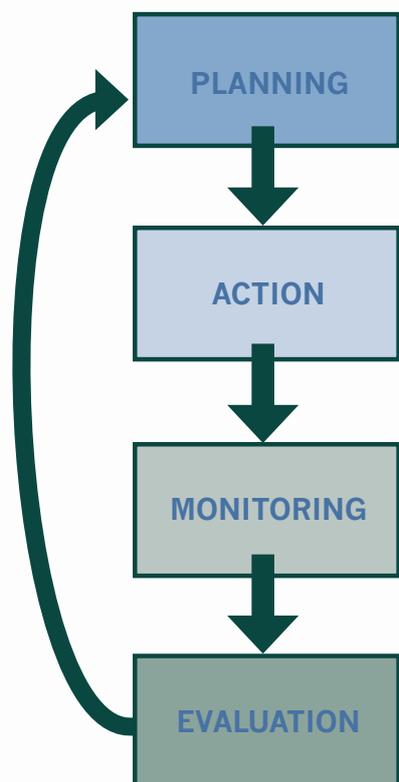


3) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Catchment Management in the Southern ACT

THE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

It was decided in the 2006 review of the SACTCG sub-catchment plans that the group needed to develop a more effective method of approaching NRM in the Southern ACT Catchment Area. By combining all three sub-catchment plans into one Catchment Management Strategy the SACTCG will be able to focus more clearly on the issues that affect our region. The CMS will override the existing targets and milestones in the *Woden-Western*, *Tuggeranong-Tharwa* and *South-West ACT* sub-catchment plans and provide a framework for the future vision of the SACTCG.



One of the primary aims of the CMS is to maintain community involvement in the management of our natural resources. There currently exist numerous international, national, state and regional policies that affect the way our natural resources are managed. These policies (see 3.4) provide a basis for the development of targets for the strategy and through a process of community consultation the SACTCG has been able to develop achievable actions for the group to work toward sustainable management of the natural resources within the Southern ACT Catchment Area.

The CMS is a platform for bringing together the community and government, providing opportunities to manage our natural resources more holistically. The southern ACT catchment community has had a longstanding commitment towards the protection of our natural resources and with the development of a strategy to act as a management tool the community can continue to effectively develop and implement actions for the future management of our natural resources.

The direction of the CMS is to create a long term focus, giving recommendations for best management practices to combat identified issues and problems. It also aims to address possible opportunities for the SACTCG, setting out priorities for on ground works that go towards achieving our vision of sustainable NRM.

To achieve our vision the CMS recognises that the management of our natural resources is a continuous loop of planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. As projects are completed the original targets and actions should be reassessed by the group and altered accordingly. Best management recommendations result from group discussions and are therefore group decisions.

THE SOUTHERN ACT CATCHMENT GROUP

In 2001 a jointly funded project between the Australian Governments Natural Heritage Trust and Environment ACT was initiated to assist community groups in developing and implementing sub-catchment plans within the ACT.

Sub-catchment planning was seen as an effective tool for delivering Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) as it brought together community groups and provided opportunities for the community and government to work together.

During the process of community consultation for the development of these sub-catchment plans, the southern ACT catchment community expressed the need for a central representative body to be established to truly own and progress the implementation of the plans, and in May 2002 the Southern ACT Catchment Group was formed. The SACTCG quickly established itself as an umbrella organisation for all active environment groups in southern regions of the ACT, to support their projects and to initiate new projects relevant to the area. By 2003 the SACTCG had developed three sub-catchment plans in the Tuggeranong-Tharwa, Woden-Weston, and South West ACT Rural sub-catchments and had several on-ground work projects in progress.

The SACTCG is run by an executive committee, elected annually, and supported by a Catchment Group Coordinator and a Waterwatch Coordinator. Initially the SACTCG was hosted in ACT Government offices but in 2005 the SACTCG set up an independent office in Kambah (the centre of its' region) to provide a more effective working environment for its coordinators and to further the development of the group as a representative body for sub-catchment planning in the Southern ACT.

In 2006 a review of the existing sub-catchment plans was executed and with agreement from SACTCG members it was decided to incorporate all three plans into one catchment management strategy. During this process the group realigned its catchment boundaries in consultation with other groups and formulated new environmental targets for the group that correlated with existing plans, namely the ACT Natural Resource Management Plan and the Murrumbidgee Catchment Action Plan.



SACTCG members at the 2006 Annual General Meeting

The catchment group continues to play an important role in supporting new initiatives, disseminating funds, coordinating community monitoring efforts, monitoring and evaluating projects, collecting data, reporting, sharing information, capacity building and community education. Our vision for the future is to continue as an independent community organisation, raising awareness of environmental issues within our catchment and actively participating in sustainable natural resource management.

SACTCG's membership includes Park Care, urban and rural landcare groups, the Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead, Waterwatch volunteers, Schools, other community groups and concerned individuals.

SOUTHERN ACT CATCHMENT GROUP MEMBERS 2007/2008

ACT Rural Landholders Association	Illoura Horse Owners Group
ACT Waterwatch	Jackie Howe Rouseabouts
Birrigai	Joan Goodrum (individual)
Concerned Residents of West Kambah	Lanyon High School
Coolleman Ridge Park Care	Lions Youth Haven
Farrer Ridge Parkcare Group	Michael Beddingfield (individual)
Fisher Park Care	Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead Inc (MOTH)
Freshford Equestrian Centre	Mt Taylor Park Care Group
Friends of Tidbinbilla	Mugga Mugga / Issacs Ridge Park Care
Friends of Tuggeranong Hill and Conder Wetlands	Orana School
Friends of Urambi Hills	Paton Family (individual)
Geoff Hyles, Castle Hill	Raymond Luhowsks (individual)
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group	Red Hill Bush Regenerators
Hughes / Garran Park Care Group	White Family (individual)

Table 1

Most member groups have regular work-parties and are linked to the wider natural resource management community through a number of networks. Activities include planting, weeding, community education and awareness raising, walking track maintenance, flora and fauna monitoring, water quality monitoring, signage, and the design, publication and distribution of printed and electronic material.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Having a strategy is the first step in formulating a plan of action for the sustainable management of our natural resources. An effectively developed strategy that reflects the aims of the organisation is completely worthless if it is allowed to sit on a shelf and gather dust. This is why the SACTCG has employed two coordinators to help in implementing the Strategy.

The Catchment Group Coordinator and the Waterwatch Coordinator are employed to provide the community of southern ACT with the on-going support needed to develop understanding, skills, motivation and capacity to implement the CMS. Funding for these positions is delivered through a partnership agreement between the NRM Council, ACT Government and the Australian Government. The SACTCG has linked the funding conditions for the coordinators to the development of the CMS to continually monitor the implementation process. The work of the coordinators is made accountable through monthly reporting to the SACTCG and bi-annual reporting to the ACT NRM Council.