

**APPENDIX 4**

**TOTAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT, NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

# The TCM Approach

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## A Catchment

A catchment is the area supplying surface water to a common watercourse. Each catchment is separated by hills or ridges which direct the flow of water.

A catchment may be as small as a single watercourse and its watershed or may be as large as the Murray-Darling Basin which is the amalgamation of many smaller catchments in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia, all feeding the River Murray.

Catchment boundaries do not usually match government, administrative or social boundaries across the State and there are often decisions, activities or natural phenomena that are not restricted by catchment boundaries. Nevertheless, most natural processes and environmental disturbances have their greatest impact within the boundaries of a catchment.

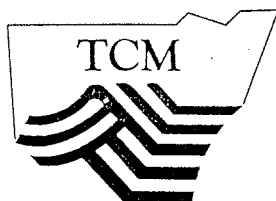
*Understanding the catchment resource is a key element of TCM.*

## Management

Management is the process of planning, coordinating and directing human activities. Successful businesses depend on good management which includes consideration of inputs and outputs and the various operations to achieve the business goals. In a catchment, there are many businesses with a wide range of management styles and goals, but these are connected in some way by sharing or influencing each other's resources. The natural resources of land, water, vegetation and air are used by individuals, primary, secondary, and tertiary industries. This makes them vital, requiring special management, across all users.

Environmental damage or pollution pays no heed to artificial boundaries that we impose. Management strategies and remedial works are more effective if planned and implemented over a whole catchment.

Strategies should consider all the impacts and relationships between human involvement, land, water, vegetation and fauna.



**Total Catchment Management**

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## Regional and state strategies for natural resource management

Catchment Management Committees are developing regional catchment strategies that contain detailed action plans to address natural resource management issues. Preparation of regional strategies, which are consistent with the guiding principles of sustainable natural resource management, will involve all sectors of the community and integrate across a range of disciplines such as soil, water, vegetation and economics.

Catchment Strategies provide a framework for fostering cooperation and coordination between landholders and other resource users, community groups, local government and state agencies. Strategies recognise the complex interactions that exist within natural systems and the need for a coordinated catchment wide approach to address resource management issues. They establish a long term vision for the future, acknowledging the importance of sustainability whilst recognising the need to integrate social, economic and environmental values.

The State Strategy for Natural Resource Management pulls together actions identified in existing policies, regional catchment management strategies and other initiatives. The Strategy describes in clear terms the specific actions, responsibilities, performance indicators and priorities needed to bring about sustainable natural resource management in New South Wales. The State Strategy will help identify potential gaps and overlaps in proposed actions and will assist in establishing funding priorities for natural resource management projects.

Regional and statewide natural resource management strategies will form the blueprint for action at state, regional and local level and will focus on what the community and government can achieve when the actions of many individuals, groups and agencies are planned and coordinated. These strategies will be flexible and dynamic to meet the requirements of a changing physical, economic and social environment.

One of the most important aspects of these natural resource management strategies is that both the community and the government are actively and meaningfully involved in their preparation, aware of their objectives and sees itself as part of the solution.

## Implementation/funding assessment

The underlying theme of the TCM process is the community and government working together to achieve sustainable natural resource management. The implementation of TCM within each catchment is the joint responsibility of the Catchment Management Committee or Trust together with the local community and resource management organisations.

Landcare groups form the basis for active community involvement in resource management and are already implementing activities that are consistent with the resource management strategies developed by Catchment Management Committees. Groups established to address natural resource management issues are eligible for financial assistance through funding programs, such as the National Landcare Program and SALT ACTION. These programs enable the implementation of community actions identified in catchment management strategies.

An important function of Catchment Management Committees is the assessment of community and government agency funding applications. Committees assess all applications to check that the necessary guidelines have been met and that the proposed activities, as detailed in the applications, are consistent with the regional catchment strategy. Funding applications are prioritised by the Committees, again in accordance with the strategy, to ensure that funds are directed towards effective actions.

Project applications are then referred to the State Assessment Panel. This Panel, comprising Catchment Management Committee Chairpersons and the Natural Resources Program Coordinating Committee, further assess the funding applications and prioritise projects in accordance with the NSW State Strategy for Natural Resource Management.

Following evaluation by the State Assessment Panel, recommended projects are referred to the Commonwealth Government who announce successful grants shortly after the Federal Budget.

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## Total Catchment Management (TCM)

TCM is not about controlling your activities in a catchment but rather about providing management direction for a catchment and having everybody within a catchment considering the impacts of their activities on others and on the catchment itself.

The important features of TCM that will assist in the sustainable use of resources are:

- Co-operation between governments, businesses and the community generally;
- A coordinated approach to natural resource management;
- Consideration of the impacts activities have on others;
- Provision of a forum to resolve natural resource management conflicts;
- An understanding of the ecosystems within the catchment;
- Community identification of catchment issues and involvement in strategies to address the priority issues;
- Community access to government resources, such as the National Landcare Program (N.L.P.), which enables implementation of community action..

## How does TCM Work

An important component of TCM is community involvement. Neighbours may come together as a group to tackle a common local issue (e.g. landcare groups) or may provide representatives to a Catchment Management Committee which has a broader catchment perspective. Groups established to address catchment management issues are eligible for assistance to implement their actions through competitive funding grants and technical assistance from government departments, such as the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Department of Water Resources, NSW Agriculture, the Environment Protection Authority and Local Government.

There are four elements of TCM that require attention if the goals of managing for our future needs are to be achieved:

1. Look at the whole situation, as well as the parts.
2. Involve all members of the community, including government and the general public.
3. Cooperation between all parties.
4. Plan for the future, as well as meet the needs of today.



*Involvement of all interested people is a key element of TCM.*

## Membership of Catchment Management Committees

Catchment Management Committees consist of the following members who are appointed by the responsible Minister:

- (a) persons who are land holders or land users within the catchment area, who are to constitute the majority of the members;
- (b) persons who, in the responsible Minister's opinion, have an interest in environmental matters within the catchment area;
- (c) persons selected from a panel of 2 or more persons nominated by local government authorities within the catchment area; and
- (d) persons who are officers of government departments or authorities having responsibility for natural resource use or management within the catchment area.

The responsible Minister is to appoint one of the members of the Catchment Management Committee to be the Chairperson and another to be the Deputy Chairperson of that Committee and may remove either member from the office and appoint another member as Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson at any time.

## Catchment Management Trusts

Catchment Management Trusts are also recognised in the Act. A Trust is a corporation and can raise revenue. It is established at the recommendation of a particular Minister when:

- (a) the degradation of natural resources within the area concerned is adversely affecting the community;
- (b) the land holders, land users and the community who utilise and derive benefit from those resources have a joint responsibility to deal with the degradation;
- (c) the formation of a Trust is the most appropriate means of achieving equitable cost sharing; and
- (d) there is clear support by the land holders, land users and the community for the formation of a Trust.

## Membership of Catchment Management Trusts

Catchment Management Trusts consist of trustees appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the responsible Minister.

The trustees recommended by the responsible Minister must include:

- (a) landholders or landusers within the Trust area, who are to constitute the majority of the trustees;
- (b) persons who in the responsible Minister's opinion have an interest in environmental matters within the Trust area;

- (c) persons selected from a panel of 2 or more persons nominated by local government authorities within the Trust area; and
- (d) persons who are officers of government departments or authorities having responsibility for natural resource use or management within the Trust area.

## Functions of Catchment Management Trusts

Catchment Management Trusts have the total catchment management purpose prescribed in relation to the Trust area described in the regulations. Trusts may for the purpose for which they are established:

- (a) provide, construct, operate, manage and maintain works and buildings;
- (b) purchase, exchange, take on hire or lease, hold, dispose of, manage, use or otherwise deal with real or personal property;
- (c) enter into contracts, including consultancy contracts;
- (d) enter into cost sharing or other arrangements in connection with the carrying out of works;
- (e) generate revenue by levying and recovering catchment contributions;
- (f) provide assistance to mitigate the effects of flood, drought, fire or other emergency, including assistance with funds, personnel or equipment;
- (g) effect and maintain insurances;
- (h) exercise any other functions prescribed by the regulations; and
- (i) do anything incidental to the achievement of the purpose for which it was established.

If the responsible Minister so decides, a Trust may also exercise within its Trust area any or all of the functions of a Catchment Management Committee.

Within one year of the first meeting of a Trust, a Corporate Plan is to be prepared for the achievement of the purpose for which it was established. The Corporate Plan is to contain a detailed written scheme of the natural resource management strategies and programs to be implemented by the Trust within its Trust area.

## Responsible Minister

Under the Catchment Management Act, 1989 various Ministers have responsibilities as follows:

- (a) for the SCMCC; the Minister for Conservation and Land Management;
- (b) for a Catchment Management Committee; the Minister who makes the order for establishing the Committee;
- (c) for a Catchment Management Trust; the Minister who recommends to the Governor the establishment of the Trust.

The Ministers for Natural Resources, Environment, Agriculture and Conservation & Land Management are all empowered under the Act, to make an order establishing a Catchment Management Committee.

# TCM and The Future

TCM links the community with government to achieve sustainable natural resource management. The future with TCM means less soil erosion, enhanced water quality, improved productivity, maintenance of biodiversity and a healthier environment.

Specifically, the TCM organisational structure will:

- coordinate actions to ensure that the community's collective impact on the environment is positive.
- allow for conflict resolution.
- increase the efficiency with which we use our resources, making sure that money is directed towards effective actions.
- ensure that research is targeted towards genuine needs and is consequently used.
- encourage management strategies that minimise environmental problems.
- raise awareness of and deal with environmental problems whilst they are still in their infancy and cost less to remedy.
- enable local responsibility and allow people to have a say in their future.
- provide feedback to government and influence policy.
- improve everybody's quality of life in a healthy environment.

In the past we have often relied on simple remedies to try to repair environmental damage. Whilst in many instances we have become quite good at this, we have not been nearly as successful at coming to terms with the complex environmental and social causes underlying these problems. Filling erosion gullies, dredging harbours

of silt, and dumping human and industrial effluent further out to sea are classic examples of short-term "fixes" that do not address the causes.

There is nothing wrong with any of these activities, if a harbour has silted up it often makes good sense to dredge it. Often a strategy such as this is the only practical one available at the time. Looking at the situation from a wider perspective, however, it is clear that despite the amount of resources we have devoted to activities such as soil conservation, the overall situation has not appreciably improved.

Our approaches have relied heavily on engineering or works orientated actions without adequate consideration of broader social, economic, biological and management issues of the real long-term solution.

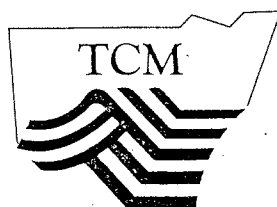
We need to continue addressing immediate concerns in the short-term, but with consideration of the wider environment in which these problems occur, and for the future. Better strategies are necessary. They need to do more to address the underlying causes of problems, and must recognise the interactions between different problems and activities. We need, in other words, to take a more holistic integrated approach.

TCM allows us to start addressing natural resource management issues now. In the short term TCM presents the opportunity to achieve many practical outcomes. In the long term it presents an opportunity to reshape natural resource management practices and community relationships in ways that reflect the ethos of TCM.

The TCM approach deals constructively with difficult questions and conflicts. All of these things will lead to a healthier environment while maintaining the quality of life for everyone.



*Natural resource management involves us all.*



## Total Catchment Management

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# TCM Legislation

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The NSW Government formalised a TCM Policy in 1984. An operational and legislative framework for TCM was created by the passing of the Catchment Management Act in 1989. TCM has bipartisan support.

1. The objectives of the Act are to:
  - (a) coordinate policies, programs and activities as they relate to total catchment management;
  - (b) achieve active community participation in natural resource management;
  - (c) identify and rectify natural resource degradation;
  - (d) promote the sustainable use of natural resources; and
  - (e) provide stable and productive soil, high quality water and protective and productive vegetation cover within each of the State's water catchments.
2. In order to achieve these objectives, the Act:
  - (a) provides for a network of Catchment Management Committees, coordinated by a State Catchment Management Coordinating Committee, and linking the Government and the community to achieve the objectives of total catchment management; and
  - (b) provides for Catchment Management Trusts to replace Catchment Management Committees in some situations in order to raise revenue for particular total catchment management purposes.

## Objective of the State Catchment Management Coordinating Committee

The objective of the State Catchment Management Coordinating Committee (SCMCC) is to provide a central coordinating mechanism for the purpose of total catchment management throughout New South Wales. Total Catchment Management (TCM) is defined as the coordinated and sustainable use and management of land, water, vegetation and other natural resources on a water catchment basis, so as to balance resource utilisation and conservation.

## Functions of SCMCC

The functions of the SCMCC are to:

- (a) coordinate the implementation of total catchment management strategies;

- (b) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of total catchment management strategies;
- (c) advise the responsible Minister or other Ministers on any aspect related to total catchment management;
- (d) coordinate the functioning of Catchment Management Committees and to maintain liaison with Catchment Management Trusts;
- (e) undertake any other functions relating to total catchment management as are directed by the responsible Minister.

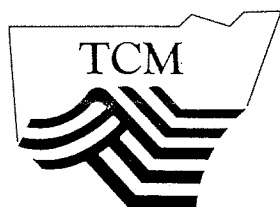
## Objectives of Catchment Management Committees

Catchment Management Committees oversee and coordinate natural resource management activities at a regional or entire river valley level.

## Functions of Catchment Management Committees

Within its catchment area, the functions of a Catchment Management Committee (CMC) are to:

- (a) promote and coordinate the implementation of total catchment management policies and programs;
- (b) advise on and coordinate the natural resource management activities of authorities, groups and individuals;
- (c) identify catchment needs and prepare strategies for implementation;
- (d) coordinate the preparation of programs for funding;
- (e) monitor, evaluate and report on progress and performance of total catchment management strategies and programs;
- (f) provide a forum for resolving natural resource conflicts and issues; and
- (g) facilitate research into the cause, effect and resolution of natural resource management issues, and
- (h) undertake any other functions relating to total catchment management as are directed by the State Coordinating Committee.



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