of the partnership	<p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared planning/co-design (starting with this agreement);</li> <li>co-delivery of projects from start to completion;</li> <li>shared understanding/documentation of connection points between key strategies and plans; shared story-telling.</li> <li>Knowledge holders from both parties participating in planning and practice to aid with two-way knowledge transfer (as appropriate).</li> <li>Evidence of an adaptive management approach, including ways to identify and address if aspects of the partnership are not working.</li> <li>Evidence of feedback processes in place.</li> <li>An agreed method for measuring partnership health is in place (e.g. Goal Attainment Scoring).</li> <li>Positive outcomes from the partnership health evaluation assessment</li> </ul>





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# KEY CONTACTS

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