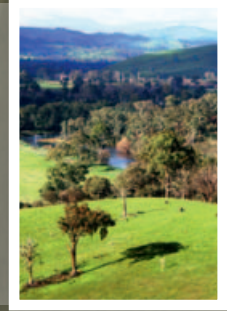
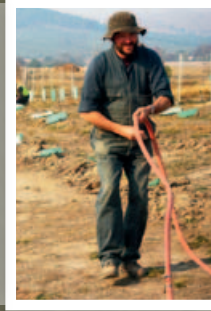
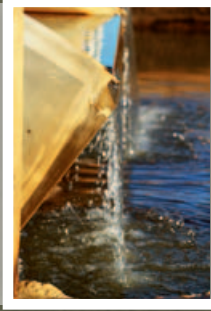
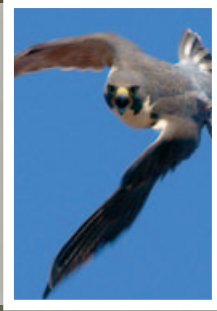




**GOULBURN
BROKEN**
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



08-09

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

GOULBURN BROKEN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

SUMMARY

Across the Catchment



CEO's report on 2008-09 highlights

- Extreme dry conditions extended to 12 years, impacting on all areas of GB CMA's operations.
- It was an exceptionally difficult year in the Dryland, with significant landholder and partner agency resources devoted to suppressing and recovering from Australia's worst natural disaster on record, February's Black Saturday bushfires.
- The bushfires burnt 190,000 hectares or eight per cent of the Catchment, including riparian vegetation along 2,845 kilometres of streams.

Drought and bushfire response and environmental water

- Levels of achievement were excellent under the circumstances, thanks largely to the third year of the Drought Employment Program which employed 81 drought-affected rural people during six months to erect 164 kilometres of fence, spray 8,000 hectares of weeds and plant 1,300 trees.
- Aquatic ecosystems are under significant stress because of very low stream flows, although there have been no single or immediate environmental disasters. Given the low flows, emphasis was on maintaining water quality as we attempt to manage drought conditions better. 840 megalitres was provided to wetlands.
- Water recovery from irrigation farms accelerated, with 247 irrigation whole farm plans completed (an increase of 98 per cent on 2007-08) as Shepparton Irrigation Region Implementation Committee's Farm Program links with the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project to modernise irrigation infrastructure.

Works and incentives

- 743 incentives were provided for landholders to fence and revegetate waterways, build stock containment areas, whole farm plan, improve irrigation and install water reuse systems.
- 3,623 hectares of remnant vegetation were fenced, well above the long-term average again.
- 782 landholders received an average of \$16,223 as a Murray Darling Basin irrigation management grant for water-use efficiency projects.

Water reform

- DSE released the draft Northern (Victoria) Region Sustainable Water Strategy for public consultation
- Strong joint proposals with adjoining catchment management authorities were prepared for federal Caring for our Country funding.

Funding

- \$5 million has been allocated over two years and \$1.5 million was provided by the Australian and Victorian Governments for environmental works following the Black Saturday bushfires.
- \$2.8 million was provided by the Victorian Government to fund the third year of the Drought Employment Program.

Recognition and milestones

- GB CMA was awarded Banksia Environmental Foundation's Water Award for the Vision for the Broken River Basin project.
- Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network was a finalist in Australia's Regional Achievement and Community Awards.
- GB CMA received a Silver Award from the Australasian Reporting Awards – the highest level awarded to a natural resource management organisation.

Finally

This is my twelfth and final Annual Report. I am very proud of what staff, partner agencies, community groups and farmers have achieved, especially given the difficulties of recent years.

Thank you to the Catchment's outstanding community leaders whom I have been privileged to work with during my 23 years in natural resource management.

W J O'Kane
Chief Executive Officer

Aggregate output performance across all investment areasⁱ

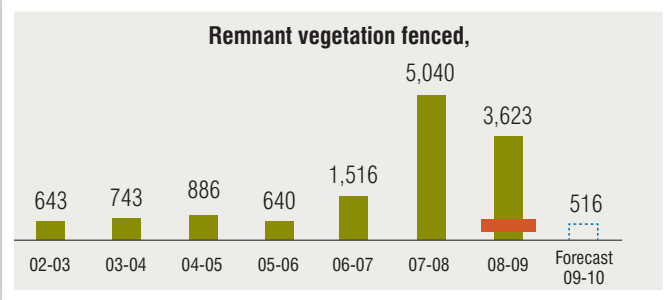
Output	Achieved	Target	Performance	
			% achieved	Rating ⁱⁱⁱ
Remnant vegetation fenced, hectares	3,623	479	756	Exceeded target
Long-term conservation agreements, hectares	363	845	43	Well below target
Indigenous revegetation planted, hectares	945	640	148	Exceeded target
Irrigation drains built, kilometres	10.8	5	216	Exceeded target
Reuse systems installed, numbers	66	44	151	Exceeded target
Irrigation systems improved in SIR, hectares	21,083	7,500	281	Exceeded target
Groundwater pumps installed, numbers	12	13	92	On target
Weeds treated, hectares	36,990	34,200	108	On target
Rabbits and foxes treated, hectares	1,530	6,550	23	Well below target
River or stream erosion controlled, kilometres	111	182	61	Below target
Fishway structures installed and barriers modified, numbers	1	0	-	Exceeded target
Aquatic habitat works ⁱⁱ , numbers	59	11	536	Exceeded target
Threatened species projects, numbers	29	33	88	On target
Whole farm plans prepared, numbers	341	291	117	Exceeded target

ⁱ from funds received through Corporate Plan 2008-09

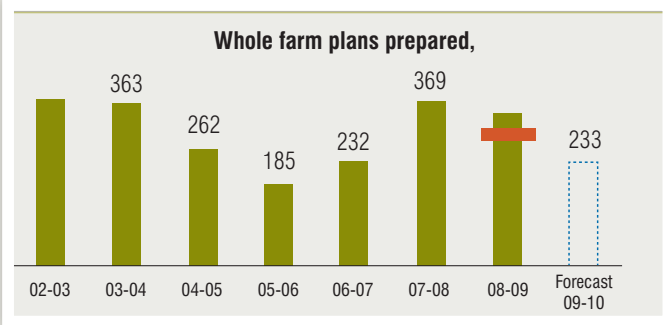
ⁱⁱ significantly enhanced aquatic refugia

ⁱⁱⁱ ratings legend is on the back page

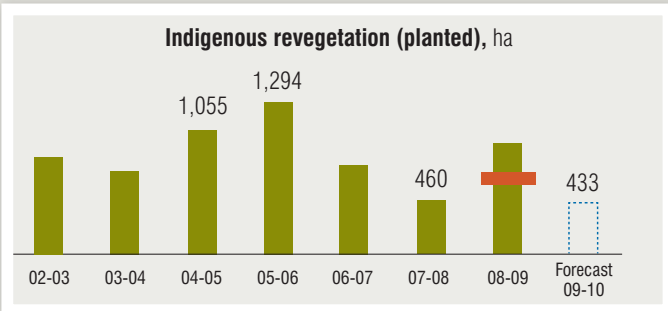
Exceptional achievement due to Drought Employment Project (since 2006-07)



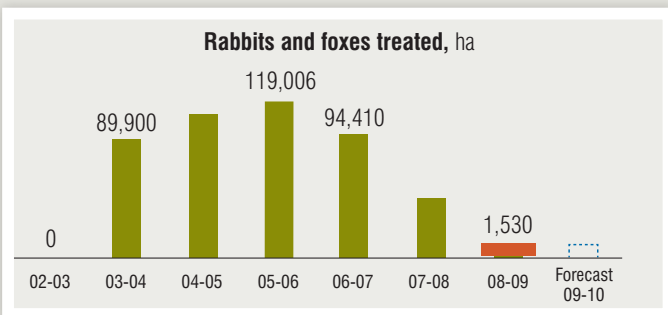
Strong interest due to extended drought and Foodbowl Modernisation Project



Achievement from many programs



Impacted by fires



Output targets are generally forecast to be low in 2009-10 (as shown in the above graphs) because of reduced indicative funding from Australian and State Government programs.

Target for 2008-09

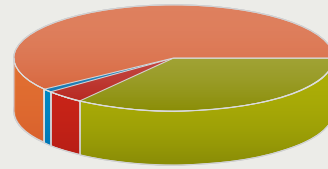
Front cover

Main photo: Tree fern shoots emerge in Murrindindi Scenic Reserve, May 2009. Photo: Mark Turner, GB CMA

Inset photos (left to right):

- Peregrine Falcon. Photo: Keith Ward, GB CMA
- Water over a flume gate regulator. Photo: Chelsea Nicholson, DPI
- Gary Hendy, landholder from Strath Creek. Photo: Bridget Clarke, Upper Goulburn Landcare Network
- View of the Goulburn River from Acheron cutting, Maroonah Highway. Photo: Mark Turner, GB CMA

Goulburn Broken investment share 2008-09



- Community investment** - The Environment, \$61.8 million (65%)
- Government investment** - The Business (Governance, Planning and responding, Human resources, Environmental footprint), 1.3 million (1%)
- Government investment** - The Business (Collaborations and communities), 3.5 million (4%)
- Government investment** - The Environment, \$28.8 million (30%)



Nathalia farmer, Laurie Hicks, plants a tree as part of the Drought Employment Program. Photo: Gary Deayton, Moira Shire



Picking apricots at a Bunbartha orchard. Photo: Fleur Baldi, GB CMA

2008-09 Implementation Committee highlights

Broken Goulburn Implementation Committee (BGIC)

- In December 2008, BGIC replaced the Mid Goulburn Broken and Upper Goulburn Broken Implementation Committees that were established following the formation of the GB CMA in 1997.
- BGIC is consolidating its role by focusing on the Dryland Landscape Strategy, which was finalised in February 2009.
- BGIC and its former committees oversaw delivery of a \$12.5 million program in 2008-09, funded by the Victorian and Australian governments through programs including Caring for Our Country, Natural Resources Investment Program, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and Second Generation Landcare.
- Black Saturday bushfires are resulting in collaborations between government and non-government agencies and communities at a scale not seen before in the BGIC area.
 - Upper Goulburn Landcare Network is playing a huge role in recovering from the bushfires, coordinating over 230 volunteers from 13 diverse organisations to control weeds, demolish fences and out buildings, construct fences, etc.
 - DPI has contacted over 200 fire-affected landholders by telephone in the upper Catchment and visited over 100 sites
 - Information sessions on post-fire rehabilitation and low-flow planning are being run by DPI in partnership with Landcare.
- Landholders received 291 incentives, 424 hectares of terrestrial remnant native vegetation were fenced and 814 hectares were revegetated. DPI staff helped build 25 stock containment areas for drought-affected landholders in irrigation and dryland regions and 3,390 hectares of land were protected from overgrazing. Bush Returns annual stewardship payments were provided to eight landholders covering 324 hectares.
- Significant works were undertaken by the Regent Honeyeater project and in the Longwood Plains Biodiversity Action Planning areas.
- The Landcare Support Strategy was revised by GB CMA with help from the Goulburn Broken Landcare community and staff.
- Goulburn Broken Drought Water and River Contingency Planning Group continued to address potential river health and water quality hazards as a result of continuing drought and low flows.
- Flood protection planning scheme amendments were prepared for Murrindindi and Mansfield shire councils.
- The Rural Extension Program model continued to be successful, with two new community driven blackberry programs and one gorse program commenced.



GB CMA's Carl Walters and Corey Wilson inspect works on the Goulburn River.
Photo: Mark Turner, GB CMA

Shepparton Irrigation Region Implementation Committee (SIR IC)

- SIR IC planned and delivered a \$16 million program in 2008-09, funded by the Victorian and Australian governments through programs including: Our Water Our Future, Water in a Climatically Challenged Environment, the Natural Resources Investment Program, Caring for Our Country and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. SIR IC's program also used over \$0.5 million of regional funds.
- Implementation of the \$2 billion works program to modernise Victoria's Foodbowl region and save 425 gigalitres of lost water by 2012 through the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) is well underway.
- SIR IC worked closely with NVIRP to ensure that NVIRP's water saving projects complement implementation of the SIR Catchment Implementation Strategy.
- Whole farm plans on 247 properties covering 20,476 hectares were completed, including ten 'revised modernised' plans, bringing the total number of whole farm plans under this incentive to 3,716, covering 253,959 hectares or 80 per cent of the irrigated area.
- Farm irrigation systems: 485 were assessed to link with the irrigation modernisation process.
- Sixty six reuse systems draining 3,643 hectares were installed, bringing the total number of reuse systems constructed with assistance from this scheme to 549 serving 35,670 hectares.
- Fifteen automatic irrigation systems were installed under the scheme, serving 607 hectares, including seven for automating outlets from the G-MW delivery channel, bringing the total number of automatic irrigation systems constructed with assistance from this scheme to 142 serving 8,238 hectares.
- Fifteen landholders received support to undertake environmental projects and they fenced 29 hectares of remnant vegetation and revegetated 62 hectares.
- Implementation of many of the 94 waterways grants were supported by the Drought Employment Program and achievements included 87 kilometres of fencing, protecting 1,397 hectares of vegetation and 390 hectares of wetlands; establishment of 54 off stream watering points; and revegetation of 84 hectares of streamside zone.
- Environmental water was delivered to Reedy, Black and Kinnairds swamps and the Broken Creek. An environmental watering plan for Reedy Swamp is being developed.
- Five shallow groundwater pumps were installed and six upgrades were completed, with ten new and five upgrades in progress. Completed works have produced 1,595 megalitres and therefore 1,595 hectares of irrigated land have been protected from high watertables.
- There were 5.5 kilometres of primary drains and 5.3 kilometres of community drains constructed.
- SIR IC is considering the impact of the Northern Victoria Sustainable Water Strategy, Victoria's white paper on Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change, the joint Rural Land Use Planning Addendum (for the City of Greater Shepparton), the Australian Government's On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program and the Victorian Irrigation Drainage Program review.



A message from the Chair

The Goulburn Broken Catchment is at risk of serious degradation following Australia's largest recorded natural disaster, the Black Saturday bushfires of February 2009, and continuation of the longest dry period on record.

A \$5.8 million natural resource bushfire recovery program is being implemented and further significant opportunities are being explored.

We need a common understanding of our rapidly changing social and ecological systems so we can strengthen resilience at desired and achievable states of these systems.

The Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy, the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) and the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan are resulting in significant water savings that will be shared between urban consumption, the environment and irrigators.

The Victorian and Australian governments are investing \$1 billion each into NVIRP, which is also achieving complementary salinity and water quality benefits.

The Dryland Landscape Strategy was finalised, promoting a shift to an integrated approach at all levels, from planning to service delivery. The Mid Goulburn Broken and Upper Goulburn Implementation Committees were wound up after more than ten years, and the Broken Goulburn Implementation Committee was formed to replace them and implement the Dryland Landscape Strategy.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment deferred the update of our Regional Catchment Strategy to 2010.

A significant forecast decline in Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority revenue in 2009-10 will need to be managed.

I thank our Implementation Committees, partners (landholders, Department of Primary Industries, Goulburn-Murray Water, Goulburn Valley Water, Department of Sustainability and Environment and local government) and employees for their contribution in what has been an extremely tough year, especially for those personally affected by bushfires in the devastated south of the Catchment.

I also acknowledge the five outgoing directors for the past three years and with our new Board I look forward to tackling the enormous challenges ahead.

Dr Huw Davies
Chair



View of the Goulburn River from Acheron cutting, Maroondah Highway. Photo: Mark Turner, GB CMA

What's next in 2009-10?

- Continue to help communities and individuals respond to natural resource management implications from the Black Saturday bushfires.
- Continue adjusting approaches to the rapidly changing social and ecological systems.
- The Department of Sustainability and Environment deferred the update of the 2003 Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy to 2010. Major emerging State directions to be factored into the update include:
 - the Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy (expected to be finalised late 2009)
 - changes to the management of large areas of public land that results from Victorian Environment Assessment Council's River Red Gum Forests Investigation (expected in late 2009)
 - the Victorian Climate Change Green Paper (released June 2009)
 - the Land and Biodiversity at a time of Climate Change White Paper (expected in late 2009)
 - the Royal Commission into Victoria's Bushfires (final report expected in July 2010)
 - a renewed State Biodiversity Strategy (a draft is expected late in 2009).
- Major national directions that will influence the updated Regional Catchment Strategy include those from:
 - the Australian Government's Water for Our Future program
 - evolving climate change strategies
 - the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, which will develop a proposed Basin Plan by mid-2010 and the first Basin Plan by 2011.
- The Biodiversity Strategy for the Goulburn Broken Catchment will be updated in 2010. There will be a general focus on building ecosystem resilience and landscape-scale projects.
- A significant forecast decline in revenue and resulting uncertainty will need to be managed. Management's emphasis over several years on efficiency has placed the GB CMA in good stead heading into an increasingly uncertain funding environment. The GB CMA has the lowest percentage of overheads to on-ground works of all Victorian catchment management authorities.
- Seek new fund sources to deliver the irrigation program following completion of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the accompanying withdrawal of State and Australian Government funds. SIR IC will continue to work closely with DSE, NVIRP, G-MW, and North Central CMA to attract the Australian Government's On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program funds to the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District to link in with irrigation modernisation processes.



"No vacancy" Sugar Gliders tucked up inside their new home.
Photo: Helen Repacholi, DPI

The Goulburn Broken Catchment



Our environment and people

The Catchment covers 2.4 million hectares. About 1.4 million hectares is dryland agriculture, 270,000 hectares is intensive irrigated agriculture and 800,000 hectares is public land.

In addition, for ease of management, the Shepparton Irrigation Region includes 70,000 hectares of the adjacent North Central Catchment in its works program.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment's diverse landscapes include 1,800 metre snow covered alps, moist montane and dry sclerophyll forests, granitic outcrops, gentle sloping plains, box woodlands and red gum floodplains, mixed farms and irrigated pastures and orchards.

Rainfall varies from 1,600 millimetres in the high country of the south east to 400 millimetres in the north west.

The Catchment is home to over 200,000 people, including 6,000 Indigenous Australians, many of whom are from the traditional owner groups, the Taungurung and Yorta Yorta clans.

Migrants, mainly from the British Isles, took up landholdings in the 1800s. Since World War Two the north of the Catchment has received an influx of migrants from Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, Turkey, Iraq and many other countries.

The proximity to Melbourne has attracted tree changers and commuters to the south of the Catchment, resulting in a significant increase in lifestyle landholders who manage land within the Catchment.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA) is a Victorian statutory authority that coordinates land, water and biodiversity management in the Goulburn Broken Region.

The GB CMA is the caretaker of river health. Water storage, delivery and drainage systems are managed by partner agency Goulburn-Murray Water and urban water and wastewater services are managed by Goulburn Valley Water.

The GB CMA focuses on private land mostly managed for agriculture and on the interface of private and public land. The GB CMA therefore relies on shared contributions from government and private landholders.

The GB CMA managed \$34.8 million in 2008-09 from State, Commonwealth and local governments. Major investment areas are irrigation salinity, river health (including environmental flows and water supply), biodiversity, climate change and collaborations and communities. The dry period that began over 12 years ago is influencing much of the GB CMA's efforts.

Links to the Region's extremely diverse cultural groups are maintained through projects with partner organisations, including Landcare, the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Goulburn-Murray Water, local government, Environment Protection Authority and industry bodies.

2008-09 Board Members as at June 2009

Huw Davies - Chair	John Pettigrew - Deputy Chair
Anne McCamish	Lyn Gunter
Neville Barwick	Nick Roberts
Peter Fitzgerald	Yvonne Davies

Communities contributing to the environment

Many people and local communities care for the welfare of our environment and participate in many different ways. The regional community contributes (in-kind, products and services) about double what governments contribute. Management of private land is critical to the environment and prosperity of the Region.

The GB CMA is well positioned to respond to rapidly changing landholder demographics. Implementation of projects framed under the over-arching Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy is driven by two geographically based implementation committees to ensure activities of the GB CMA reflect the views of local communities.

There are 76 Landcare groups that are part of seven Landcare group networks and 14 natural resource management groups that help to deliver the Regional Catchment Strategy.

2008-09 Implementation Committee Chairs

Broken Goulburn	David Dore
Shepparton Irrigation Region	Peter Gibson

GB CMA's Indigenous Facilitator, appointed in 2005, is fostering increased trust between wider and Indigenous communities and increasing awareness of Traditional Owners' values and further staff were appointed in 2008-09 to support traditional values and processes.



GB CMA's Mary Dimit. Photo: Vicki Mackenzie, GB CMA

Our workforce

Staff turnover remains significantly lower than for comparable organisations.

Staff satisfaction is among the best in the Victorian public sector and in the water sector.

As at June 2009, GB CMA had 43.4 working staff (full-time equivalents; excluding those on extended leave). During 2008-09, 28 males and 27 females were employed.

In addition to GB CMA staff, 81 regional people affected by the drought worked under the Drought Employment Program over a six month period in 2008-09.

Senior officers

- Bill O'Kane - Chief Executive Officer
- Annie Squires - Information Technology (IT) Manager
- Carl Walters - River Health Implementation Manager
- Geoff Earl - Environmental Water Flow Coordinator
- Guy Tierney - Statutory Planning and Floodplain Manager
- Kate Pendergast - Strategic Human Resource Manager
- Ken Sampson - Shepparton Irrigation Region Implementation Committee Executive Officer
- Megan McFarlane - Business Development Manager
- Neville Atkinson - Indigenous Facilitator
- Richard Warburton - Occupational Health and Safety Manager
- Rosalba Camera - Executive Assistant
- Mark Cotter - Dryland Strategy Manager
- Sharon Lewis - Dryland Manager
- Stan Gibney - Business Manager and Freedom of Information Officer
- Tim Barlow - Biodiversity Manager
- Tony Kubeil - Regional Landcare Coordinator
- Wayne Tennant - Strategic River Health Manager

Our vision for the Goulburn Broken Catchment

A catchment recognised locally, nationally and internationally for quality agricultural produce and where community values contribute to the benefits of abundant and well maintained environmental assets used for tourism and recreational activities.

The environmental footprint of irrigation and dryland farming will be significantly reduced, with farmers occupying less land and using less water whilst managing their resources more sustainably. New opportunities

will arise for increasing ecosystem services provided by the land retired from agriculture and improved environmental flows.

The region's economy will be robust, with much of the agricultural produce processed within the region, generating employment and wealth creation opportunities for a regional community actively engaging in natural resource management programs.

Long-term scorecard

Ratings in the following table are explained in the details sections of investment areas in the full Annual Report (as referenced in the right hand column of the following table). The details sections also list certainties of these ratings.

Long-term strategy implementation progress and Catchment condition

Investment area	Long-term strategy implementation progress ⁱ			Catchment condition ⁱ			Details page (in full Annual Report)
	Strategy life ⁱⁱ	Progress	Gov't funding trend	1990 ⁱⁱⁱ	2009	Trend	
The Environment							
1 Salinity: watertables and River Murray salinity							
1a Shepparton Irrigation Region salinity	1990-2020	On target	↓	Poor	Good	↑↑	96
1b Dryland salinity	1990-2050	Below target	↓	Poor	Satisfactory	↑	100
2 River health							
2a Environmental flows and water supply	2004-	On target	↑	Poor	Very poor	↓	105
2b Riparian and instream habitat and channel form	2005-2015	Below target	↑	Poor	Satisfactory ^{iv}	↑	108
2c Water quality (nutrients) in rivers and streams	1996-2016	Exceeding target	●	Very poor	Satisfactory	↑	111
3 Biodiversity	2000-2030 2004-2007	On target	↑	Poor	Poor	●	114
4 Climate change ^v	2007-2010	On target	●	Satisfactory	Poor	↓	118
5 Flood protection	2002-2012	Exceeding target	●	Very poor	Poor	↑	120
6 Pest plants and pest animals	2001-	Below target	●	Poor	Poor	●	123
The Business							
A Governance	Rolling 5 year Corporate Plan	On target	●	Poor	Satisfactory	↑	51
B Collaborations and communities	2005-	On target	↓	Poor	Poor	●	18
C Planning and responding	Rolling 5 year Corporate Plan	On target	↓	Poor	Satisfactory	↑	37
D Human resources	various	On target	●	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	●	44
E Environmental footprint	2007-10	On target	●	Very poor	Poor	↑	42

- i Strategy implementation progress considers evidence of outputs completed against targets, including onground works and tasks to improve management systems. Catchment condition ratings consider evidence of environmental or business condition, social and economic health and management systems. Catchment condition encompasses more than just biophysical condition.
- ii Strategies vary in formality and comprehensiveness. Refer to details sections for lists of strategies. Strategy life includes time taken for capacity building tasks to be completed in medium term (usually three-five years) and for 'The Environment' investment areas, time taken for changes to be achieved over the long-term (usually 10-50 years).
- iii Ratings for 1990 have been determined using our understanding in 2009 of what the situation was like in 1990. 1990 is a useful reference year because it was about this time that integrated catchment management began and sufficient time has elapsed since for meaningful questions about long-term change to be asked.
- iv Almost 50 per cent of riparian vegetation impacted by 2006 and 2009 fires (impact is being assessed).
- v Climate change condition rating considers impact of climate change on Goulburn Broken Catchment's assets

Ratings legend				
Annual performance and long-term strategy implementation progress	Well below target (<50%)	Below target (50-79%)	On target (80-109%)	Exceeded/exceeding target (>110%)
Catchment condition	Very poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good to excellent
Trend	Declining (↓)	Static (●)	Improving (↑)	Dramatically improving (↑↑)