



Regional Catchment Strategies

RMCG Capability Statement

April 2020

Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) across Victoria are about to embark on preparation of the fourth round of Regional Catchment Strategies.

RMCG has been there from the beginning, assisting CMAs in the preparation of the first Regional Catchment Strategies in 1997 and through each successive round of these critical regional plans.

We have a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the Victorian Catchment Management Council (VCMC) Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) Guidelines and of the strategies themselves.

The language and strategic basis for the strategies has evolved as our understandings of natural systems and community have grown. While the first round of strategies focused on identifying and addressing threats to natural resources in each region, the second round moved away from a 'threat-based approach' to focus on identifying natural assets in each region and enhancing their values. In the last round, an asset-based approach was applied to regional priority setting. In the next iteration many regions are planning to adopt a landscape or systems-based approach based around five key NRM themes: water, land, biodiversity, marine and coasts and community.

This evolution has resulted in improved regional priority setting and a clearer rationale for decision-making.

Robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) frameworks have also been adopted and there is growing ownership of RCSs amongst delivery partners.

Key enduring elements for the development of a successful RCS include:

- Strong engagement to build ownership by communities and delivery partners
- Place-based planning based around shared Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) outcomes
- A reliance on a robust evidence base
- A focus on triple bottom line outcomes - environmental, socio-cultural, and economic factors.

HOW RMCG CAN HELP?

We can help ensure successful preparation of RCSs, from managing the overall development process through to targeted assistance on discrete components of the process.

Here are just some of the ways we can assist:

- **Reviewing and selecting the method(s)** to use in preparing the regional strategy
- **Strategy review and evaluation** in preparation for the new strategy
- **Priority setting** for natural resource management planning
- **Community and stakeholder engagement**
- **Project planning and management** for RCS renewal.

In the next five sections, we have provided some more information on each of these areas.

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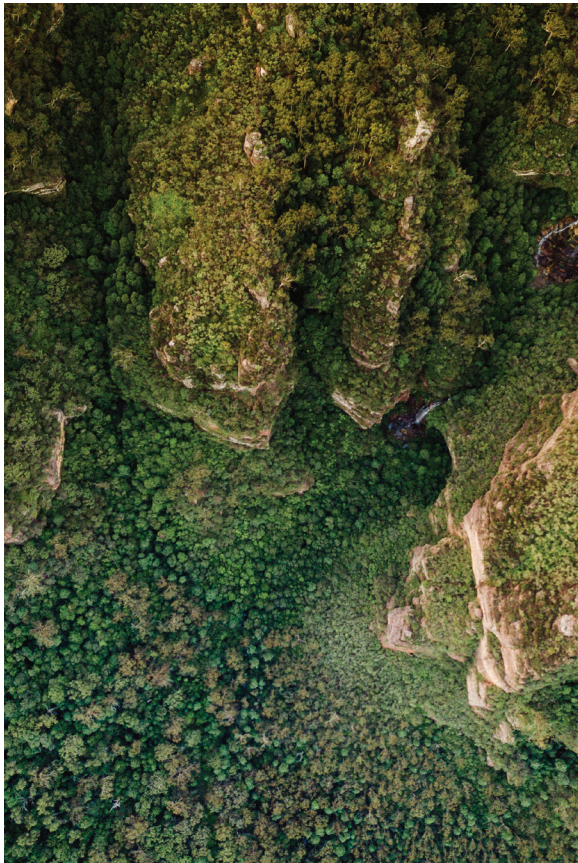
REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODS

Our breadth of experience means we understand a wide range of methods and techniques that can be employed to prepare robust and effective Regional Catchment Strategies.

These include:

- The various 'systems' and 'asset' based approaches to strategic planning
- Outcome-based planning methods, such as program logics, log-frames and impact pathways
- Conservation Action Planning and associated tools
- Resilience and place-based planning approaches
- Various structured decision-making techniques (i.e. trade-off methods, multi-criteria analysis).

In addition, we bring in-depth knowledge of the key NRM themes, issues and policy drivers that influence and impact catchment health – valuable context for developing an RCS.



STRATEGY REVIEW AND EVALUATION

We are a leader in NRM program review, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) frameworks. We develop clear outcomes and program logic that can be vital in the preparation for a new strategy.

We know how to create an MER framework for a Regional Catchment Strategy that will help a CMA to demonstrate their progress and achievements.



PRIORITY SETTING PROCESSES

We have developed a robust understanding of the various priority-setting processes in use across the NRM sector.

Key areas include:

- Understanding the scope and purpose of the priority-setting required in regional catchment strategies
- The systems, asset themes or landscapes to be considered, their scale and form for comparison, (and the relationships between them)
- Assessing the feasibility of actions – an asset may be important but may be impossible or impractical to protect
- Consideration of both the costs AND benefits of actions and their importance for priority setting
- How to manage information or knowledge gaps.

We can assist with priority-setting by:

- Exploring options for priority-setting and determining the most appropriate approach
- Helping to implement priority-setting approaches, particularly where they involve partners and stakeholders.

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COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We have significant expertise in engagement and facilitation and have applied this to many strategic planning processes, particularly Regional Catchment Strategies.

Within this area we have staff with specialist skills in facilitation, conflict management and mediation, governance, organisational development, and structured decision-making, all of which can be valuable to strategy review and renewal.

Our approach to engagement (with community, landholders and agency stakeholders) is based on the following principles:

- We ensure there is a clear and agreed purpose for any engagement activity
- We design and implement engagement activities to suit the specific purpose and the audience
- We are flexible as the best approach must be informed by what we learn from stakeholders
- We are respectful of all participants and provide opportunities for diverse views to be aired, captured and acknowledged.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

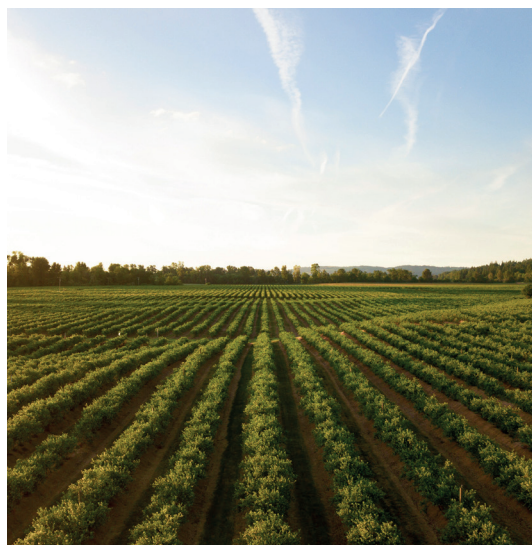
We believe that renewal of an RCS should be planned and delivered as a major project because of the complexity and risks involved in their successful delivery.

Project planning for this process, and management of its delivery, requires a broad set of skills. They include the ability to manage diverse interests, to collate and interpret technical data and investigations, to anticipate key risks to the project and to design and manage strong project governance.

RMCG has extensive experience in both planning and management of strategy development. Our ISO accredited Quality Management System (QMS) ensures that projects are thoroughly planned and managed.

The particular areas where we can assist with project planning and management include:

- Developing a strong project plan, which includes identifying key risks
- Organising and facilitating consultations with key parties who have a stake in the RCS renewal process
- Gathering and interpreting technical and strategic inputs to inform planning requirements
- Assisting to establish project management and governance arrangements
- Establishing reporting and communication processes for the duration of the process.



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RECENT PROJECT EXAMPLES

RMCG is currently assisting some CMAs with their RCS development and we have completed various other relevant projects. Some are shown here:

PROJECT	CLIENT
West Gippsland RCS Review and Preparation for Renewal	West Gippsland CMA (current)
RCS Traditional Owner Engagement	Wimmera CMA (2020)
Sustainable Agriculture – Future Directions Paper	Corangamite CMA (2019)
Our Living Rivers of the Barwon: A discussion Paper for the Future	Barwon River Ministerial Advisory Committee (2019)
Tasmanian NRM organisational capacity support RLP and project delivery	Department of Primary Industries Parks, Water & Environment (2019)
Priority landscape project plans for Gippsland	East Gippsland CMA (2018)
Better connections between state, regional and local planning - Our Catchments, Our Communities	Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) (2017)
Improving accountability for implementation of Regional Catchment Strategies	DELWP (2017)
Better Integration of the RCS with the Planning Scheme	West Gippsland CMA (2013)
East Gippsland RCS Prioritisation Process	East Gippsland CMA (2013)
Corangamite RCS Process Review	Corangamite CMA (2013)

CONTACT US

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