

2019-2024

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT *and Partnership Strategy*

WORKING PARTNERSHIP WITH LANDHOLDERS  
AND THE COMMUNITY TO PROTECT AND  
ENHANCE THE REGION'S LAND, WATER  
AND BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES

Glenelg Hopkins



CMA





# Purpose

Working with community, individuals and organisations is central to how the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (CMA) operates. We engage to build capacity, support partnerships and ensure ownership of integrated catchment management (ICM) in the region.

This includes developing regional plans and strategies, supporting the significant efforts of Landcare and community networks and groups, and bringing together diverse partners to develop and deliver on-ground programs.

This document reflects the CMA's focus for community engagement and partnership development over the coming years:

- **Dedication** to telling the story of who we are and the work we do
- Having a **professional, innovative, knowledgeable** and **respected** work force **committed** to community engagement and partnerships
- Maintaining a **strategic** and **collaborative** approach to community engagement and partnerships that recognises and supports regional **diversity** and interests.



## Integrated Catchment Management:

Working with the community to improve and integrate the management of land, water and biodiversity for the improved health and well-being of people and the natural environment





# WHY PARTNERSHIPS and community engagement?

Effective engagement is important for CMAs to understand, share knowledge and work with community to improve the health of our catchments. Local Government, Landcare, Traditional Owners, community groups and many other partners also support and provide leadership in engaging communities.

Communities have an important role to play – they know the issues and solutions for their landscape. When we work together, we help protect and enhance the natural environment and provide a range of social, cultural and recreational benefits for the broader community.

This strategy builds on and strengthens the CMAs existing relationships and partnerships. It also aligns with the principles, engagement and partnership approaches outlined in the **Community Engagement and Partnership Framework for Victorian CMAs** and the **Victorian CMA Aboriginal Participation Guidelines**. We recognise that to achieve sustained practice change, engagement and partnership development needs to be planned, tailored, targeted and inclusive.

## Communities:

Individuals, public and private landholders, Traditional Owners, community groups and business owners

## Community engagement:

Activities which see us interact with members of our communities to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower

## Partners:

Traditional Owners, community groups, organisations, local, state and federal governments, or individuals with whom we seek specific and mutually beneficial outcomes through formal or informal arrangements. As partners we share both the problem and the solution.



# Our Promise

Glenelg Hopkins CMA commits to the Victorian CMA statewide principles for community engagement and partnerships.

## Principle 1:

We will embed community engagement and build partnerships in all that we do

## Principle 2:

We will provide meaningful opportunities for our communities and partners to contribute to strategies and initiatives

## Principle 3:

Our community and partnership approaches will be planned, tailored, targeted and evaluated

## Principle 4:

We will collaborate with our communities and partners, transparently and respectfully and establish clear roles and expectations







# Our Catchment

The Glenelg Hopkins region lies south of the Great Dividing Range in Victoria's south west. It is renowned for its agricultural production, scenic beauty, dramatic coastline and rich biodiversity.

The catchment is home to Australia's most extensive volcanic province - UNESCO listed Kanawinka Geopark, a large section of the internationally recognised Grampians National Park (Garwird) and the World Heritage listed Budj Bim cultural landscape.

Other natural features of national and international significance include:

- the Glenelg River, estuary and Discovery Bay
- Western District Ramsar Lakes
- 13 endangered Ecological Vegetation Communities
- the iconic Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Orange-bellied Parrot and 174 of Victoria's threatened species
- numerous wetlands, comprising 44 percent of Victoria's total.

The catchment supports a permanent population of 130,000 with year-round tourism adding significantly to this number. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and health and community services are the major employers.

Continued relationships and partnerships with community are integral for addressing the key challenges and priorities within the region, including:

Habitat loss  
and  
fragmentation

Pest plants  
and  
animals

Wetlands  
loss

Climate  
variability

Waterway  
health





# A SNAPSHOT *of success*



**24973**  
LANDCARE  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS  
in 2018-19



**1550**  
LANDCARE  
MEMBERS  
in 2018-19



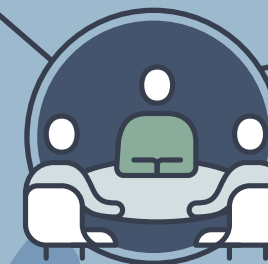
**6241**  
PEOPLE AT  
364 EVENTS  
in 2018-19



**333**  
PUBLICATIONS  
PRODUCED  
in 2018-19



**7**  
FORMALISED  
PARTNERSHIPS  
since 2015



## *The Angler Angle*

Building strategic partnerships with individual anglers and fishing groups has been instrumental in boosting awareness of and advocacy for environmental flows in the Glenelg River, as well as environmental conditions in other unregulated waterways.

‘Since we’ve had environmental flows coming down the river, we’ve had incredible movements of fish that hadn’t happened for years. We’re seeing fish push hundreds of kilometres up the river in a river that used to be, in the higher reaches, very disconnected and a series of small pools. Now that we’re getting environmental water...we’re seeing improvements in the fishing all the time. I’ve spoken to people that tell me this is the most consistent they’ve seen the river fish in 30, 40 years.’

This comment from notable western Victorian angler Shane Lowery - recorded during the Glenelg Hopkins CMA Bream Classic along the Glenelg River in February - reached 51,000 people and achieved 28,000 views on Facebook thanks to strategic partnerships.



## *The digital age*

Joining forces with a broad range of project partners has enabled the CMA to establish Smart Farm demonstrations on 4 farms in the region. Working with landholders, technology such as wireless soil moisture and temperature probes, weather stations, tank monitors, electric fence monitors and livestock trackers have been installed on farm. Answering simple questions such as “will it save me time and money?”, “will I understand the information?” and “will it work on my property?” are fundamental adoption challenges.

The key strength of the project has been the enthusiasm and commitment of its wide-ranging collaborators.

## *Purchase Partnerships*

With the aim of restoring Walker Swamp to its former glory, Glenelg Hopkins CMA partnered with Nature Glenelg Trust and Hamilton Field Naturalist Club to undertake a significant step in the protection of the Wannon River Floodplain. Through funding from the Our Catchment Our Communities program, Nature Glenelg Trust purchased Walker Swamp, a 500-acre iconic wetland near Dunkeld. A conservation covenant on the Swamp ensures the on-going protection of this wetland habitat for wildlife, such as the Brolga and the nationally vulnerable Growling Grass frog.

Funding from Glenelg Hopkins CMA for Walker Swamp purchase and on-ground works totals \$251,285, with in-kind contributions of \$504,930.



## *Keeping an eye out*

The CMA’s Woodland Bird Monitoring program represents a partnership between vibrant Landcare groups and passionate local bird observers. Community members were trained in woodland bird monitoring and identification techniques and have spent 4 years monitoring sites on local farms and reserves twice a year. The program has been well supported with 231 people attending regular monitoring events. A true measure of the success of the program is the fact that Upper Hopkins Land Management Group and Panyyabyr Landcare Group have chosen to continue the program past the life of the funded project phase.



Training, education and public forums associated with the program attracted an impressive 792 people over the last four years.

## *A catchy tale*

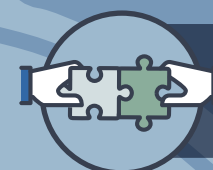
Perce the Perch was spawned during Glenelg Hopkins CMA’s participation in a trial of community crowdfunding for river enhancement projects called ‘Funds for Fish’. A new approach to communication was needed - not only did the CMA need to get the attention and engage with its audience, the communication also needed to motivate the audience to act and to provide money for fish habitat reintroduction in the Merri River, Warrnambool. Perce will continue to be used to compliment official CMA communication on waterway health issues and reach a demographic historically harder to reach.

Perce has 2,263 followers on Facebook and raised \$18,400 through crowdfunding.



## *A commitment over time*

In recognition of the long-standing relationship between Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Glenelg Hopkins CMA, a formalised partnership statement was signed in 2015. This document acknowledges and honors the successful working partnership between the two organisations over the past two decades and well into the future.



490 students from Baimbridge College have learnt about Gunditjmarra Country since 2016.



8 key collaborators include Grasslands Society of Southern Australia, Southern Grampians Shire, Agriculture Victoria and commercial equipment providers Agri Ace, Meshed, Wild Eye, Simply Farm and Telstra.



# WHAT YOU have told us

We have sought the communities' feedback on our approach to engagement and partnership development. Here is a summary of what you have told us.



**The CMA has a positive reputation and is well respected in the community.**

'Big picture perceptions of the CMA are positive. The most frequently used words to describe the CMA are innovative, professional, collaborative and knowledgeable.'

'I feel it is professionally and personally appropriate in its dealings with us as landowners/farmers. They are respectful and keep landowners informed.'

**The CMA has a long term view to community engagement and partnerships.**

'We need to continue having an on-going and long-term presence in the community with funds to support them.'

'Keep building on what you are doing, keep using social media and building relationships with community/recreation groups with a strong community presence.'

**The CMA has a strategic imperative to engage with special interest groups.**

'There is opportunity to engage with other interest groups – you need to be clever about who you engage and the opportunity for expanding advocacy'.

**Early and constant engagement with diverse community and partners is necessary for planning and delivery.**

'Go out of your way to have a genuine conversation with volunteers and communities at field days, information sessions and meetings... and tell us what the outcome of our conversations and input have been.'

'We would be open to more strategic planning meetings – annual catch-up to talk about plans and opportunities for future collaboration and partnerships.'

**Continue to build on what is already working well.**

'More interaction with landholders... more seminars, education and training. More information in local papers about what is happening and grants that are available.'

**Staff competence and professionalism is recognised as its greatest strength.**

'There is a good culture in the organisation which is reflected in how staff present themselves. They always act professionally and with respect.'

**There is room to further support staff capacity building and cross-organisational knowledge sharing.**

'Community often ask what is going on. Knowing what others [CMA staff] are doing makes it easier to engage and share information.'

**Face-to-face engagement and social media are our most effective forms of communication, however more work is needed.**

'A more strategic whole of organisational approach to communications is needed, as well as some discrete communication/engagement messaging.'

**The CMA has a broad portfolio of responsibility, expectations need to be managed.**

'The breadth and variety in projects being delivered by GHGMA is perhaps contributing to confusion. At times I get the feeling that the CMA don't know their place.'

**There is a wide-spread recognition that the CMA's approach to developing partnerships is maturing.**

'[The CMA is] effective at building partnerships, but these are not as effective as they can be in addressing some of the priority issues for the region.'

**There is a perception the CMA is Glenelg River and Hamilton centric.**

'Consideration needs to be given to the CMAs branding and regional representation to ensure that the focus is not just on Hamilton and the Glenelg River.'



# Key Strategic Areas

The following strategic areas have been developed to show our commitment to enhancing community engagement and partnerships. The aim is to take what community have told us and build on current best practice to deliver meaningful engagement approaches and develop partnerships that reflect the regions needs and interests.

## 1. Dedication to telling the story of who we are and the work we do

The purpose of Glenelg Hopkins CMA is to work in partnership with landholders and the community to protect and enhance the region's land, water and biodiversity resources - our portfolio is diverse. We recognise that telling our story is important to raise awareness of what we achieve together. It is also important to recognise the people behind that work.

INITIATIVE	ACTION	PURPOSE	TIMEFRAME
Developing a strategic direction for communications and branding to ensure the community is well informed of our role and responsibilities	Develop a CMA Communications Strategy, including branding	Introduce a consistent look and messaging to CMA information, communications materials and activities with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising the profile of CMA staff, community and partners, and the work we do,</li> <li>celebrating the successes of partners and communities work.</li> </ul>	Feb 2020



## 2. Having a professional, innovative, knowledgeable and respected work force committed to community engagement and partnerships

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is a respected organisation with professional and dedicated staff. We will continue to position ourselves as an employer of choice by supporting staff, and Board and Advisory Group members to sustain strong regional working relationships.

INITIATIVE	ACTION	PURPOSE	TIMEFRAME
Recruiting and retaining skilled staff with strong knowledge and networks	CMA staff, board and advisory group member inductions include information on community engagement and partnerships, including relevant policies, procedures and guidelines	Ensure a consistent engagement approach is delivered by the whole organisation	Annual
	Staff performance reviews include questions about their confidence and skills in engagement and partnerships	Continue to build staff capacity and knowledge	Biannual
	Staff successes are celebrated and acknowledged through meetings and awards	Valuing the expertise, innovation and commitment of CMA staff	Annual
Supporting professional development opportunities to build skills in engagement and partnership brokering	Staff, board and advisory group members are provided with professional development opportunities through attendance at conferences, training and other relevant initiatives	Ensure CMA staff and others are knowledgeable and experienced in community engagement and partnership creation	Annual
	Staff have an increased presence at community events and investor and agency meetings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local fairs, field days and shows</li> <li>Conferences and award nights</li> <li>Meetings and workshops</li> </ul>	Provide staff with opportunities to engage and network with community, partners and investors to help identify regional priorities and investment opportunities.	Annual
	Innovative methodologies for improved community engagement and partnership opportunities are supported	Support change and improvements within the CMA	Annual
Providing the tools and resources needed by staff to effectively and efficiently deliver projects and activities	Projects are appropriately resourced (funding) to support community engagement and partnership building	Ensure effective and meaningful engagement through project design and delivery	Annual
	Engagement, communication plan and evaluation templates are developed for relevant projects	Provide staff with consistent and professional templates to use in all project planning, delivery and evaluations	December 2019



3. Maintaining a strategic and collaborative approach to community engagement and partnerships that recognises and supports regional diversity and interests

Glenelg Hopkins CMA takes great pride in its partnerships and ability to engage with key agencies, organisations, businesses, individuals, Traditional Owners and the broader Landcare community. We value our community and partnerships but know there is always more we can do. Through this we will continue to focus on the CMA will have a continued focus on committing to Traditional Owner engagement, Landcare and Smart Farming initiatives. We will support diverse partnerships and have a strategic approach to engagement.

INITIATIVE	ACTION	PURPOSE	TIMEFRAME
Maintaining a strategic direction for engagement and partnerships across the catchment	Maintain relevant strategies that inform the CMAs approach to partnerships and engagement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Regional Catchment Strategy</li><li>Aboriginal Partnerships Framework</li><li>Community Engagement Policy</li></ul>	Provide strategic direction for engagement and partnership development that supports funding and legislative commitments	As required
	Develop and maintain a Relationship Management Plan	Provide guidance for Board and staff to position the CMA as a service provider of choice and to maintain trust with community, agencies and investors	December 2019
	Undertake social benchmarking surveys to inform CMA engagement and partnership approaches	Better understand regional demographics and garner community and partner feedback on how the CMA is performing	Biennial
Supporting a strategic and targeted approach for engaging interest groups around specific issues	Develop targeted community engagement plans and communication materials to assist with specific regional issues, including RAMSAR, Water for the Environment, Regional Land Partnerships, Recreational water use and Agricultural Industry Sustainability Frameworks	Support opportunities to raise the profile, increase engagement with community and provide targeted messaging on specific issues, projects and programs	2024
Strengthening regional partnerships through formal and informal arrangements	Review and conduct partnership health checks to ascertain if they should be continued, maintained or strengthened	Ensure formal partnerships are relevant and meeting partner expectations	2024
	Broker new partnerships that will support the implementation of the Regional Catchment and other relevant strategies with Traditional Owner organisations, Landcare, Agricultural Industry Groups, Shires, research, education and health institutions	Broaden the CMA's partnerships to reflect regional diversity and priorities	Annual
	Develop and support appropriate planning initiatives to coordinate investment and project delivery across the catchment	Provide an integrated approach to the development of projects and programs, through strengthened community and partner input	Annual
	A range of feedback channels are available for community and partner use	Provide partners and community with avenues to access further information or provide comment back to the CMA, including project evaluations and partner surveys	Annual

MEASURING Success

Progress against our actions will be evaluated annually using the indicators and performance scale outlined in the Community Engagement and Partnership Framework for Victorian CMAs. This toolkit has been produced to standardise monitoring, reporting and evaluation approaches across the state. An example of this Framework is provided below.

PRINCIPLE 1 We will embed community engagement and build partnerships in all that we do				
INDICATOR	LEVEL OF QUALITY (RATING)			EXAMPLE OF EVIDENCE FOR RATING
	ELEMENTARY	EMERGING	EXEMPLAR	
The extent to which we have clear processes and procedures in place to engage our communities and partners and we will follow them	No internal policies or guidance materials in place for the Board, Management and staff.	Existence of community engagement and partnerships policy/ strategy. Processes are underway to complete and educate staff about strategies and policies (including Aboriginal Participation Guidelines).	Community engagement and partnership policies and plans exist, and staff see this work as core business. Engagement plans and evaluation plan templates are available, and staff are clearly using them on relevant projects. Aboriginal Participation Guidelines fully inform our processes.	Sighting of key document examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CMA community engagement and partnership policy/strategy</li><li>Project engagement plan</li><li>Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community protocols</li></ul>

STRATEGY Development

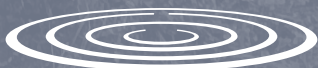
This strategy was developed in 2019 with input from the community, key stakeholders and partners, Community Advisory Groups, CMA staff and the Glenelg Hopkins CMA Board. It is informed by community and partner surveys, regional and statewide strategies and Frameworks, and our organisational commitments to partnership and engagement.







## Glenelg Hopkins



C M A

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