

## Community Engagement and Partnership Framework and Toolkit.

Victorian CMAs have a long and successful history of collaborating with their local communities and establishing productive partnerships for integrated catchment management outcomes.

This Framework builds on this strong foundation and encourages ongoing commitment, resourcing, skill development and continuous improvement to this practice across the State. This Framework replaces the previous version developed in 2012 and outlines the key principles and expectations for community engagement and partnership building across all Victorian Catchment Management Authorities.

It complements the Aboriginal Participation Guidelines for Victorian Catchment Management Authorities 2016 and Diversity & Inclusion Plans for each CMA. Together these documents set the standards for best practice partnership and engagement work in Victorian CMAs.

Victoria's CMA's acknowledge and respect Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities and organisations. We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Victoria's lands and water. We value partnerships with them for the health of people and country.

## Our Promise to Our Communities and Partners

### Why do we engage and partner with our communities

*"Communities know the issues and solutions for their landscapes. Effective engagement is crucial to understand communities, share knowledge and achieve the most practical place-based planning, priority setting and delivery".*

**(Our Catchments, Our Communities 2016)**

# Community Engagement and Partnerships in Victorian CMAs

## Defining Community Engagement

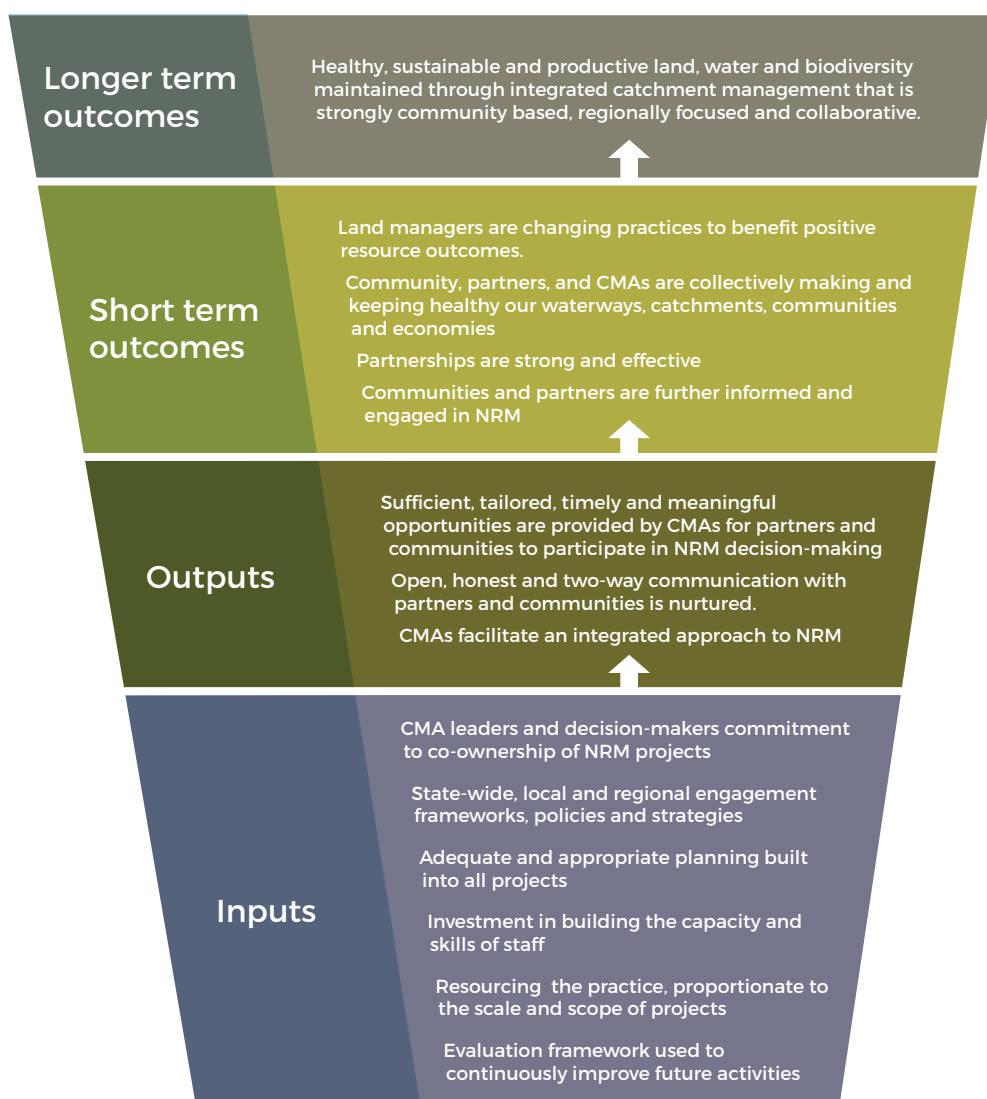
We define 'communities' as including individuals, public and private landholders, community groups and business owners. We define 'community engagement' as the activities which see us interact with members of our communities to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower others (IAP2).

## Defining Partnerships

We define 'partners' as those community groups, organisations, local, state and federal governments, or individuals with whom we seek specific and mutually beneficial outcomes. As partners, we share both the problem and the solution. They can be formal or informal arrangements.

## Community Engagement and Partnerships Roadmap

The following roadmap demonstrates how good community engagement and partnership building leads to natural resource outcomes.



# Our Promise to Our Communities and Partners



# Measurement Toolkit

The Framework outlines four principles and indicators of good practice. This measurement toolkit aims to help measure the CMA's progress and performance against each principle and indicator.

The toolkit has been produced in recognition that CMA's needed assistance and direction to know what aspects of their practice they need to monitor, evaluate and report on. It has been designed to standardise the measurement requirements at the organisational level and help generate consistent statewide reporting and sharing.

Each principle has a set of indicators for success and a scale to rate performance as well as examples of evidence. The rating scale will help each CMA pinpoint their level of practice as well as identify areas for ongoing improvement.

PRINCIPLE 1				
We will embed community engagement and build partnerships in all that we do				
Indicator	Level of Quality			Example 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 or staff	Existence of written Community engagement and partnerships policy/strategy  Processes are underway to complete and educate staff about strategies and policies (including Aboriginal Participation Guidelines)	Community Engagement & Partnership Policies and plans exist and all staff see this work as core business  Engagement plan and evaluation plans templates are available and staff are clearly using them on relevant projects.  Aboriginal Participation Guidelines fully inform our processes	Sighting of key documents example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMA Community Engagement and Partnerships policy/strategy</li> <li>• Project Engagement Plan</li> <li>• Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Community protocols</li> </ul>
The extent to which we are flexible and responsive in our approach and continuously evaluate, share and learn from our practice	Evaluations of our engagement and partnerships are limited and lessons are not shared beyond the project	Monitoring and evaluation of community engagement and partnerships is expected and occurring and starting to be shared	Monitoring and evaluation is fully embedded and shared throughout the organisation and trends, insights and changes to our approaches are explored with project teams, other CMAs and partner agencies	Sighting key documents example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation Matrix and reporting</li> <li>• Board Reports</li> <li>• Annual Report data</li> <li>• Partnership Health Assessments</li> <li>• Case studies documented and shared</li> </ul> Example Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that share learnings internally and between CMAs</li> </ul>
The extent to which we actively support and build the capacity of our staff to engage communities and to build effective partnerships	Capacity building and professional development opportunities are not available for staff, management and the Board	Capacity building opportunities exist and staff are encouraged to undertake them	Capacity building opportunities are many and varied and staff/management and the Board are actively seeking to improve their practice  Staff performance review processes include question(s) for staff about their confidence and skills in engagement and partnerships	Evidence is found in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions in staff performance review processes</li> <li>• Induction Program includes community engagement, partnerships and Aboriginal Participation guidelines content</li> <li>• Relevant training attendance</li> <li>• Conference/professional development attendance</li> </ul> Example Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide community engagement and partnerships steering group participation.</li> <li>• Recognition Program for good practice</li> <li>• Mentoring program</li> </ul>

## PRINCIPLE 2

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

Indicator	Level of Quality			Example Evidence for Rating
	Elementary	Emerging	Exemplar	
The extent to which we maximise inclusive opportunities for our diverse local communities to participate in decision making, including Aboriginal Communities	Pockets of good practice exist however opportunities have been consistently missed to engage or partner with local and Aboriginal communities	<p>Many projects demonstrate good practice in community engagement and partnership building</p> <p>The Aboriginal Participation checklist is used to inform our process</p>	<p>Our communities, stakeholders and partners are fully engaged in our work</p> <p>Our approach to engagement and partnerships is well resourced and allows adequate opportunity, time and information for meaningful contributions</p> <p>Increased number and diversity of organisations and communities involved in regional planning processes and activities (including traditional owners and aboriginal communities)</p>	<p>Feedback data received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership Feedback</li> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> <li>Catchment Condition Indicators</li> <li>Participation numbers for our programs and events</li> <li>Demographic information</li> <li>Project feedback and evaluations conducted</li> </ul>
The extent to which we include people early in any project, share the dilemmas openly and collaborate around the actions	<p>Engagement is starting to occur early and be as collaborative as possible however often projects are rushed or we miss opportunities</p> <p>Communications could be improved to be more open and transparent</p>	<p>Engagement is occurring early in the process and staff are mostly open about what we can and can't engage on</p> <p>Communications generally support our engagement and encourage participation</p>	<p>Our Community Engagement Plans are thorough and allow for early engagement</p> <p>The participation opportunity and level of influence is clearly and openly communicated to stakeholders using a diverse range of channels</p> <p>Engagement has occurred as early as possible to allow for meaningful input and co-design with those impacted</p>	<p>Sighting key documents example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Engagement Plans</li> <li>Communication materials</li> <li>Website content (digital engagement)</li> <li>Partnership agreements/MoUs</li> </ul> <p>Feedback data received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> </ul>
The extent to which we close the loop with stakeholders and communicate our decisions and why we made them	<p>Communication with community and stakeholders know the outcomes of our engagement is often overlooked</p> <p>Possible communication channels are not being taken advantage of</p>	Communication occurs regularly with our community and stakeholders about progress and final decisions	Consistent communication occurs with stakeholders to inform them of project decisions and rationale and degree to which they have had influence through a variety of channels	<p>Sighting key documents example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication materials and key messages</li> <li>Website content</li> <li>Newsletters/Project updates</li> <li>Correspondence</li> </ul> <p>Feedback data received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> </ul>

# PRINCIPLE 3

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

Indicator	Level of Quality			Example Evidence for Rating
	Elementary	Emerging	Exemplar	
The extent to which we thoroughly plan, tailor and document our intended engagement and partnership approach and seek feedback	<p>Community Engagement Plans are not consistently undertaken</p> <p>Stakeholder analysis is lacking and therefore the approaches are not well tailored</p>	<p>Community engagement plans are completed but feedback is not actively sought</p> <p>Stakeholder analysis is undertaken and it informs the approach</p> <p>The Aboriginal Participation checklist is also used to inform our approach</p>	<p>Community engagement plans outline the purpose, what is negotiable and non-negotiable, stakeholder analysis and planned tools and techniques</p> <p>Engagement plans are completed and tested internally and with key stakeholders prior to project delivery</p> <p>Evidence of plans and communication materials have been appropriately tailored to maximise participation by relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Sighting key documents example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Engagement Plans (including stakeholder analysis)</li> <li>Monitoring and Evaluation plans</li> <li>Communication materials</li> </ul>
The extent to which we monitor and evaluate our progress and change our approach when feedback suggests it	<p>We have some monitoring systems in place, but limited evidence on how any feedback is directly informing our approach</p>	<p>Monitoring systems are in place, feedback is being received and we are getting better at being responsive to this feedback</p>	<p>Feedback received confirms that the techniques were appropriate for the level of influence and the project objectives</p> <p>Project monitoring and evaluation is undertaken, enabling teams to be responsive, making adaptive changes as a result</p> <p>Teams share their learnings with other teams to benefit other program practices</p>	<p>Sighting key documents and analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation Reports</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Partnership Health Assessments</li> <li>Online feedback</li> </ul>
The extent to which we coordinate with other agencies to integrate our activities and programs in the catchment	<p>We have missed opportunities to align our work with other agencies or with local projects</p>	<p>Opportunities to coordinate our activities with other agencies are actively sought</p>	<p>CMAs are working closely with other CMA and agencies/groups to collaborate and ensure projects are integrated</p> <p>New systems and/or software programs are trialled to help facilitate data sharing in innovative ways</p>	<p>Example Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects and events co-hosted with other CMAs/agencies/groups</li> <li>Combined communication materials</li> <li>Interagency working groups</li> <li>Statewide CMA projects</li> <li>Data sharing systems used</li> </ul>

## PRINCIPLE 4

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

Indicator	Level of Quality			Example Evidence for Rating
	Elementary	Emerging	Exemplar	
'The extent to which we treat all parties fairly and build polite and considerate relationships that value different experiences and diverse knowledge	Partnerships are valued but they are not resourced well and this is placing strain on the relationships  Stakeholders report low to moderate satisfaction levels about the partnerships	Partnerships are valued but resourcing them has been challenging  Stakeholders report moderate satisfaction levels about the partnerships	Support resources are in place for the partnerships and processes used facilitate respectful conversations  High satisfaction levels are received by partners and stakeholders  Achievements are celebrated and acknowledgements given to our community and partners for their input	Sighting key documents example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership agreements/MoUs</li> <li>Communications/meeting minutes</li> </ul> Feedback data received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership Health Assessments</li> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Complaints and praise feedback register/log.</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> </ul>
The extent to which we make roles and expectations with all partners and stakeholders clear at the outset	Our project partners are sometimes unclear of their role and the purpose of the partnership and projects suffer as result	Most of our partnerships have a clear purpose and partners report that they are relatively clear on their role and the expectations of them	All partnerships are clear why they exist and the what they plan to achieve and have Terms of Agreement (or similar)  Communication with partners and stakeholders is clear and purposeful  Stakeholders and partners consistently report that their role and the expectations of them are clear	Sighting key documents example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership agreements/MoUs</li> <li>Communications</li> </ul> Feedback data received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership Health Assessments</li> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Complaints and praise feedback register/log.</li> <li>Event Feedback Forms</li> </ul>
The extent to which we actively seek to engage with people with a range of background and experiences	Limited attempts are made to diversify participation on working groups - we go to the usual people	New techniques are being used to draw out diverse views in a safe environment and we have some different/unusual perspectives on our working groups	Active and creative recruitment occurs to ensure diverse points of view are sought  Most working groups have very different and diverse views represented  Processes are designed for participants to hear and understand the diversity of views held	Sighting key documents example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of reference</li> </ul> Feedback data received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working group participant interviews</li> <li>Desktop assessment of membership diversity against demographics of the area</li> <li>Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Partnership Health Assessment</li> </ul>

A note about using this measurement toolkit and rating scale. Staff can use the scale and assess which level is the best fit. The example indicators are a guide to help support your assessment. It is important that you provide evidence to support your judgement. The examples provided are to act as a guide only.

# How we will measure **our progress** and how will you know if we are doing a good job?

We will measure our progress consistently across the State using our Measurement Toolkit.



We will be guided by our agreed set of principles for community engagement and partnership building, and the indicators for success



We will provide evidence to support our judgements



We will focus on continuous improvement and share our learnings with other CMAs and project partners



Every three years we will review and update our framework and measurement toolkit (if required)

A number of Victorian Government and CMA policies document the central role of community and partners in achieving Victoria's new directions for integrated catchment management, biodiversity, water and climate change. These policies and directions have informed the development of this Framework, they include: the Community Engagement and Partnership Framework for CMAs 2012, Aboriginal Participation Guidelines and Implementation Plan 2015 and 2016, IAP2 Quality Assurance Standards 2015, VAGO Better Practice Guide 2015 and DELWP Community Charter 2015 and Australian Government Performance Expectations Regional Funding.

