

6.12 Roles and responsibilities

The overall coordination of the salinity program and liaison with the community in general is the responsibility of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA). The West Gippsland CMA has a number of community based “Implementation Committees” and “Portfolio Groups” that provide opportunity for community input into the various natural resource management programs operated by the Authority. The implementation committees are based on geographic areas. Smaller portfolio groups based on the asset classes defined in the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy are an opportunity to explore issues around particular assets in more detail. The key portfolio groups relevant to the salinity issue are:

- The Land and Production Portfolio Group; and
- The Water Portfolio Group.

However, there may be a need to liaise with other portfolio groups on an as needs basis on various issues (eg consulting with “Infrastructure, People, Communities, Atmosphere and Climate Portfolio Group” on issues associated with urban salinity).

This plan proposes to utilise the established implementation committees and portfolio groups to provide community input to salinity management decisions. This plan also proposes to use “Technical Groups” of relevant agency representatives to discuss and review various technical issues associated with the implementation of the plan and provide recommendations to the West Gippsland CMA on appropriate actions using the portfolio groups and implementation committees to provide community input. The Technical Group will also be responsible for the implementation of the recommended actions. Two technical groups are proposed to address irrigation and dryland issues respectively. A technical group addressing wetland ecology including salinity is also recommended. Depending on the issue being addressed, the technical groups can either meet together or separately.

The responsibilities of each of the key State Government agencies in implementing this plan are given below:

- **West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority:** Their key role in this plan will be overall coordination of the program, development of future projects, facilitating funding partners, adaptive management of the program, community consultation and implementing the recommended surface drainage programs outside the Macalister Irrigation District.
- **Southern Rural Water:** Their key role in this plan will be responsibility for water allocation, the public groundwater control pumping program, licensing, groundwater monitoring in and around the Macalister Irrigation District, management of irrigation drains and surface drainage in irrigation areas.
- **Department of Primary Industries:** Their key salinity activity in irrigated areas is likely to be extension advice on irrigation and revegetation and as a referral authority for new irrigation developments. In dryland areas, the Department of Primary Industries will provide extension advice, undertake groundwater monitoring and manage the research and investigation program.
- **Department of Sustainability and Environment:** Their key role in this plan will be to provide Statewide policy on water, biodiversity, native vegetation and salinity issues and be a key player in salinity management actions affecting the biodiversity assets especially lakes and wetlands, as well as surface water, groundwater and land salinity monitoring. However, as required by Victoria’s Biodiversity Strategy, all decision makers including government,

business, industry, community groups and individuals are required to undertake actions to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity where relevant to their realm of responsibility, land ownership or management.

- **Parks Victoria:** Their key role in this plan will be the implementation of actions related to wetlands in reserves and parks and remnant vegetation management.
- **Environment Protection Authority:** The EPA will continue to advise the WGCMA and SRW on issues relating to the impact of disposal of saline water into rivers via irrigation drains.
- **Greening Australia:** Greening Australia will continue to administer revegetation and protection of native vegetation projects on private land including extension activities.
- **Gippsland Private Forestry Inc:** Gippsland Private Forestry Inc. will provide strategic advice and extension on forestry activities (including farm forestry) provided funding is available each year.
- **Gippsland Coastal Board:** The Gippsland Coastal Board will be responsible for reviewing and implementing activities that reduce salinity in Lake Wellington.
- **Local Government Authorities (LGA):** The West Gippsland region is covered by six LGAs: Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, South Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire. There is the potential for the depth to watertable and land salinisation maps to be used for planning purposes by each of the LGAs. The Salinity Management Plan does not advise that the depth to watertable map be used as an official overlay due to the inaccuracies of the mapping, but suggests it be used as a guide, particularly in urban areas. There is strong justification for Local Government to contribute to the investigation costs for urban salinity. If townships in the region are found to be currently impacted or have the potential to be impacted by urban salinity in the future, then Local Government should contribute to any investigation costs into appropriate management options.

The Wellington Shire should continue to contribute to the operation of the Groundwater Control Pumps where they are protecting private land and public infrastructure such as roads (see Section 6.9.2 (Table 59) and Appendix F for more details on recommended alterations to the current cost share arrangements).

Current LGA incentives programs for enhancement of biodiversity and wetland rehabilitation are strongly encouraged in this plan and will aid in protecting biodiversity, agricultural and wetland assets from the effects of salinity.

- **GippsLandcare, Landcare Networks, Landcare groups:** In addition to widespread education and capacity building activities, Landcare will continue to administer land management incentive programs including on-ground works at the farm, catchment and regional level to assist in salinity mitigation and extensive native revegetation works on private land.
- **Trust for Nature:** Trust for Nature will continue its role in remnant native vegetation protection through Conservation Covenants, Land Purchase and a Revolving Fund.
- **Landowners/landholders:** Landowners have the responsibility to manage their land in such a way that it does not detrimentally impact on other properties. Landowners also need to take responsibility for managing and mitigating salinity on their own property.

The responsibilities for implementing management action targets addressing irrigation, dryland, ocean induced salinity, surface water salinity and community education are given in Sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 respectively.