



# Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

## **Charter for Community Engagement Advisory Groups**

Updated June 2015

## 1.0 PURPOSE

### 1.1 Introduction

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GB CMA) is a statutory authority established by the Victorian Government to coordinate land, water and biodiversity management in the region. The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority was constituted on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997 under the provisions of the Water Act 1989 and the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. The Authority was established as the peak natural resource management body in the Catchment to develop and oversee the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy.

To assist it in this task, the Authority used the provisions of Section 19J of the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, to establish geographically based Implementation Committees. The Implementation Committee (IC) comprised community representatives appointed by the Authority and a non-voting representative from each of the Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability & Environment and Goulburn-Murray Water.

The Implementation Committee structure was reviewed in 2010/11 in recognition of the changing environment that CMAs were now operating in. This included more competitive funding environments, tighter funding priorities set by both State and Commonwealth Government investors with less discretion for regional input, and a greater focus on increased community engagement across the whole catchment (that does not create an artificial divide between irrigation and dryland as these areas were going through enormous structural adjustment). As an outcome of this review, a new revitalized community engagement approach was adopted by the GB CMA Board in August 2011.

This renewed approach utilised existing and new community engagement structures to support the delivery of the 3 GB CMA Programs. The 3 CMA delivery Programs are:

- (i) Sustainable Irrigation,
- (ii) Land and Biodiversity, and
- (iii) River & Wetland Health and Floodplain Management.

With the development and establishment of the new Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy (2013-19), a resilience approach was adopted based on seven Social-Ecological Systems (SEs) that whilst not having sharp boundaries, do have similar characteristics and issues which give them a unique identity. Planning around these SEs supports the principle of subsidiarity and improves decision making of the Board around tailored activities and solutions at this scale. The identified SEs in the Goulburn Broken Catchment are;

- Agricultural Floodplains (covering a large proportion of the Shepparton Irrigation Region (SIR))
- Productive Plains
- Upland Slopes
- Southern Forests
- Commuting Hills
- Urban Centres (Shepparton, Seymour & Benalla)
- Whole of Catchment

Community Engagement structures are now also being established around these SES areas to support the development and implementation of the RCS and SES Local Plans.

## 1.2 The Charter

The GB CMA Charter is underpinned by the following key principles for community engagement:

- Advice from community is to be provided both functionally (project issues) and geographically, based on agreed 'whole of catchment' Program structures *{with ongoing review to identify potential gaps}*.
- Advice and feedback is to come through GB CMA Management (ultimate responsibility sits with CEO).
- An emotional connection and ownership of CMA directions/activities is built through current and new community engagement forums by realigning language (and a consistent Charters/ToRs).
- Different community perspectives on issues are recognised and used to test our assumptions, and the principle of subsidiarity is supported.
- Partnerships formed and fostered through our community engagement structures are critical to the performance of the GB CMA.
- Will underpin our strategic planning framework and Authority's directions as described in the Regional Catchment Strategy and Corporate Plans.
- Will meet the CMA's obligations under the CaLP Act (1994).

## 2.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1 Role and Function of the Community Engagement Groups

The Group regulates its own proceedings subject to conditions established by the Board of the Authority and has certain key responsibilities which include:

- To provide the various Programs and the Authority (via Management/CEO) with advice and a community perspective on catchment NRM issues.
- To provide a grounded community perspective that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of our Program delivery ensuring that the Authority does not rely totally on its own technical views.
- To provide community input into Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) and sub-strategy development, as well as Program/project development.
- To be a conduit to the whole of our community through supporting and advocating CMA directions, programs and activities (including the development of specific Stakeholder Engagement Plans).
- To advise on and support local and catchment-wide community engagement activities.
- To advocate and promote CMA programs and activities to local communities and through existing networks.
- To help to promote funding calls made by the CMA to the community.
- To share and celebrate successes.
- To identify new and emerging issues within the community.

- To report to and/or provide community feedback via GB CMA Program Managers to the Board.

The GB CMA Community Engagement Groups have no role or responsibility in matters pertaining to statutory planning.

## **3.0 GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE**

The basic structure of the GB CMA comprises:

### **3.1 Board**

The Board is responsible to its Ministers for GB CMA's strategic direction, governance and performance of GB CMA. Key functions of the Board include:

- Formulating strategic direction in conjunction with the CEO and senior Management;
- Approving the appointment and termination of the CEO;
- Establishing objectives for and monitoring the performance of the CEO;
- Ensuring that a risk management framework is in place;
- Ensuring that GB CMA complies with the law and conforms to the highest standards of corporate governance practice and ethical conduct;
- Approving GB CMA's policies; and
- Ensuring that GB CMA otherwise performs its functions in a proper, effective and efficient way.

### **3.2 Community Engagement Structures**

A range of community engagement structures will be adopted by each GB CMA Program to meet its growing responsibilities and the programs and/or projects it delivers. These will be broadly based on the following types of structures;

1. High-level coordination/reference groups
2. Program advisory groups
3. Project steering groups (including working groups)
4. Other (including Landcare Groups/CMNs)

To maximise the engagement of the communities within the catchment the Groups may form, with input from Management, working groups to assist in the development of sub-catchment strategies and/or local action plans identifying priorities and program directions.

Members of all formal Groups established by the GB CMA are to adhere to the directions provided in this Charter.

### **3.3 Community Engagement Group Convener**

A Convener and/or appropriate resources will be allocated to provide support to each Group.

The Convener will report to the CEO, GB CMA or delegated position. The Convener is required to assist the Group to achieve its tasks by ensuring information flow, administrative support and policy advice. The Convener is also a member of the GB CMA Partnership/Management Team and is accountable to the CEO for performance, employment and disciplinary matters.

### 3.4 GB CMA Staff

Staff operate through the CEO and are responsible for the delivery of programs and projects consistent with the strategic directions set by the Board.

### 3.5 GB CMA Principles

**Respect of the community** – implementing natural resource management actions cannot occur without the support, guidance and active participation of the community.

**Quality** – the management actions and works actions promoted by the RCS will be delivered to a high standard dictated by community expectations.

**Learning and Adapting** – we must strive for excellence in our monitoring and evaluation processes. They must be transparent and invite community scrutiny, and we must achieve best practice in reviewing and adjusting our efforts to accommodate new research findings and revised community expectations.

### 3.6 GB CMA Values and Behaviours

- **Environmental Sustainability** - we will passionately contribute to improving the environmental health of our catchment.
- **Safety** - we vigorously protect and look out for the safety and wellbeing of ourselves, our colleagues and our workers.
- **Partnerships** – we focus on teamwork and collaboration across our organisation to develop strategic alliances with partners and the regional community.
- **Leadership** – we have the courage to lead change and accept the responsibility to inspire and deliver positive change.
- **Respect** – we embrace diversity and treat everyone with fairness, respect, openness and honesty.
- **Achievement, Excellence and Accountability** – we do what we say we will do, we do it well and we take responsibility and accountability for our actions.
- **Continuous learning, innovation and improvement** – we are an evidence and science-based organisation and we test and challenge the status quo. We learn from our successes and failures and we are continually adapting using internal and external feedback from stakeholders and the environment. We are an agile, flexible and responsive organisation.

## 4.0 MEMBERSHIP

### 4.1 Representation

Each Community Engagement Group should comprise a chairperson, and not less than five and not more than ten community representatives appointed through a transparent process, and will also include representation from key Agency partners (such as the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Training and Resources, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Goulburn Murray Water etc.), where required.

### 4.2 Membership Eligibility

#### 4.2.1 Membership eligibility criteria

- No convictions under the Water Act 1989 or Catchment & Land Protection Act 1994.
- No criminal convictions.
- Must maintain satisfactory attendance record
- Should have skills in one or more of the following areas:

Leadership	Land Management
Business Management	Vegetation Management
Environmental Law	Conservation
Land Use Planning	Farming
Statutory Planning	Salinity
Floodplain Management	Landcare
Waterway Management	Forestry
Environmental Protection / Biodiversity	Indigenous Land
Sustainable Agriculture	State Government
Natural Resource Management	Local Government
Demonstrated Community Linkages	

Each Group may require a different emphasis dictated by the Regional Catchment Strategy and the relevant Program or SES area.

#### 4.2.2 Term of Appointment

Membership should be based on the tenure of the Group, but always seeking renewal of members after four years with any member having a maximum of two rotations (ie. can remain on the Group for a maximum of 8 years).

### **4.2.3 Appointment Processes**

Depending on the status of the Group (as defined under Section 3.2), the following appointment processes is recommended;

- Nominations for vacant positions shall be called for by advertisement in local newspapers. The advertising process will be coordinated by the relevant GB CMA Program Manager.
- A Selection Panel will be formed comprising the relevant GB CMA Program Manager, another Community Reference Group member and potentially a member from the GB CMA Board. The selection panel will advise the CMA Board of its recommended appointment(s).

### **4.2.4 Termination of Appointment**

The Authority (CEO and Board) reserves the right to terminate membership of any member of a GB CMA Community Engagement Group at any time as a result of a significant breach of protocol or standard (see Section 11.0).

### **4.2.5 Appointment of Chair**

The Chair of each Group is to be appointed by the CEO, upon recommendation of the Convenor/Program Manager.

The Board is to be advised of the nominated Chair by Management.

### **4.2.6 Casual Vacancy**

Any Group replacements are to be coordinated by the Convener via discussion with the CEO and either recommending a replacement or advertisement.

The Board is to be notified by Management of any significant changes to membership.

### **4.2.7 Induction**

To ensure that the quality and timeliness of advice and input are maintained at a high level, all new Group members should receive of briefing of the relevant activities and responsibilities by the Convener. This induction process will normally be completed before any new member attends a meeting.

### **4.2.8 Responsibility when representing Authority**

Where Management (via advice from the Board) appoints a Community Engagement Group member to represent the Authority on an external Committee, the member will represent the views of the Authority. Such member should report to the Board through the relevant Program Manager and/or CEO and consultation is to occur before any formal correspondence is entered into by either party. Member's costs (sitting fees/travelling costs) will be met from the appropriate budget.

## **5.0 EXPENSES & REMUNERATION**

Members of the GB CMA Community Reference/Advisory Groups may be entitled to be paid a session fee, travelling and other (if any) allowances in accordance with Government Guidelines.

## **6.0 MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **6.1 Meeting Frequency**

The Groups should meet on a regular basis as defined by the Convener and membership, and in line with the requirements of the work program.

Extraordinary meetings can be called when required.

### **6.2 Meeting Support**

The Group is supported with a Convener and other resources, as required.

### **6.3 Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of meetings must be treated as confidential by members until they are confirmed. In general, minutes of meetings will only be circulated to the membership and corresponding members.

### **6.4 Attendance Requirements**

Members are required to achieve a minimum attendance level, as set by the Group but a minimum of 80% is expected. Non-attendance without apology or leave of absence may constitute unsatisfactory attendance and may lead to a review of membership.

### **6.5 Quorum**

If required, a quorum is reached by a simple majority of voting members, that is 50% or greater of total voting members.

## **7.0 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS**

### **7.1 Correspondence**

All correspondence is to be cleared by the Convener/GB CMA Program Manager.

### **7.2 Conflict Resolution**

Where Groups are seeking to initiate changes to Board policy, or are critical of Board processes or performance, or the matters at hand are controversial or have the potential to affect the Community Engagement / Board relationship, then the Chair of the Group and GB CMA Convener needs to follow the steps set out below:

1. Telephone the CEO of the Authority to discuss and endeavor to resolve the matter.



2. If needed, write to the CEO of the Authority to confirm the matter in writing (who is required to bring the matter to the attention of the Board).

### **7.3 Public Communication**

With regard to communications protocol, the Convener (in conjunction with the Group Chair) are authorised to conduct public communications on behalf of their Group, in line with existing CMA communication processes. This includes media releases initiated by the Group with any policy ramifications requiring endorsement by the CEO of the Authority.

Nevertheless, members are encouraged to maintain close contact with their constituency including farmers, Landcare, Local Government, natural resource based industries and primary industry associations. Members should take the opportunity to communicate natural resource management issues and canvass opinions from the community.

### **7.4 Communication from the Authority**

The CEO's Board Report (in the form of a newsletter) will be made available to the Group Conveners within 2 weeks following a Board meeting to be tabled and discussed at upcoming meetings. There may be times where this information will be communicated, but a request that hard copies are not circulated further.

### **7.5 Communication to the Board**

The GB CMA Program Managers will report to the Board quarterly on their program delivery and overall performance. These reports are to contain feedback on the community issues and discussions arising from these advisory groups.

Membership will also have access to Board members through participation in various "Whole of Catchment" Community Forums.

## **8.0 PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

A member must make a declaration of interest before consideration of any relevant matter at any meeting. Section 92 of the Water Act "Effect of Pecuniary Interests" should be used as a guide. All breaches of Corporate Governance will be reported to the CEO. Counselling will be adopted in the first instance, but repeated breaches will result in a recommendation to the CEO (and advice to the Board) to terminate the offender's appointment.

## **9.0 LIABILITY**

Members of any Community Engagement Group created by the GB CMA shall be covered by the Authority's Group Personal Accident Insurance Policy. Details of the Policy and the level of cover can be obtained upon request by any member of a Community Engagement Group.

## 10.0 CONFLICT/DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All conflict is to be resolved in accordance with the appropriate GB CMA policies and procedures.

## 11.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES

In the event that a Group member has failed to act in accordance with the Charter, the prescribed values and/or behaviours of the GB CMA, or have failed to act in the best interest of the Authority (example inappropriate public statements, leaking of documents/information etc.) then the matter will be referred to the CEO for action. Inappropriate actions or behavior may result in the termination of membership.

## 12.0 REVIEW

This Charter will be reviewed annually.

The Group should review its performance annually using the following checklist as a guide:

- ✓ The Community Engagement Groups should be an **integral part** of the organisation's structure and way of doing business.
- ✓ Clear **roles and responsibilities**: A clear purpose, Charter and/or Terms of Reference clearly understood by the Group members, the Board, senior management, and the broader organisation.
- ✓ Clear guidelines for **selection** of members that can serve the purpose of the Group.
- ✓ The **'right people'** need to be involved.
- ✓ A **culture of respect** within the Group and organisation that values different perspectives, and is able to hear the different views expressed and modify decisions and/or approach to an issue. Open minded participation and goodwill.
- ✓ Strong **leadership** from the Group Chair, Convenor/Program Manager, CEO and Board.
- ✓ The Groups need to be **part of a whole of community engagement process**.
- ✓ The Groups should be **adequately supported** with executive resources, training and budget to meet the purpose and charter. This support extends to the support of the senior management (and Board).
- ✓ There needs to be an **investment** in building knowledge, capacity and relationships of members.
- ✓ The Groups should only meet when there is a **reason to meet**.
- ✓ The Groups should be part of **two way communication** with the Board and organisation.
- ✓ The Groups should be formally monitored and **evaluated for effectiveness** against the purpose and Terms of Reference.
- ✓ The Groups and their achievements should be **acknowledged** and celebrated.
- ✓ **Defined timeframes** for Groups and member terms to ensure renewal, flexibility and responsiveness.

