

Appendix 1: Policy context

The Regional Catchment Strategy supports, integrates and gives regional context to a suite of Victorian and Australian Government legislation, policies and strategies.

International obligations

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was agreed by 193 countries at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 associated targets. They deliver a global framework for sustainable development to 2030.

Environmental, social and economic development are indivisible under the framework. The goals aim to reduce poverty and inequality, promote prosperity and well-being for all, protect the environment and address climate change, and encourage good governance, peace and security.

The aim of these goals is reflected in the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy and the work of regional partners and communities. They place added emphasis on the need to work together for the benefit of the Wimmera's community and environment, now and into the future. Collective local actions contribute to a broader global sustainable development movement.

Figure 1 shows the Sustainable Development Goals and how they contribute to and are supported, reinforced by and integrated with the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy.

RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance's (Ramsar Convention) broad aims are to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain through wise use and management.

BILATERAL MIGRATORY BIRD AGREEMENTS

The Australian Government has fostered international cooperation through bilateral migratory bird agreements with Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA). Each of these agreements provides for the protection and conservation of migratory birds and their important habitats.

Australian Government legislation, policies and plans

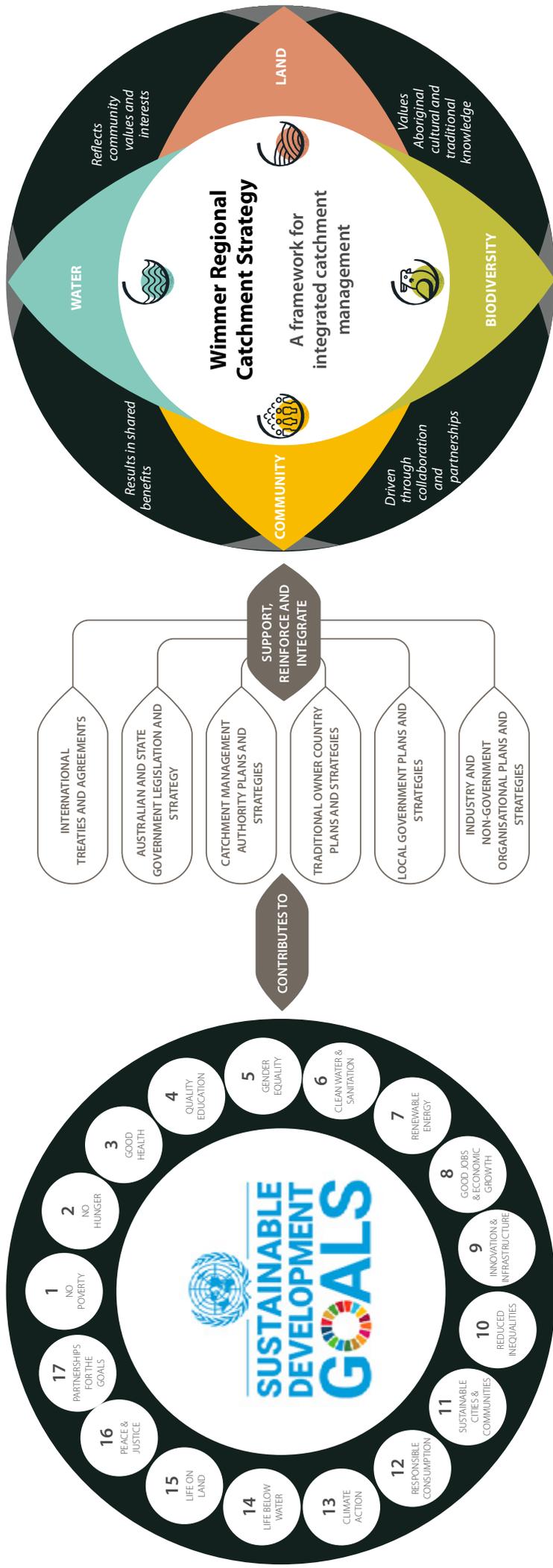
NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAM

The National Landcare Program is a key part of the Australian Government's commitment to natural resource management. More than \$1 billion is being invested in targeted national priorities from 2017 to 2023. A range of measures will support natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and protect Australia's biodiversity. The Regional Land Partnerships Program is delivering natural resource management at a regional scale.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999

The EPBC Act provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities, Ramsar sites and heritage places. The Act focuses on the protection of matters of national environmental significance, with the states and territories having responsibility for matters of state and local significance.

Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals and the Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy



AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGY FOR NATURE 2019-2030

Australia's Strategy for Nature aims to guide the development of new and innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation. It focuses on overarching goals that support healthy and functioning biological systems by promoting a stronger connection between people and nature, improving the way people care for nature, and building and sharing knowledge. It is a shared roadmap to better understand, care for and sustainably manage nature to 2030.

THREATENED SPECIES STRATEGY 2021-2031

The Threatened Species Strategy delivers a framework for action to protect and recover threatened plants and animals across Australia. It sets a clear vision to drive practical on-ground action, identifies key action areas that are fundamental to the recovery of threatened species and ecological communities, and establishes principles for identifying priority threatened species and places to focus effort. The strategy will be underpinned by consecutive 5-year action plans, with the first planned for release in the second half of 2021.

NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR RAMSAR WETLANDS

These Guidelines aim to facilitate improved management of Ramsar sites and maintenance of ecological character, in line with Australia's commitments under the Ramsar Convention and responsibilities under the *EPBC Act*. The guidelines provide a framework for Ramsar Convention implementation in Australia and provide jurisdictions and other interested parties with guidance on the management of Ramsar sites.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 1992

This strategy facilitates a coordinated and co-operative approach to ecologically sustainable development and provides broad strategic directions and framework for governments to direct policy and decision-making.

NATIONAL SOIL STRATEGY

The National Soil Strategy sets out how Australia will value, manage and improve its soil for the next 20 years. The strategy highlights three overarching goals to prioritise soil health, empower soil innovation and stewards and strengthen soil knowledge and capability. Actions to address these goals will ensure that soil continues to contribute to agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and economic growth.

NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON CLOSING THE GAP

The objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the entrenched inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. The Australian Government, states and territory governments, local government and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations are jointly accountable for ensuring the outcomes of closing the gap are achieved through implementation.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

These standards have been developed by Volunteering Australia and the state and territory peak bodies for volunteering. This framework provides good practice guidance and benchmarks to help organisations attract, manage and retain volunteers, and to help manage risk and safety in work with volunteers. Volunteering Victoria is Victoria's peak body for volunteering, focusing on advocacy, sector development and the promotion of volunteering.

Victorian Government legislation, policies and plans.

CATCHMENT AND LAND PROTECTION ACT 1994

The CaLP Act is the legislation that promotes and enables integrated catchment management across Victoria including establishment of catchment management regions, catchment management authorities and the requirement for Regional Catchment Strategies.

OUR CATCHMENTS OUR COMMUNITIES

Supporting the CaLP Act, the Our Catchments Our Communities strategy confirms the Victorian Government's commitment to managing catchments to benefit the environment, community and economy with a focus on ensuring catchment management partners work together.

WATER ACT 1989

The Water Act provides the legal framework for managing Victoria's water resources. The main purposes of the Act are to promote the equitable and efficient use of water resources, ensure water resources are conserved and properly managed for the benefit of all Victorians, and increase community involvement in conserving and managing water resources.

WATER FOR VICTORIA

Supporting the Water Act, Water for Victoria sets the long-term direction for managing Victoria's water resources and a plan for responding to the impact of climate change and a growing population.

VICTORIAN WATERWAY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Victorian Waterway Management Strategy provides the detailed policy for managing Victoria's waterways.

VICTORIAN RURAL DRAINAGE STRATEGY

The Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy supports landholders to make choices about how they want to manage rural drainage. The strategy outlines a series of actions and policies that will:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities and obligations for landholder and government agencies to manage dryland rural drainage,
- Rebuild the capability for landholders and government agencies to manage rural drainage to support agricultural productivity,
- Simplify previously complex and confusing regulations and approval processes, and in doing so reinforce obligations on landholders to protect and nurture their local environment and to respect the cultural values of Aboriginal Victorians when conducting future drainage works, and
- Manage priority waterways impacted by rural drainage to provide cultural and environmental benefits.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT 2018

This Act provides the legislative framework for the protection of human health and the environment from pollution and waste. The Act retains environmental reference standards (State Environmental Protection Policy objectives) as a core element of this framework.

STATE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION POLICY (WATERS)

The Victorian Government has declared a new State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) to ensure Victoria has clear and relevant standards, legal rules, and statutory obligations to protect and improve the health of water environments.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

This Act establishes the legal framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. The Act sets the broad objectives for planning and the main rules and principles for how the Victorian planning system works. The Act is 'enabling' legislation, meaning it does not precisely define the scope of planning, how it should be done or the detailed rules that should apply to land use and development. These and other more detailed matters are dealt with by 'subordinate' instruments under the Act including the Victoria Planning Provisions which are the standard provisions for all of Victoria's planning schemes.

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT 1988

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 is the key piece of Victorian legislation for the conservation of threatened species and communities and for the management of potentially threatening processes.

PROTECTING VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT – BIODIVERSITY 2037

Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria's plan to stop the decline of native plants and animals and improve the natural environment. The plan outlines the long-term vision for Victoria's biodiversity supported by two overarching goals:

- Victorians value nature, and
- Victoria's natural environment is healthy.

TRADITIONAL OWNER SETTLEMENT ACT 2010

This Act provides for an out-of-court settlement of native title. The Act allows the Victorian Government to recognise Traditional Owners and certain rights in Crown land. In return for entering into a settlement, Traditional Owners must agree to withdraw any native title claim pursuant to the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* and not to make any future native title claims.

Under the Act, a settlement package can include a Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) which allows traditional owners to comment on or consent to certain activities on public land. The Land Use Activity Regime is a simplified alternative to the future acts regime of the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The LUAA provides procedural rights for recognised Traditional Owner groups over certain activities that occur on public land. The objective is to enable these activities to proceed, while accommodating third party interests and respecting the rights of traditional owners attached to the public land.

Munganin – Gadhaba 'Achieve Together'

DELWP ABORIGINAL INCLUSION PLAN 2016-2020

Aboriginal cultural and economic wellbeing is a Victorian Government priority. The Aboriginal Inclusion Plan commits to activities that will contribute towards the outcomes identified in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18 and Council of Australian Governments' National Indigenous Reform Agreement, Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage.

The Victorian Aboriginal Inclusion Framework emphasises the need to embed inclusive, consistent and accessible services to Aboriginal people within government processes. Munganin – Gadhaba is a vital next step towards building inclusiveness into all aspects of work and culture. This will improve recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff and more effectively engage Aboriginal people and communities in the design and delivery of work.

PUPANGARLI MARNMARNEPU 'OWNING OUR FUTURE'

ABORIGINAL SELF-DETERMINATION REFORM STRATEGY 2020-2025

This strategy aligns with whole-of-government commitments set out in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023. The strategy provides a roadmap to building a better future with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians, through systemic and structural change that fully supports Aboriginal decision-making, evaluation and talent building to inform its policy and processes.

STRONG, INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE: A NEW STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURE IN VICTORIA

This ten-year strategy documents Agriculture Victoria's commitment to work with industry, community and trading partners to ensure that the Victorian agriculture sector is strong, innovative and sustainable.

VICTORIAN LANDCARE PROGRAM

The Victorian Landcare Program provide services and initiatives to support Landcare in Victoria, with the goal to strengthen community groups and networks across Victoria. Support includes funding on-ground facilitators who empower locals to act for their environment and provision of grants.

VICTORIANS VOLUNTEERING FOR NATURE – ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING PLAN

This plan recognises that volunteers contribute significantly to Victoria's environment, local communities and economy and that environmental volunteer groups play a critical role in managing, protecting and improving the natural environment. The Victorian Government has established the plan to maintain, support and grow the environmental volunteering sector. The plan aims to reduce barriers to volunteering in Victoria, and to encourage more Victorians to connect with nature and act to protect and enhance the natural environment.

VOLUNTEERING IN PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Volunteering in Parks Strategic Plan aims to deliver a well-managed and world class volunteering program across the Parks Victoria estate with benefits including increased capacity to support Parks Victoria to maintain and enhance Victoria's parks, greater connection of parks with Victoria's diverse community to enhance health and wellbeing, and to ensure safe and effective volunteer engagement.

VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

The Victorian Government has also committed to develop and implement a Volunteer Strategy to support and enhance volunteerism in Victoria more broadly. The Volunteer Strategy is due to be released in late 2021.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACT 2017

This Victorian Government established this Act because climate change is identified as one of the biggest threats to the future of Victoria. Warmer and drier conditions are projected to have negative consequences for health, infrastructure, agriculture, water, biodiversity, and alpine and coastal areas. The Act responds by putting in place a legislative framework to drive action to achieve a net zero emissions, climate-resilient Victorian community and economy by 2050. The framework includes a number of approaches, including how the *Climate Change Act* will drive action and how Victoria is preparing for a changing climate.

VICTORIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE FRAMEWORK

Victoria's Climate Change Framework sets out the Government's long-term vision for climate change action.

VICTORIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN

This plan lays out the Victorian Government's plan of action to help Victorians meet the challenges and act on the opportunities of climate change.

VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL FIRE STRATEGY

This strategy helps provide policy direction and a framework across Victoria's fire and land management agencies to support Traditional Owners to undertake cultural burning for the range of cultural values entailed in caring for Country.

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM: A PUBLIC SECTOR THAT DELIVERS EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES FOR VICTORIANS

The RCS aligns with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 'Outcome Architecture' hierarchy by having a core set of domains (themes) and associated long-term outcomes and indicators that are consistent in all Victorian RCSs.

Regional strategies and plans

WIMMERA WATERWAY STRATEGY 2014-22

The Wimmera Waterway Strategy 2014-22 is an action plan for the Regional Catchment Strategy that details the actions required to achieve the long-term and short-term outcomes for the region's waterways. It identifies priority waterways and includes a detailed set of management targets for each priority.

WIMMERA FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Wimmera Floodplain Management Strategy outlines priority actions designed to deliver floodplain specific outcomes for the region.

WIMMERA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS STATEMENT

The Wimmera Strategic Directions Statement outlines the priority integrated water management projects for the region. They are designed to improve the liveability of the region's towns and city by implementing improvements to the regional water cycle. It supports and complements the outcomes in the RCS.

WIMMERA CARBON READY PLAN

The Wimmera Carbon Ready Plan is an action plan for the Regional Catchment Strategy. It details the actions required for the long-term management of Wimmera soils and other natural assets in the context of adapting to and mitigating the impacts of a changing climate. The plan emphasises the need to continue research and trials that test new ideas and demonstrate these to land managers.

WIMMERA INVASIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Wimmera Invasive Plant and Animal Management Strategy outlines an approach to setting priorities for coordinated management of invasive plants and animals in the region. It is an action plan under the RCS.

GROWING WHAT IS GOOD COUNTRY PLAN – VOICES OF THE WOJOBALUK NATIONS

Whole-of-Country plan prepared by Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation to represent the interests of Traditional Owners, to express their people's vision, aspirations, strategies and actions for Country.

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Environmental Water Management Plans provide detailed management information to help guide watering of wetlands. They set out the environmental watering goals, ecological objectives, and the water regime required to meet the ecological objectives.

EASTERN MAAR - MEERREENGEEYE NGAKEEPOORRYEY

Whole-of-Country plan prepared by Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to represent the interests of Traditional Owners, to express their people's vision, aspirations, strategies and actions for Country.

WIMMERA CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Co-operative management is a partnership between Traditional Owners and the Victorian Government that provide a means for Traditional Owners to participate in the management of parks and reserves on their Country. The Wimmera Co-operative Management Agreement is between the State and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Traditional Owners, with Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation as the representative body.

The agreement established the Winyula Council to advise the State on the management of those lands. The relationship is now maintained directly between Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Victoria. Co-managed lands under this agreement include:

- Lake Albacutya Park
- Lake Hindmarsh Lake Reserve
- Little Desert National Park (part)
- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park
- Wimmera River Heritage Area Park
- Wyperfeld National Park.

WESTERN REGION SUSTAINABLE WATER STRATEGY

The Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy is a comprehensive plan for the sustainable use of water resources in the western region. This region extends from the southern Mallee in the north to the southwest coast, and from the Victorian-South Australian border in the west to the Avoca, Corangamite and Gellibrand rivers to the east. The region includes the Avoca, Wimmera-Avon (including the Avon-Richardson River), Millicent Coast, Glenelg, Portland Coast, Hopkins, Lake Corangamite and Otway Coast river basins and the southern half of the Mallee river basin. The strategy includes a series of actions and augmentations to meet the region's water needs, including policy statements, and for implementation at a regional and local scale.

WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The plan covers the municipalities of Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. The plan provides broad direction for regional land use and development in the region and a more detailed planning framework for the regional city of Horsham.

GRAMPIANS REGION CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

The adaptation strategy is being developed by the community, led by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. It will outline a shared direction and priority actions for climate change adaptation in the region. The draft strategy is due to be released for public comment in March-April 2021 and finalised by July 2021.

BIODIVERSITY RESPONSE PLANNING

DELWP are leading and coordinating regional prioritisation through a Biodiversity Response Planning process that will identify priority landscapes and species in the Wimmera region.

COUNCIL PLANS

Council plans are developed by each municipal council in the year following a general election (every four years). A Council Plan is the major strategic document outlining what the Council is planning to achieve in the subsequent four years (as part of its longer-term journey) and how it will achieve those outcomes. There are 8 municipal councils that are wholly or partly in the Wimmera catchment management region.

WIMMERA PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

The Wimmera Primary Care Partnership Strategic Plan sets out the strategic objectives of the primary care partners aimed at delivering its vision to collectively improve the health and well-being of the Wimmera Southern mallee communities, reducing health inequities across the region.