

PEOPLE and ORGANISATIONS

8. PEOPLE and Organisations

8.1 Overview

Role and importance

As individuals, and collectively through a variety of organisations, the people of the Port Phillip and Western Port region provide an immense pool of knowledge, skills, services and funds that can be applied to sustainable catchment management.

Therefore, one of the region's most important catchment assets is its community – all its people and organisations – and their current and potential capacity to successfully address catchment management issues.

The goals, objectives, targets and actions proposed in this RCS will only be achieved with community action by these people and organisations. Every individual has opportunities to behave in ways that minimise his or her impact on our catchment assets. The ways in which each of us use energy and water, manage our litter and waste and travel to work all contribute to the size of our individual and collective ecological footprint.

As well as acting individually, the people of our regional community also come together in all sorts of forums and groups that can directly or indirectly affect the health and sustainability of our catchment assets. These organisations are many and varied in terms of purpose, size, structure and formality. They provide everyone with opportunities to act responsibly, to influence others, to develop new skills, knowledge and employment, and to provide leadership in improving our catchments, coasts and seas.

Catchment management organisations in this region include Landcare and other environmental community groups, Indigenous communities, local governments, private enterprise and Victorian and Australian government agencies and authorities.

Figure 31 depicts some of the national, State and regional policies, strategies and plans that are important in guiding and supporting the involvement of people and organisations in integrated catchment management.

Statistics

The Port Phillip and Western Port region is the most populous of Victoria's ten regions. Its population of around 3.4 million is diverse in terms of economic status, age structure, education, religion and ethnic background.

Almost half (48 per cent) of Victoria's 25,000 Indigenous people live in the region⁹⁴, with a number representing the traditional owners whose cultural connections to this land go back 40,000 years⁹⁵.

One of the region's most important catchment assets is its community – all its people and organisations



⁹⁴ Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Lands in Victoria.

⁹⁵ The lost land of the Kulin Nation.

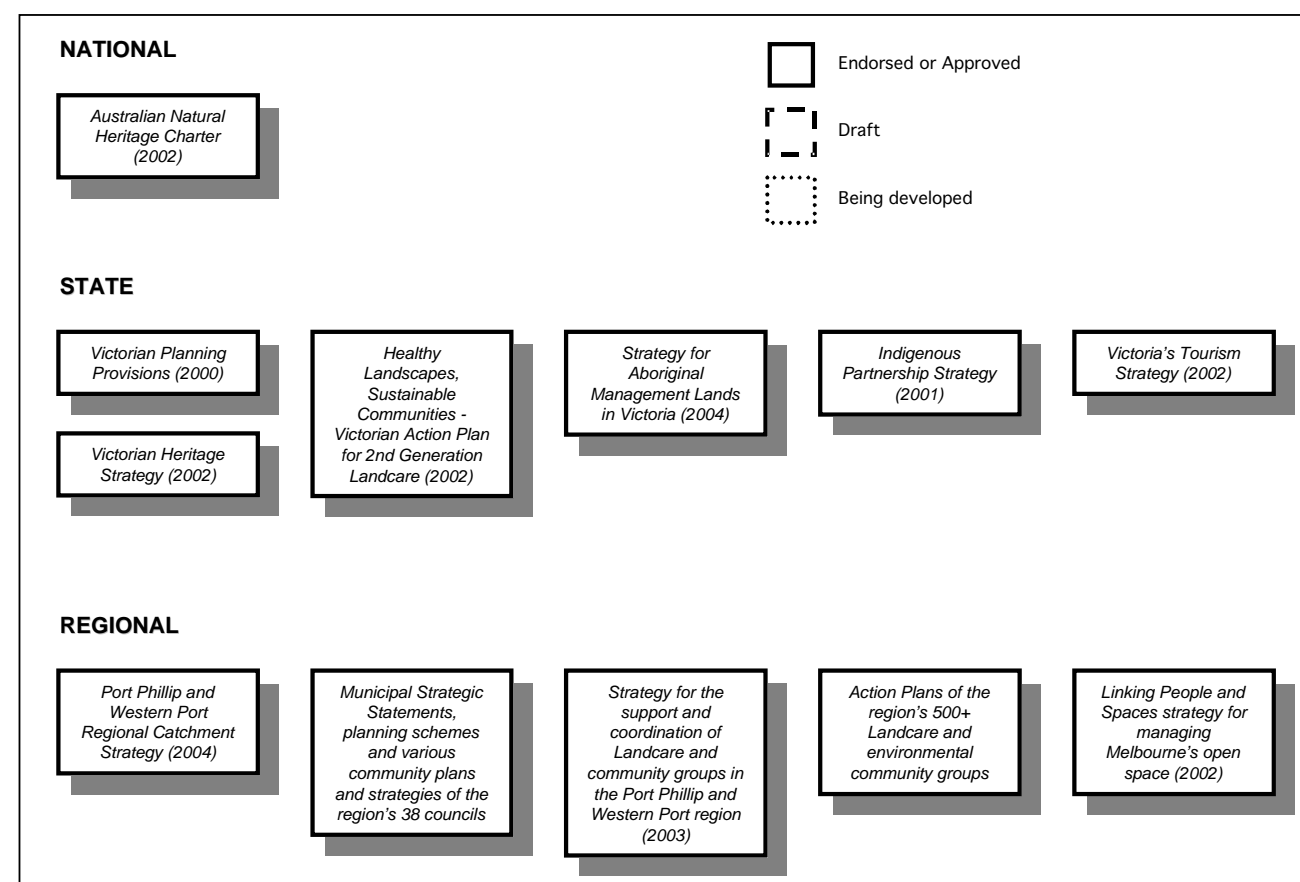
More than 28 per cent of our residents were born overseas, including many from the United Kingdom, Italy, Vietnam, Greece, New Zealand and China⁹⁶. Around 26 per cent of residents speak languages in addition to English at home.

The population structure varies across the region and changes with time. Melbourne 2030 suggests that the population will grow by around one million in the next 30 years though the average household is expected to contain fewer people and the population's average age will continue to increase. Despite changing requirements, however, the continued effect of people living in the region on the use and management of catchment assets is inevitable and essential, as is their involvement with these assets.

The population will grow by around one million in the next 30 years though the average household is expected to contain fewer people

Current estimates indicate that people living and working in the Port Phillip and Western Port region, and visiting it, use relatively large quantities of natural resources every day. This is illustrated by the size of the theoretical "ecological footprint" of each resident – an average of 4.7 hectares – which is considered high by world standards⁹⁷. The impact of this high level of consumption is felt far beyond the region (it is equivalent to 16 million hectares or 12 times larger than the land mass of the region).

Figure 31: Some of the important policies, strategies and plans relating to the participation of the region's people and organisations in integrated catchment management



⁹⁶ Census of population and housing

⁹⁷ 1998-99 Ecological Footprint of the population within the Port Phillip and Western Port region

8.2 Regional goal

Within the region, it is vital to ensure a strong relationship between the community and sustainable catchment management. Our long-term goal is to have:

The community valuing, understanding and celebrating the region's catchment assets and acting to achieve sustainability.

This goal encompasses:

- a community that understands and embraces the concept of stewardship – that is, our catchment assets are in our care only temporarily and should be passed on to future generations in as good or better condition than they have been received
- an understanding of the region's Indigenous and European cultural heritage, an agreed vision for the future and a shared commitment to doing what is required to achieve that vision
- a community that has the willingness and capacity to achieve the necessary changes in behaviour that will lead to sustainable use of our catchment assets
- a community that is engaged and empowered in local and regional decision-making processes on catchment management
- a community where all sectors clearly understand, accept and act on their respective roles and responsibilities for catchment management
- relationships between individuals, community groups, businesses and government that are well-managed, coordinated and equitable where issues of catchment management are addressed
- a community that has ready access to funding for sustainable catchment management, and to information about it.

Appropriate actions will be required to achieve this regional goal. Generally, people and organisations can only take such actions if they have the resources and capacity to do so.

In this context, capacity includes the awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation, commitment and confidence of individuals and organisations to mobilise, harness and direct the available community resources. It can be built through the establishment of partnerships and networks that facilitate the sharing of resources, experiences and expertise to build upon existing capabilities within an operating framework of trust, inclusiveness and mutual benefit.

8.3 Asset-risk assessment

8.3.1. Values

The resources and capacity, existing and potential, inherent in our community of the Port Phillip and Western Port region make up a major asset. There are many opportunities to turn the potential into reality. Beyond landholders and households, stakeholders in catchment management in the region include Landcare and other community environmental groups, Indigenous communities, local governments, business and industry, and government agencies and authorities at State and Federal level.

This section examines in more detail the values inherent in the community in terms of its key people and organisations.

Landholders and householders

As indicated, the population of the region includes a wide range of people with differing attitudes and understanding of catchment health. Many of the people who have come to live here from other parts of the world have established their own cultural connections with the land, and share land stewardship responsibilities.

The urban population is around 3.4 million, who live on some 215,000 hectares, or 17 per cent of the region. The rural and forested area of the region comprises around 83 per cent. This area supports some 4,500 agricultural properties and a major network of parks and forests. Numerous rural lifestyle properties are distributed through the urban-rural fringe and the green wedges.

Because everyone in the region has an influence on the health of the catchment through their household, recreation, travel, business or land management practices, each person is able to contribute to a healthier catchment through his or her decisions and actions.



Community groups

In the region there are an estimated 500 volunteer-based community groups undertaking activities aimed at improving catchment management. Some 18,000 people are involved in these groups.

The groups include:

- Landcare groups – generally with a focus on privately-owned rural land
- Coast Action/Coastcare groups – with a focus on coastal natural assets
- ‘Friends’ groups – generally with a focus on publicly-owned urban land such as a park or stretch of waterway
- Traditional owners and their Indigenous community networks;
- groups associated with the ‘adopt a highway’ program run by VicRoads.
- Melbourne Waterwatch groups – with a focus on monitoring and addressing water quality issues
- committees of management and advisory committees for local reserves or waterways
- community-run native plant nurseries
- branches of organisations like the Bird Observers Club of Australia, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and the Australian Plant Society,
- groups with a marine focus – with an interest in the recently established marine reserves and the ‘Victorian Reefwatch’ program.

Community groups are valuable. They provide networking opportunities for individuals to share experiences and knowledge, and to access, develop and practice sustainable catchment management skills and techniques, thus leading to increased confidence, motivation and commitment.

Everyone in the region has an influence on the health of the catchment

They also act as innovators and drivers of change in local communities by raising awareness of catchment management issues, establishing new standards, and providing an important community resource of knowledge and expertise. Importantly, groups also deliver a significant amount of on-ground works to address local and regional issues. Thus, effective community groups play a key role in implementing practical solutions to local problems and developing an ethic of stewardship for catchment assets in their local communities.

Farmers who are landcare group members are, on average, 50 per cent more likely to adopt a sustainable agricultural practice than other farmers⁹⁸. This suggests that, in general, people who belong to community groups have a greater capacity to undertake sustainable catchment management practices than those who do not.

Many community groups in the region are members of one or more networks that play an important role in maintaining and building the capacity and effectiveness of such groups. Active networks include:

- statewide and nationwide networks such as the Victorian Farmers Federation, Victorian Friends Network and Australian Forest Growers
- local Landcare group networks such as the Bunyip and Bass and South Gippsland Landcare Network
- municipality-based networks such as the Moorabool Landcare Advisory Committee and Nillumbik Landcare Network
- multi-stakeholder management committees such as the Merri Creek Management Committee
- themed networks such as the Threatened Species Network and the Western Port Seagrass Partnership
- multi-partner, community-based organisations such as the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation
- Landcare and industry / business partnerships (eg. GMH).

Groups in the region are supported by people and organisations that help with capacity building, technical advice, training and access to resources.

Commonwealth, state and regional authorities recognise the importance of effective community groups in achieving sustainable catchment management. Key documents include the Victorian Government’s Action Plan for Second Generation Landcare: Healthy Landscapes Sustainable Communities, and the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA’s Strategy for Support and Coordination of Landcare and Community Groups in the Port Phillip and Western Port Region.

Mechanisms for assisting groups include investment in group support positions as well as monetary grants to groups through Commonwealth initiatives such as Envirofund and the National Landcare Program, state initiatives such as the Second Generation Landcare Program and regional initiatives such as the CMA-devolved grants and Melbourne Water’s Stream Frontage Management program.

Most of the region’s 38 local governments provide support to groups through an Environment Officer position (or similar), and many also offer community grants within their municipality, including some directed towards catchment management. Some group networks have secured funding to directly employ one or more people. As well, some groups utilise support positions at catchment and regional levels to provide strategic development and coordination, capacity building and/or technical advice services. These include Landcare, Bushcare, Coast Action/Coastcare, Farm Forestry, Fishcare and advisory officers employed through DPI and DSE and Melbourne Water.

Non-government organisations also provide services that directly support or complement the voluntary efforts of groups and individuals. These include Greening Australia Victoria, Environment Victoria, Victorian Farmers Federation, Victorian National Parks Association, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Trust for Nature, Australian Conservation Foundation and Our Community Pty Ltd.

This existing support structure plays an essential role in maintaining and developing the effectiveness and capacity of community groups – a capacity that has been built over many years with considerable investment of time and money from volunteers, non-government organisations and all tiers of government. Although the value of this structure is difficult to measure, it is considered to be substantial and very important in helping groups to fulfil their potential.

Effective community groups play a key role in implementing practical solutions to local problems

⁹⁸ Landcare Farming: Securing the future for Australian Agriculture

⁹⁹ Strategy for the Support and Coordination of Landcare and Community Groups in the Port Phillip and Western Port Region

Indigenous communities

The Port Phillip and Western Port region is the country of the Wurundjeri, Boonerwung, Wathaurong and Taungorong language groups. These groups are part of the Kulin Nation and have strong cultural connections with this land. Aboriginal culture holds an inherent ethic of land stewardship incorporating a belief system that places Traditional Owners as both custodians of and belonging to the land.

The Indigenous communities of the region are its Traditional Owners - the Kulin people and the people of other Indigenous nations who were displaced from their own country to this region's missions in the 19th Century or who arrived more recently for economic and family reasons. Although relatively small in population and in the area of land they own and manage, Indigenous people bring a unique perspective and an unprecedented history of land stewardship to our approach to catchment management. There are legal as well as ethical imperatives attached to protecting the heritage of the region's Indigenous people and the Indigenous communities of the region are best placed to advise on land and waterway management practices to retain these values.

More than 4,000 sites and places of cultural heritage significance in the region are registered with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. These sites, and others that are not yet registered, are valuable to the community as a record of the region's heritage. Whether registered or not, all sites, objects, places and folklore of aboriginal cultural significance are afforded legal protection under relevant Victorian and/or Commonwealth legislation. For example, the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act [1984] need to be taken into account in much of the decision making and action that can affect land, water and biodiversity by all land managers, organisations and tiers of government.

In addition, eight properties in the region, covering around 200 hectares, are owned and managed by Indigenous communities. The Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Land in Victoria outlines issues involved in managing such properties and makes recommendations on catchment management policies and programs as they relate to Indigenous people. The development of this strategy is an example of the opportunities for collaborative and effective relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to achieve mutually beneficial catchment management.

Local government

The Port Phillip and Western Port region includes all or part of 38 local government areas. This is almost half the local governments in Victoria. Twenty three of these local

government areas are predominantly urban and 15 are predominantly rural or urban-rural fringe.

Each local government already provides a wide variety of catchment management services to its local communities. These include local land-use planning, determination of permits for vegetation clearance, stormwater management planning and works, management of some publicly owned land such as bushland reserves, wetlands, coastlines, creeks and associated riparian areas, waste management services, local law establishment and enforcement, rate rebate schemes and other incentives for good land management, community education, community grants and support for volunteer groups.

Because local governments have well-established connections with their communities, they are positioned well for raising awareness, providing advice and coordinating the activities of their local communities, and for investigating and mapping local issues and planning responses.

Sometimes local governments collaborate to address catchment management issues beyond their individual boundaries, through associations such as the Association of Bayside Municipalities, Interface Councils group and the Middle Yarra Land Management Group. There are also many examples of contributions to cross-municipal organisations or

Local governments have well-established connections with their communities

programs such as the Merri Creek Management Committee, the Urban-Rural Links program, the Melbourne Waterwatch facilitators and less formal project-based partnerships. Local governments also form statewide networks through organisations such as the Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Governance Association, Australian Local Government Association and Environs Australia.

Business and industry

Around 180,000 businesses operate in the region, employing more than two million people¹⁰⁰. Some directly provide catchment management services and products. Others contribute funds, materials or services to catchment management activities, through activities like sponsorships. All use and rely on our catchment assets in some way.

Many are represented and supported by peak bodies, industry groups and industry-based programs. These are important for leading innovation and change across industries that can promote good catchment management. Agricultural industry groups have important roles in leading sustainable rural land use.

Organisations such as Landcare Australia Limited, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Greening Australia play an important role in securing and directing private sector investment towards catchment management activities.

Increasingly, the private sector is realising the benefits of operating in a more sustainable manner, and businesses and industries are adopting tools such as quality assurance systems and triple bottom line reporting to assist with this. Some enterprises are also taking a leadership role in the way they contribute to the community, and are active participants in catchment management initiatives and activities.

There are a growing number of examples in this region of businesses making contributions to catchment management projects. Major projects are proving to be attractive when they can deliver multiple outcomes, local benefits relevant to the investor, promotional opportunities, commercial returns, educational value and/or opportunities for staff involvement. Existing examples of projects that are securing corporate sponsorship include the Grow West project near Bacchus Marsh and the Hills to Ocean project in the South Gippsland Landcare Network area. In the future, further corporate partnerships with significant catchment and community benefits may arise through opportunities for carbon trading and large-scale plantation establishment.

Government agencies and authorities

Government agencies and authorities working directly in catchment management in the region include:

- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
- Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Melbourne Water
- Environment Protection Authority
- Parks Victoria
- Central Coastal Board
- Southern Rural Water

- Retail water authorities (including South East Water, Yarra Valley Water, City West Water, Westernport Water, South Gippsland Water and Western Water)
- VicRoads
- Committees of Management of Foreshores and Coastal Reserves

Individually, these organisations focus on their core business – water supply, coastal management, forests management and so on. However, collectively they contribute to catchment management in the region through providing strategic planning and coordination, policy and legislation, revenue, technical expertise, direct management of catchment assets, research and new knowledge, training, incentives and community awareness-raising.

While all these organisations play a role in the Port Phillip and Western Port region, few have boundaries that are entirely consistent with those of the region. In some cases, these organisations must work across several of Victoria's catchment management regions whilst others only operate in part of the region.

Increasingly, the private sector is realising the benefits of operating in a more sustainable manner

¹⁰⁰ Regional Statistics Victoria 2002



8.3.2 Key risks

Five key People Risks (PR1 – PR5) will affect whether people and organisations of the region operate effectively to achieve sustainable catchment management.

PR1 - Insufficient resources

Substantial inputs of financial, physical and human resources will be needed for the task. A key risk is that these will not be available. Each year the State and Federal governments, local government and landholders invest substantial resources, but even combined these are not enough to fully achieve all of the goals of this RCS. Opportunities exist to increase the level of resourcing from within these sectors, and also to significantly add to it from new sources of funding, particularly from the extensive corporate sector of metropolitan Melbourne.

Sufficient resources need to be directed to important on-ground management actions and to building and maintaining the capacity of key stakeholders. For any stakeholder group, particularly local government and volunteer community groups, a consistent and adequate level of resourcing contributes to maintaining the enthusiasm and commitment to their local tasks that contribute to regional outcomes.

PR2 - Inadequate community engagement

The regional community is made up of all its people and organisations, each of which has particular skills and interests. Successful catchment management programs will need to involve relevant sectors of the community in priority setting, decision-making on investment, project planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

A key risk is that there will not be adequate engagement of the community to achieve the goals of the RCS. Ownership and understanding by stakeholders is essential to achieve a high level of participation in catchment management, better quality outcomes, outcomes that last, and increased capacity in the community. Without such ownership, there is a risk of missing important local knowledge, having poor coordination, lack of commitment and low adoption rates.

PR3 - Inadequate knowledge and skills

For effective catchment management, people and organisations need to be able to recognise and prioritise catchment management issues, know what can be done about them, and be able to do it.

We must develop and maintain systems and processes that add to and pass on the vast amount of knowledge about catchment management within the region, across regional, state and national boundaries and across generations. Similarly, adequate skills and experience are critical to ensure

that the necessary actions can be undertaken effectively to achieve the goals of the RCS.

PR4 - Ineffective support and coordination

Coordinated, integrated effort is critical to achieving efficient use of resources and maximum benefits for catchment assets. This involves agreement on the vision for the regional approach to catchment management, clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, clear communication between stakeholders and partnerships for matters of common interest.

This is a major undertaking in a region with such a large number and variety of stakeholders. The key risk is that poor coordination will result in the inefficient use of resources and lost opportunities for attracting investment. The ability to plan and implement programs for the long term, including long term commitment of resources, is also crucial to maintaining effective coordination.



PR5 – Unsustainable consumption patterns (a high ecological footprint)

One recent approach to measuring the effect of human activity on the environment is the ecological footprint. The ecological footprint is the theoretical amount of land required to produce resources and process waste to sustain a given person, community or activity¹⁰¹. The lower the value of the footprint, the lower the theoretical impact being made on the world's natural resources. Many resources that we use locally are imported from other regions or countries, so the effects of our footprint are felt beyond the immediate boundaries of our region.

Average ecological footprint	
USA	9.7 ha
Australia	7.4 ha
Our region	4.7 ha
Worldwide	2.3 ha
Asia	2.1 ha
Africa	1.4 ha

Australians have an average footprint of 7.4 hectares per person, which is the eighth highest average in the world and reflects a relatively high average consumption of materials and energy¹⁰². The

average worldwide footprint per person is 2.3 hectares. These figures indicate that the global population is using resources at 1.2 times the rate the planet is able to regenerate these resources. If the rest of the world were to consume resources at the Australian rate, this would increase to 4.1 times.

Recently, a footprint was calculated specifically for the Port Phillip and Western Port region¹⁰³. The study was based on Australian Bureau of Statistics consumption data, calculating the footprint for statistical sub-districts (SSD) in the region and a total for the region. A notable feature was that the region's footprint is 2.7 hectares per person lower than the Australian average.

The footprint varied by three hectares per person from the lowest to highest SSD. The two main factors accounting for these footprint differences were expenditure (the more expenditure, the greater the footprint) and household size (the more household occupants, the less the average footprint per person).

Overall the key drivers of the size of our footprint are:

- consumption patterns
- the different levels of environmental disturbance caused by individual human uses and activities
- productivity gained from the land used
- greenhouse gas emissions.

While the RCS does not specifically address consumption patterns, it is an opportunity to consider what and how much we consume and the implications for the sustainability of our catchment assets. The RCS therefore explicitly examines issues associated with land use and how we might gain multiple benefits from our land with thoughtful farm planning and urban design. Land use productivity is also considered. A sustainable increase in productivity not only provides long-term economic benefits for this region, but may also decrease environmental pressures in this region or from where we import. Farm forestry is an example and actions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions should also be considered.

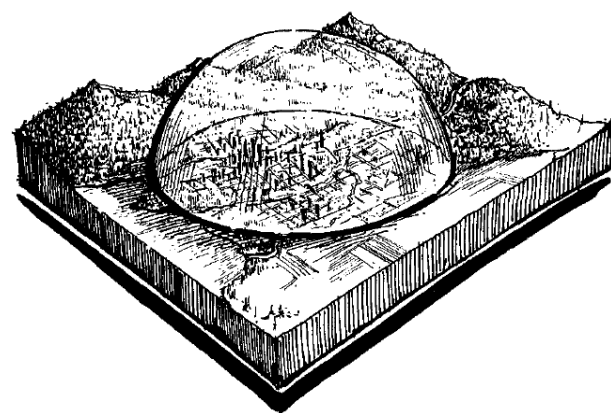


Figure 32: The concept of an ecological footprint explores how much land would be needed to theoretically sustain a regional community¹⁰¹

8.4 Objectives

The following People Objectives (PO1 – PO3) are designed to reflect sustainability principles and to deal with the key risks that have been identified.

Objective	Sustainability Principles	Risks
PO1 Enhance regional planning, coordination, resource allocation, monitoring and reporting	P7	PR1, PR2, PR4

Objective PO1 addresses the sustainability principle of strengthening community understanding, participation and partnerships. It recognises that as well as providing 'on-ground' resources, significant effort is needed to implement a strategically sound, well-coordinated and well-directed catchment management program. The process is made more challenging by the number and diversity of stakeholders and the range of issues in the region.

The allocation of funding to support planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting is a fundamental component of programs that address catchment management issues. A better-directed allocation and sharing of resources will lead to better results and less duplication.

The diverse array of stakeholders will need to operate in genuine and equitable partnerships with each other. Collaboration between stakeholders on matters of common interest invariably achieves more effective outcomes. The Catchment Management Authority has utilised various mechanisms for engaging the community across the region by bringing people together on a regular basis with a view to improving coordination and cooperation. Such forums can be very effective so it is important to continually assess these and other ways of improving communication and coordination.

Objective	Sustainability Principles	Risks
PO2 Increase the capacity and participation of people and organisations in catchment management	P7	PR2, PR3, PR4

Part of the overall capacity building approach, this objective recognises that without involvement from people and the commitment of individuals and organisations to agreed changes, there can be little improvement in the condition of our catchments. It addresses the sustainability principle of strengthening community understanding, participation and partnerships.

This objective also recognises that our management of the region's land, water and biodiversity may produce inadequate outcomes and trivial change if it does not seek and act on the advice and knowledge of many people and interest groups. For example, the involvement of the region's Indigenous people, especially Traditional Owners, in project design, decision-making and action has been inadequate. Mutual policy and community commitments to fill this gap will better protect heritage sites, help rebuild Indigenous culture in the region and promote its values in society and provide Indigenous people with skills, community development, education and employment opportunities.

To achieve this objective, we need to understand and respond to the barriers that stop people and organisations from participating fully in catchment management. We will also need to understand the gaps in capacity. Methods will have to be established to keep the focus on catchment management issues and the provision of readily accessible training, education and support to carry out the work needed. A quantum increase will be required in the resources available to catchment management priorities. We must reach out to engage and involve many more people and organisations, so that the work is not left to the willing few.

¹⁰¹ Our ecological footprint

¹⁰² 2002 Living Planet

¹⁰³ 1998-1999 Ecological Footprint of population within Port Phillip and Western Port region

Objective	Sustainability Principles	Risks
PO3 Reduce the overall impact of the regional community on catchment assets	P2, P3, P4, P5	PR5

Objective PO3 directly addresses the sustainability principles of conserving natural resources, and ensuring equity between and among generations. It recognises that everyone has a role to play in contributing to the environmental wellbeing of the region, no matter how small that contribution might be.

Community attitudes are changing and developing as we increase our knowledge about the condition of the catchment's waterways, land and biodiversity. New household, business, recreational and land management practices, such as recycling of waste products, need to be adopted by large numbers of people. Other practices, such as excessive watering of gardens, need to be stopped because of the costs to this and succeeding generations.

Community attitudes are changing and developing as we increase our knowledge about the condition of the catchment's waterways, land and biodiversity.

Our large population is a significant user of catchment assets both from within the region and outside it. We need to be able to monitor our overall progress towards sustainability, and evaluate the success or otherwise of our actions.

8.5 Targets

These inter-related People Targets (PT1 – PT7) are proposed in order to attain the objectives.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT1 All key catchment management stakeholders participating in and agreeing on a 'regional investment planning' process to implement the RCS by 2005	PO1, PO2

Target	Relevant objectives
PT2 All Victorian government agencies with key roles in catchment management to be directly implementing the RCS through their annual works programs by 2006	PO1

A process is evolving in Victoria to develop regional investment plans, with forward planning for a number of years, in order to implement actions proposed in the Regional Catchment Strategies. However, this process is not yet inclusive enough. It needs to be expanded to improve coordination between community stakeholders, state government agencies and local government and use investment planning methods that increase everyone's ownership of the RCS and commitment to its implementation.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT3 At least half the region's 38 councils to have formally adopted the RCS as a reference document by 2008, reflecting relevant sections of it appropriately in their planning schemes and/or implementing relevant actions through their annual programs	PO1, PO2

Local government is one of the major investors in and practitioners of catchment management actions in the Port Phillip and Western Port region – the collective annual financial investment by councils in the region was estimated recently at \$75 million. Effective implementation of the RCS at a municipal level will depend on it becoming a key informing document whose priorities are aligned with the decisions and actions of councils, particularly Municipal Strategic Statements and Local Planning Scheme Provisions. This will require the introduction and acceptance of a formal process.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT4 Each year to 2008, secure an increase in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proportion of available Victorian and Australian government funding for RCS programs in the region the total amount of corporate investment in RCS programs 	PO1

It is vital that the region achieves a higher level of investment in catchment management and ensures that this is targeted to the priorities of the RCS. Key opportunities exist with the Victorian and Australian governments and the corporate sector. Already substantial resources are being invested each year at these levels, but collectively this is not yet enough to achieve the goals of the RCS.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT5 Maintain or increase the number and geographic coverage of community groups participating in catchment management in the region, and increase the active membership of community groups by 20 per cent (from 2001 levels) by 2008	PO2

Some 500 community groups make a significant contribution to catchment management in the region. A survey of their health and active membership has been undertaken (through the Regional Landcare Strategy) which provides a benchmark from 2001. While the number of groups is relatively high, opportunities do exist to establish new groups and revitalise some existing ones.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT6 Increase community awareness and understanding of the condition of catchment assets and associated trends	PO1, PO2

An upwards trend in community awareness and understanding of catchment management issues is important for establishing a strong case for increased investment and participation in important catchment management programs. This is a particular challenge for this region with its large and diverse population, so establishing benchmarks relating to key sectors of the community will be an important initial step.

Target	Relevant objectives
PT7 Maintain the region's total ecological footprint at or below the 2003 level, and reduce the average ecological footprint (per capita) for the region by 25 per cent by 2030	PO3

Due to its consumption patterns and population numbers, the region's ecological footprint is relatively high. Forecast population increases mean we must reduce the average footprint per capita by 25 per cent if we are to stop our collective footprint from growing beyond the current total of 16 million hectares.

8.6 Actions

These People Actions (PA1 - PA10) are needed to meet the targets. Some actions will continue and build upon existing programs in the region, while others are new initiatives.

Coordination and capacity building

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment
PA1 Review existing forums and committee structures and identify efficient ways to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan and conduct community involvement in integrated catchment management facilitate coordination and share information identify local issues and develop priority programs 	PT1	2005	CMA	Local government, agencies, community group networks	Low
PA2 Establish a whole-of-region research forum to identify knowledge gaps and the needs for research and development	PT1	2006	CMA	Government agencies, Local government, research organisations, universities	Low
PA3 Establish sub-regional forums that enable local government to help identify, discuss and resolve priority issues relevant to catchment management and to cooperate at a catchment scale	PT1, PT3	2006	CMA	Local government, MAV	Low
PA4 Establish forums that enable rural communities, industries and landholders to identify, discuss and resolve priority issues relevant to catchment management including rural development, land use and land management	PT1, PT5	2006	CMA	DPI, DSE, EPA, Local government, agricultural industries, rural communities	Low

The region needs efficient processes to engage stakeholders in priority setting, build on existing relationships and knowledge and align budgets and works programs to implement the RCS. These processes also need to work in ways that invite and support participation by individuals and interest groups that have not been involved in the past. Projects should create purposeful decision-making roles for different catchment interests including investors and practitioners, they should showcase and report on successes, leverage additional funding from other sources, and establish and maintain good relationships.

Adequate engagement of stakeholders will be effectively engaging institutional stakeholders and businesses, local government, the Indigenous community, community groups, academic and research organisations and landholders in knowledge-building, priority setting, planning and implementation.

Actions PA1-PA4 specifically address the need for efficient community engagement processes in this complex region that has many and varied stakeholder organisations.

Action PA1 will review existing structures and processes as a basis for improvements in the future. The potential for utilising existing multi-stakeholder forums, such as the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation in the Western Port catchment, should be considered within this action.

Action PA1 should also consider any gaps in structures that need to be filled. For example, there are some gaps in foreshore management in the region, that is, there are areas of our coast without Committees of Management in place. Foreshore management is a complex task and draws significantly on the efforts of volunteers, so sound arrangements and support are required.

Actions PA2-PA4 identify that there are particular community sectors that need to be better engaged in catchment management including research and academic institutions, local government and the rural sector.

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment	
PA5	Develop and implement protocols for the involvement of Indigenous groups and incorporation of Indigenous cultural values in the implementation of this RCS	PT1	2006	CMA	Kulin people, AAV, government agencies, Local government	Medium

The cultural history of the region is recognised as an important value. We need to ensure that agencies and the community with a direct interest in the coasts, waterways and other areas understand and appreciate these values and that the Kulin and all Indigenous people are involved in decision-making and action. An aim of this action will be consideration of how to increase the employment of Indigenous people in the catchment management industry as a strong basis for improved understanding by all organisations of cultural heritage values and Indigenous issues.

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment	
PA6	Develop and deliver education programs for catchment management across the region	PT6	Develop by 2006 Begin to implement by 2007	CMA	Government agencies, Local government, educational institutions	Low

There is substantial potential for the development and coordination of tailored education programs about catchment management in the region that involve specific community and industry sectors, the broader community and schools. For example, there are opportunities to increase the level of involvement of businesses, school children and urban-based volunteers in substantial on-ground projects that are revitalising our landscapes around Melbourne and protecting our catchment assets. Similarly, there are opportunities for community involvement in research and monitoring programs that can generate important information at the same time as raising awareness and understanding amongst the participants. This action will require new and innovative partnerships to be forged with educational institutions and possibly with major media operations.

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment	
PA7	Align the directions and actions of the RCS with Municipal Strategic Statements, planning schemes and other local government processes related to catchment management	PT3, PT6	2008	CMA	Local government	Medium

A particularly important element of the role of local government in catchment management is land-use planning and decision-making on individual developments. The primary tools for this are the Victoria Planning Provisions, Municipal Strategic Statements and the Local Planning Scheme Provisions. To effectively implement the RCS at municipal level, better alignment is needed between the RCS priorities and the decisions and actions of councils such as those related to education programs and the protection of important native vegetation on private land. This will be greatly assisted by developing a schedule of the RCS tailored to each council, and seeking formal adoption by each council of its schedule (or the whole RCS) as an incorporated document or reference document.

Inherent in this action is the need for a skilled and stable statutory planning workforce across the region's councils and other organisations that contribute to planning processes. Regular education programs are also needed for statutory planners regarding the directions and responsibilities outlined in the Planning and Environment Act and Victorian Planning Provisions that aim to protect the environment and support catchment management. Similarly, personnel in referral authorities need to be highly skilled in regard to catchment management issues such as salinity, land management, urban development, intensive industries, etc so they can provide a strong science-focus and assist councils in decision-making.

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment	
PA8	Implement the strategy for the support and coordination of Landcare and community groups in the Port Phillip and Western Port region	PT1, PT5, PT6	2006	CMA	Community groups, Local government, Government agencies, environment organisations	Medium

Strong and healthy community groups are effective contributors to catchment management. A study of community groups in the region and major barriers to their effective functioning has led to development of a strategy to address the key issues. This includes actions to establish a structure of positions across the region that will support groups, develop local environment condition reports, assist groups with strategic action planning in line with regional priorities, raise the profile of Landcare, attract new membership and improve access to affordable training and skills development. Implementation of this strategic plan has begun and will support existing networks while increasing the overall number of groups, their vitality, effectiveness and longevity. Reviews of the plan will regularly re-establish key directions and priorities.

On-ground programs

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment
PA9 Pilot and evaluate the use of methodologies including the ecological footprint as an educational and monitoring tool to drive behavioural change in key sectors of the community, and identify opportunities for regional programs to reduce the total footprint	PT6, PT7	Ongoing	EPA	CMA, DSE	Medium

The use of methodologies such as the ecological footprint model and the urban metabolism model is one way of reflecting to the community the effect of its consumption on catchment assets. It stimulates wide-ranging debate and encourages actions that reduce impacts on the environment. However, education will be needed to encourage broad community acceptance and action.

Containing the total regional footprint is a major task covering all types of consumption. It will require new and innovative partnerships with organisations that are not normally closely associated with catchment management, including the energy, transport and retail (food and clothing) industries.

A regional study suggests that we could reduce the footprint if we changed the way in which we live in terms of consumption of energy (electricity, gas, petrol) and goods (high input clothing and foods)¹⁰⁴. We need to think about how we run our homes and workplaces every day. Further work is needed to ascertain whether the concept could be applied in the region to raise community awareness and generate changes in behaviour.

Because the ecological footprint model is an evolving concept, it is advisable that it be piloted in a specific area – perhaps a particular industry, an individual council area or an established urban area, an area of new urban development or the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport biosphere. Some of this work is already being undertaken by the Environment Protection Authority, CMA, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne Water, City West Water and the Port Phillip City Council.

We will also need to monitor the footprint, perhaps every five years, using a consistent and agreed methodology.

Action	Relevant targets	Completion date	Lead role	Key partners	Level of investment
PA10 In the catchments in the region, develop and begin implementing major projects that fully engage and involve key stakeholders and that attract major new funding	PT2, PT4, PT6	Develop by 2005 Begin to implement by 2006	CMA	Local government, Govt agencies, Water authorities, community groups, corporate sector	High

Catchment management projects of major scale can generate a shared vision and ownership across many stakeholder groups, which is essential for achieving landscape change. They also provide an opportunity to leverage funds from stakeholders and are effective in engaging the corporate sector and generating additional funding.

¹⁰⁴ 1998-99 Ecological Footprint of the population within the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Grow West in the Werribee catchment is an example of a large project that is already under way. In addition to Grow West, the Dandenong Living Links project is being initiated for the Dandenong catchment and the Yarra River For Life concept is being developed in the Yarra catchment. A project will also be initiated for the Maribyrnong catchment focussing on major riparian restoration.

In the Western Port catchment, the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere concept has captured the imagination of many community people, while various community-based programs including the Cardinia Environment Coalition's biolinks program are working successfully on the ground and setting new standards in outcomes, landholder attitudes and community involvement. An opportunity exists to support and accelerate the biolinks program, plus incorporate into it other local catchment management priorities, so that it is a large-scale, integrated project making a key contribution to meeting the aims of the biosphere.

In addition to the major projects, it is important to pro-actively support community-based programs across the region that benefit catchment assets. Works programs for improving rivers and creeks are traditionally undertaken by the appropriate waterway manager. However, over the past decade landholders and community groups have shown a growing interest in participating in stream rehabilitation works, monitoring and education programs and coastal protection. Community-based activities provide a strong mechanism for coordinating private landholders' efforts on their land with those of neighbouring landholders and other interested parties to achieve catchment wide outcomes. Monitoring and education programs such as Waterwatch, ReefWatch and Frogwatch are well-regarded and provide important data for catchment-wide monitoring. At a broader scale, programs such as those being undertaken by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) are important for coordinating the involvement of local government in the management of catchment assets.

8.7 Summary table

The following table summarises the translation of the goal for people and organisations through the steps of objectives and targets to actions.

Goal

The community valuing, understanding and celebrating the region's catchment assets and acting to achieve sustainability

Objectives

PO1. Enhance regional planning, coordination, resource allocation, monitoring and reporting

PO2. Increase the capacity and participation of people and organisations in catchment management

PO3. Reduce the overall impact of the regional community on catchment assets

Targets (pre-existing targets in Bold)

PT1. All key catchment management stakeholders participating in and agreeing on a 'regional investment planning' process to implement the RCS by 2005

PT2. All Victorian government agencies with key roles in catchment management to be directly implementing the RCS through their annual works programs by 2006

PT3. At least half the region's 38 councils to have formally adopted the RCS as a reference document by 2008, reflecting relevant sections of it appropriately in their planning schemes and/or implementing relevant actions through their annual programs

PT4. Each year to 2008, secure an increase in:

- the proportion of available Victorian and Australian government funding for RCS programs in the region
- the total amount of corporate investment in RCS programs

PT5. Maintain or increase the number and geographic coverage of community groups participating in catchment management in the region, and increase the active membership of community groups by 20 per cent (from 2001 levels) by 2008

PT6. Increase community awareness and understanding of the condition of catchment assets and associated trends

PT7. Maintain the region's total ecological footprint at or below the 2003 level, and reduce the average ecological footprint (per capita) for the region by 25 per cent by 2030

Actions (pre-existing actions in Bold)

PA2. Establish a whole-of-region research forum to identify gaps and the needs for research and development

PA3. Establish sub-regional forums that enable local government to help identify, discuss and resolve priority issues relevant to catchment management and to cooperate at a catchment scale

PA6. Develop and deliver education programs for catchment management across the region

PA7. Align the directions and actions of the RCS with Municipal Strategic Statements, planning schemes and other local government processes related to catchment management

PA1. Review existing forums and committee structures and identify efficient ways to:

- plan and conduct community involvement in integrated catchment management**
- facilitate coordination and share information**
- identify local issues and develop priority programs**

PA4. Establish forums that enable rural communities, industries and landholders to identify, discuss and resolve priority issues relevant to catchment management including rural development, land use and land management

PA5. Develop and implement protocols for the involvement of Indigenous groups and incorporation of Indigenous cultural values in the implementation of this RCS

PA8. Implement the strategy for the support and coordination of Landcare and community groups in the Port Phillip and Western Port region

PA9. Pilot and evaluate the use of methodologies including the ecological footprint as an educational and monitoring tool to drive behavioural change in key sectors of the community, and identify opportunities for regional programs to reduce the total footprint

PA10. In the catchments in the region, develop and begin implementing major projects that fully engage and involve key stakeholders and that attract major new funding