

Report on how local communities influenced Basin Plan implementation – Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory's annual report on using local knowledge and solutions to implement the Basin Plan (Schedule 12, Item 6)

Reporting context

The success of the Basin Plan and associated water reforms depends on working closely with communities and stakeholders who can provide the necessary local knowledge and solutions to effectively implement the Plan.

The Basin Plan requires Basin States, the Authority and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to draw on local knowledge and solutions across a range of Basin Plan activities including long-term watering plans, annual environmental watering priorities and water resource plans.

It also requires that the best available knowledge (including scientific, local and cultural knowledge), evidence and analysis be used where practicable to ensure credibility, transparency and usefulness of monitoring and evaluation findings.

The purpose of this report is to monitor the extent to which local knowledge and solutions have influenced implementation of the Basin Plan during 2013-14. The report is a requirement of Chapter 13 of the Basin Plan and relates to Item 6 of Schedule 12.

Indicators for measuring success

The use of local knowledge to inform Basin Plan implementation is evaluated using the following indicators:

- Processes used to identify stakeholders from local communities, peak bodies and individuals (**Indicator 6.1**)
 - How stakeholders were engaged (**Indicator 6.2**)
 - How engagement influenced Basin Plan implementation (**Indicator 6.3**)
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Indicator 6.1: Processes used to identify stakeholders from local communities, peak bodies and individuals

Response

The ACT Government through the Environment and Planning Directorate has been utilising local knowledge and information in preparing and implementing those aspects of the Basin Plan that relate to the ACT. The involvement of local groups and stakeholders and the use of local knowledge and information is exemplified in the ACT's development of its new Water Resource Plan as required for completion in 2014-15. The ACT has consulted with a range of stakeholders and representatives of the scientific community mainly through meetings. Examples of this consultation process are the assessment of the ACT's

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risk assessment process for the Water Resource Plan and the commencement engagement with the ACT region indigenous communities on aspects of the water resource plan.

Note that due to the nature of the ACT's circumstances and situation, the ACT is not involved in a number of Basin Plan projects that involve community groups e.g. the constraints management strategy.

Indicator 6.2: How stakeholders were engaged

Response

The ACT Government through the Environment and Planning Directorate has engaged with a range of stakeholders mainly on the development of the ACT's Water Resource Plan. The stakeholder engagement process includes:

- The Water Utility – ACTEW Water
- Local water scientific experts including from the ACT university sector
- Indigenous community groups and representatives
- Rural landholders group
- Catchment management groups
- ACT Government agencies including the Environment Protection Authority
- NSW Government Primary Industries (Water Division) officials

Note * that the level and breadth of ACT's requirements and involvement in Basin Plan is relatively small compared to other Basin States. The ACT is not involved with communities with respect to the Constraints Management Strategy or any groups dealing with projects for the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment process.

** The ACT has a very small agricultural sector and a very small internal water trading market.

Indicator 6.3: How engagement influenced Basin Plan implementation

Response

Local knowledge has been used to assist in the development of various aspects of the ACT's water resource plan. A key example is the involvement of the scientific community in the risk assessment process for the development of the water resource plan and the role of the water utility in future water planning and availability.

There has also been much discussion and input from local catchment groups on the state of the ACT's water quality with respect to urban lakes and ponds especially with respect to measures to address water quality issues in those

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water bodies that eventually flow into the Murrumbidgee River.