



Beyond Bolac Catchment Action Group

What is a catchment?

Geographically a catchment is an area of land that drains to a single low point such as a gully, creek or river. A large catchment may be made up of a series of smaller sub-catchments and these are made up of soil, water, air and vegetation. Together these elements support life and make up an ecosystem that within it has cycling of nutrients and other elements. Each component is linked, so when one changes it has an effect on the other elements.

What is Integrated Catchment Management?

Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) is a coordinated approach to the management of natural resources. It is the integration of land, water, vegetation and other biological resources for use in a sustainable, balanced way. ICM draws together all members of the community to effectively manage the catchment in an integrated and holistic way. ICM fosters joint action by all sectors of the community in an effort to co-ordinate the problems and solutions within a catchment.

Catchment Strategy –The Glenelg Hopkins CMA: Regional Catchment Strategy will be built into a catchment management plan.

The Murray-Darling Basin Initiative defines ICM as “a process through which people can develop a vision, agree on shared values and behaviours, make informed decisions and act together to manage the natural resources of their catchment”.

This could be a commitment by the community and agencies of the catchment where the overall aim could be that while addressing stream flows and stream health, to halt the increase of salt and silt discharging from Fiery Creek and Salt Creeks and to reduce overall salinity and silting in Lake Bolac.

The adoption of the ICM approach is increasingly regarded as the most effective way of dealing with environmental issues. ICM takes a ‘whole of systems’ approach and avoids dealing with issues in isolation. It also recognises the important role played by the community in managing natural resources and advantages, such as increased mutual understanding and effectiveness that results from a genuine partnership between community and government.

Some building blocks:

- effective partnership between the community and government
- appropriate knowledge and skills
- legislative and planning instruments
- management coordination mechanisms
- effective resource use

ICM also implies the integration of natural resource management across the whole of government and the many sectors of the community that use and manage these resources. ICM can only be achieved by fostering cooperation and coordination between the interested parties and must be able to reflect many different perspectives.

ICM seeks to achieve ecologically sustainable natural resource management and this requires that clear environmental outcomes be defined for catchments. Setting realistic targets may involve considerable negotiation and trade offs. All planning and management decisions must consider their cumulative effects on the realisation of these outcomes, and approaches modified in the light of monitored performance.

ICM is not about the 'quick fix' it takes the long term view. However, goals for specific issues based on long-term time frames- up to 100 years-need to be supported by short term objectives and actions.

The term ICM is all encompassing and open to a variety of interpretations.

A catchment management plan for Lake Bolac will address relevant issues regarding social, economical, biological and the threats involved and an outline of how best to manage the catchment so that as much as possible the catchment is still in a reasonably healthy stage.

Some issues and activities are inclusive in an ICMP:

- community, stakeholders and agencies all working together engaging farmers and community building partnerships
- and use issues; understanding soils; water use, surface and ground water
- landscape change; pest plants (including noxious weeds) and animals
- heritage and indigenous cultural issues
- flora and fauna
- involvement of farming groups, eg Southern Farming Systems
- land management tools, eg. Sub-catchment plans and farm planning
- the introduction of EMS and EBMP into farm management

Perhaps the most difficult but most important activity is sustaining high levels of voluntary community involvement and commitment in Natural Resource Management.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

VISION:

is for a biodiverse, productive, resilient and safe catchment supporting vibrant communities and land managers.

AIM:

To develop an Integrated Catchment Management Plan for the whole of the H11 H12 Catchment.

To be achieved by:

The committee develops a realistic plan of action that will become an Integrated Catchment Management Plan (ICMP) based on what is achievable within the catchment.

Improvements in management are given positive encouragement. This committee does not wish to see any landowner, agency or community put under duress by others in this catchment. This committee intends to treat fairly all individuals, groups and agencies within the catchment.

Recommendations for land and water management made to landowners, agencies and the community will be based on existing knowledge, good science and on realistic appraisal of benefits and costs.

Where changes in management are recommended, costs should be carried by those who benefit from the change.

The ICMP will include provision to hold, maintain or to source comprehensive information on land and water resources within the catchment. It will be the first point of contact for data and information.

The ICMP will encourage and assist research and the collection of information useful for improved water and land management.

The ICMP will actively involve Beyond Bolac in all environmental matters in this catchment. It will involve and encourage active communication with all parts of the catchment. It will include advocating for the community, and being a conduit to Government agencies. It will foster partnerships of community, stakeholders and agencies.

The ICMP and Beyond Bolac will continue to demonstrate to GHCMA and relevant agencies that the communities of this catchment seek sustained and worthwhile action.

The ICMP will require that the results of programs can be assessed, where this is practicable. The successes can be used to demonstrate suitability for further funding opportunities.

The executive of Beyond Bolac should be recognised by the catchment community and agencies as the first contact for all catchment issues.