

Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan

Caring for our Country, Sustainable Environment Stream

1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that progress towards and achievements against the Sustainable Environment stream five year Outcomes (2013-2018) established as part of the Caring for our Country program (see Attachment A), can be reported. In short, this will require collecting data and information about how the Sustainable Environment stream has helped conserve and protect Australia's biodiversity, and how the program has utilised and helped build the capacity of individuals, community groups and NRM organisations to continue to protect and conserve their environment. While ensuring all five year outcomes are monitored this plan has a particular focus on:

- Collecting spatial information to help create a broader understanding of the scope and linkages between funded projects. This will help enable better spatial analysis of how projects have an impact at a range of scales.
- Gathering information about individual projects including methods used, issues encountered, and outcomes achieved. This will help develop a better understanding of what NRM methods are most effective.
- Better collecting information about how projects are contributing to conservation and protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance, including helping conserve and protect threatened species, threatened ecological communities, migratory species and world heritage values.
- Collecting information on the economic, social and community impacts of the program, including how the program contributes to Closing the Gap objectives, and the broader sustainability agenda of the Australian Government.
- Using information generated through the program to contribute to the environmental information base, and other reporting requirements, including national and international reporting obligations (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity) and state of the environment reporting.

To help support the management and presentation of data and information an online reporting system will enable both project and program reporting, online. This will enable a level of information accesses and analysis not previously seen. A demonstration of the online MERI tool is available [here](#).

2. Scope

This Caring for our Country, Sustainable Environment Stream Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan (the plan) has been developed to help fulfil the Australian Government's responsibilities as set out in the (the MERI Strategy).

The plan has been developed based on the principles and processes established in the MERI Strategy *Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement Strategy – Caring for our Country and Biodiversity Fund* and sets out how progress of the Caring for our Country Sustainable Environment stream will be monitored, evaluated and reported. The plan does this by detailing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Key Evaluation Questions for each of the investment priority outcome areas of the Sustainable Environment stream. These KPIs and KEQs will be addressed throughout and on completion of the program through the collection and analysis of project level data (to be reported by funding recipients) as well as through data and information collected through fit for purpose monitoring and evaluation activities.

This plan contains:

- A simple program logic which provides a succinct depiction of the program and the elements that will be monitored, evaluated and reported on.
- Detailed KPIs and KEQs for each investment theme/priority outcome areas.
- A set of Standard Output Measures, which reflect the NRM activities to be delivered and reported on.
- The full set of 5 year and 20 year outcomes or the Sustainable Environment stream (Attachment A)

The following funding themes within the Sustainable Environment stream are within the scope of this Plan:

- Targeted Area Grants
- Community Environment Grants
- Regional Delivery (Regional Delivery proponents should also be familiar with the Sustainable Agriculture Stream Program MERI plan)
- Reef Rescue
- Indigenous Protected Area Program
- National Reserve System, including Commonwealth Marine Reserves
- Working on Country
- Environmental Stewardship Program

This plan is for the Sustainable Environment stream only. Similar plans have also been prepared for the Biodiversity Fund and the Sustainable Agriculture Stream of Caring for our Country.

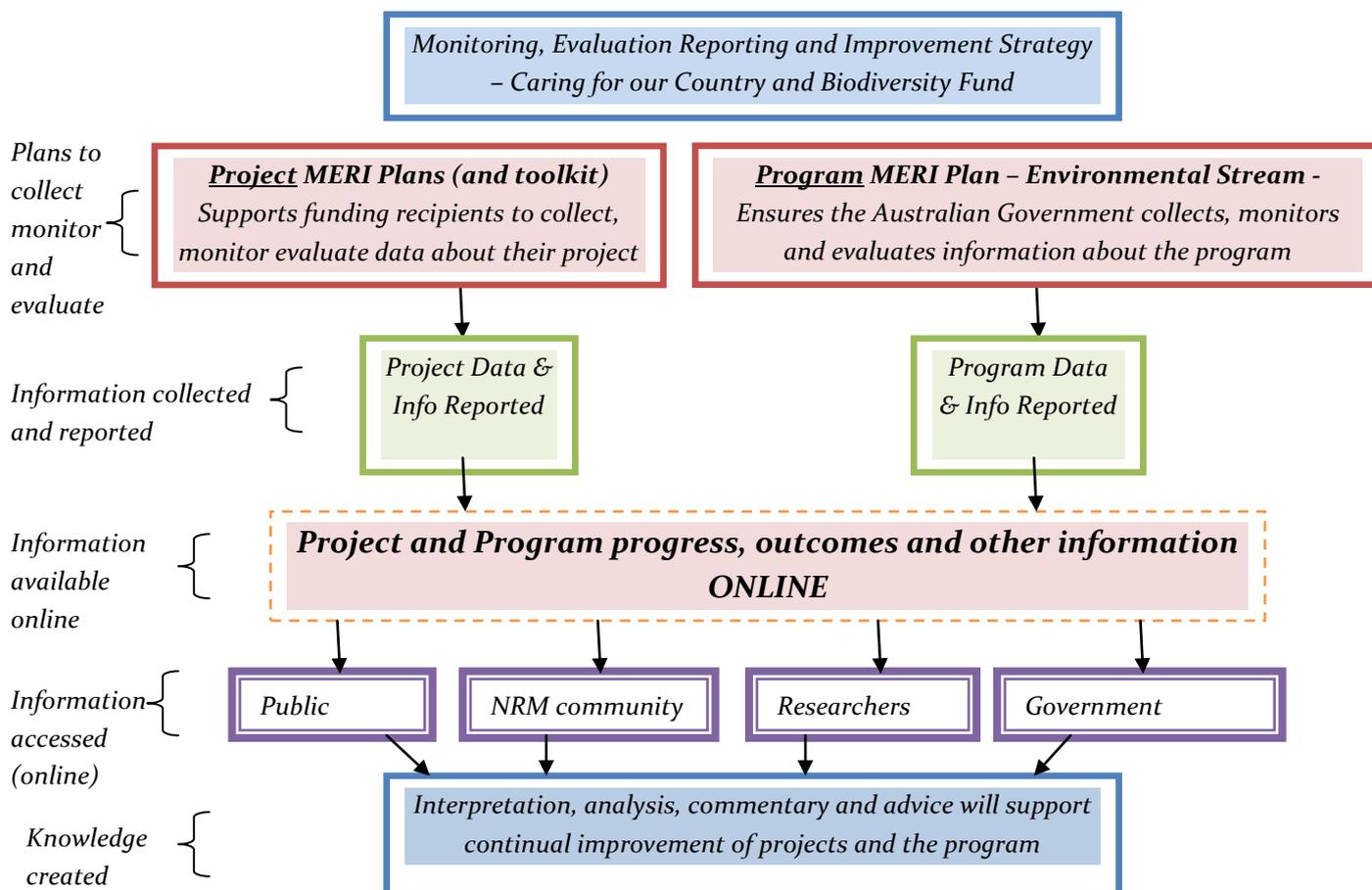
3. Implementing this Plan

Successful implementation of this plan will require:

- **Collection and analysis of project level data** - generated and reported as part of funding recipient MERI responsibilities, as outlined in the MERI Strategy and relevant guidelines, funding agreements and individual project MERI plans.
- **Strategic investment in program level monitoring and evaluation activities** - details of these investments will be updated to this plan (see Section 7) as investment arrangements are finalised.
- **Linking with existing and emerging monitoring, research and other information** - the program is not delivered in isolation, and broader contextual information will need to be considered. Linkages with other environmental monitoring and reporting programs will also be considered.
- **Providing project and program information online** - a key feature of the new MERI process is that funding recipients will soon be able to report via an Online MERI Tool. This tool is being developed in collaboration with the Atlas of Living Australia. A demonstration version of the tool is now available and currently includes recently reported data from Biodiversity Fund Round One projects to show how project information will be presented publicly. This tool will allow funding recipients to record and upload data about the progress of their projects on a continual basis and submit reports online. It will also increase information sharing within NRM communities and the broader public. A demonstration of the online MERI tool is available [here](#).

The figure below depicts how this Program MERI plan and Project MERI plans (developed by funding recipients) both underpin the reporting of data and information regarding the progress and outcomes of Caring for our Country.

Figure 1: Structure and elements of MERI



4. Audience

This MERI Plan will seek to address the interests of the following stakeholders:

- **Funding recipients** – funding recipients are a key data provider, and will help the Australian Government address the KPIs within this document. In this context, funding recipients are encouraged to align their MERI plans with the KPIs and KEQs of this MERI plan. Implementation of this plan will also result in the reporting of data and information of interest to funding recipients.
- **The public** – and others interested in the program, including researchers who may draw on data and information generated through implementation of this plan.
- **The Department** – implementation of this plan will help determine the outcomes being achieved through the Department's administration of NRM investments.
- **The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)** – this plan will help demonstrate accountability and transparency in the expenditure of public money through the reporting of outcomes and achievements.

5. Program Logic

As described in the MERI Strategy, a program logic is a useful way to depict the elements, structure and logic of a project or program. Because of the scale and complexity of the Caring for our Country Environment Stream, a simplified program logic illustration is provided here, with further detail, consistent with this structure provided in Section 7 of this plan (below). Together Sections 5 and 7 constitute the program logic, and monitoring and evaluation plan of this document. Based on the program logic a set of high level assumptions about the project have been identified (see Section 6). These assumptions will be tested through implementation of this plan.



6. Assumptions

The program logic and achievement of the 5 year outcomes is underpinned by a number of assumptions. The table below identifies some high level assumptions which help frame the Key Evaluation Questions and KPIs detailed in Section (7 below).

Assumption	Confidence it is correct	Consequence of assumption being wrong	How will assumption be tested, managed?
1. Funded projects deliver activities (outputs), as per Funding Agreements and MERI Plans	<i>High</i>	<i>Program fails to deliver effective NRM activities.</i>	<i>Projects required to report on delivery of activities as per MERI plan</i>
2. Project outputs result in the desired impact in terms of change in the environment, human or organisational asset	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Projects do not contribute toward program objectives</i>	<i>Projects will monitor, evaluate and report impact and evaluate against effectiveness, impact, efficient and appropriateness, as per project MERI plan. Projects will also be evaluated by the Department as part of this Program MERI Plan</i>
3. The program as a whole (i.e. the cumulative impact of funded projects) will result in progress and achievement of the 5 year outcomes.	<i>Medium</i>	<i>The program does not achieve its objectives</i>	<i>Program will invest / coordinate monitoring and evaluation activities to assess cumulative impact of projects across geographic scales, and asset types.</i>
4. The Program represents an effective, appropriate and efficient way of working to address Australia's NRM and biodiversity challenges	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Addressing NRM and biodiversity conservation goals compromised</i>	<i>A mid-term evaluation and end of program evaluation will be undertaken (against effectiveness, impact, efficiency and appropriateness) drawing on all available data Findings will be used to inform adjustments to program design and delivery.</i>

VERSION 1.0
TO BE REVISED AND UPDATED

7. Monitoring and Evaluation – Key Performance Indicators and Key Evaluation Questions

The following KPIs have been established for each major investment theme area. Two sets of KPIs have been developed. The **Output KPIs** reflect the NRM activities to be delivered by funding recipients. The **Outcome KPIs** are designed to help capture the change or impact of the NRM activities delivered. Data and information against these will come from project reporting and targeted monitoring and evaluation. For each investment theme there is also a set KEQs which reflect the details of the 5 year outcomes. Data and information against the KPIs will be made available online.

Priority Investment Themes	Key Evaluation Questions (Five Year Outcomes)	Outcome KPIs (to test Assumption 2 and 3)	Output KPIs (to test Assumption 1)	Data Source (s) <i>Note: this column will be updated as arrangements to undertake monitoring activities are finalised.</i>
<p>Protecting the Great Barrier Reef (GBR)</p> <p><i>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the program supported projects that reduce run-off (of nutrients, pesticides and sediment) into the GBR, and contributed to Reef Water Quality Protection Plan? What is the impact of these investments on the GBR? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the loads of nutrients, pesticides and sediment, entering the reef from adjacent catchments been reduced? Have investments contributed to improved condition and enhanced the resilience of the GBR? Have crown-of-thorns starfish numbers declined on high value tourist reefs as a result of the program? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has this resulted in maintained condition of targeted reefs? To what extent has monitoring, modelling and research informed our knowledge of priority issues, and condition and resilience trends in the reef? To what extent have the investments remained appropriate, effective and efficient in addressing the priority issues in the GBR? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of anthropogenic end of catchment dissolved inorganic nitrogen, sediment, particulate nutrients and pesticide loads into the GBR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least a 25 per cent reduction in anthropogenic end of catchment dissolved inorganic nitrogen loads in priority areas At least a 10 per cent reduction in anthropogenic end of catchment loads of sediment and particulate nutrients in priority areas At least a 30 per cent reduction in end of catchment pesticide loads in priority areas. Minimum 70 per cent late dry season groundcover maintained on grazing lands (in collaboration with Queensland Government). Improved water quality entering the GBR lagoon. Contributing to an improvement in ecological processes and environmental values of natural wetlands. Condition of high value tourist reefs maintained through management of crown-of-thorns starfish. Improved health and resilience of the Reef through incorporation of Indigenous land and sea knowledge in management of the GBR and Indigenous management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Improved knowledge of the risks to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park informing priority actions and planning through monitoring, research and development, and regional engagement activities Improved coordination of water quality improvement activities and projects between delivery partners. Training, capacity building and knowledge opportunities taken up by landholders, local government, regional organisations and community groups (including indigenous groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in numbers of landholders (and area of land), within priority catchments, participating in farm management system planning, extension and training to support continuous improvement in on-ground practice change 45 per cent increase in sugarcane, horticulture, cropping and grazing lands are managed using best management practice (soil, nutrient and pesticides) in priority areas. Increase in wetland, riparian and mangrove areas revegetated, protected and enhanced Reduction in pest animals and weeds in the reef catchments. Number of crown-of-thorns starfish removed from high value tourist reefs. Number of Water Quality Improvement Plans developed, updated or integrated. Number of (and area covered by) Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements developed and /or implemented. Increased compliance to address illegal activities that threaten cultural and natural heritage values. Number of schools, councils, farmers and fisherman engaged in Reef Guardian Program. Number of research and development projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Recipient data collected Paddock to Reef Program Integrated monitoring, modelling and reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine Monitoring Program Paddock scale monitoring program Reef Rescue Research and Development investments Queensland DAFF Management Practice Change Data collected from farm visits and face-to-face surveys Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC
<p>Matters of National Environmental</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the program contributed to the protection and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in extent (area) of habitat for threatened and migratory species and/or threatened ecological communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of projects directly addressing threatened and migratory species and threatened ecological communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT

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<p>Significance (species and ecological communities)</p> <p>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</p>	<p>conservation of threatened and migratory species and ecological communities (identified under national environmental law) Including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implementing relevant conservation management documentation. o Implementing priority actions from national Recovery Plans, Conservation Advices, Wildlife Conservation Plans and Threat Abatement Plans for threatened and listed migratory species and threatened ecological communities. o Enhancing condition (including extent and connectivity) of threatened ecological communities and species' habitat o Improving the listing status of threatened species and ecological communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the program supported a coordinated effort to identify and address key threatening processes at a range of scales. • To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to address these matters of NES? 	<p>and/or species or communities known or suspected to be at risk of becoming vulnerable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of habitat with improved condition for threatened and migratory species and/or ecological communities and/or species or communities known or suspected to be at risk of becoming vulnerable including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Decrease in extent and density of weeds o Decrease in the extent and density of pests o Increase in condition (including extent and connectivity) o Mitigation of other recognised threats o Improved fire management o Decrease in marine debris o Other improvements to habitat • Increase in the abundance, health and diversity of threatened and migratory species or ecological communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ecological communities, threatened and migratory species targeted by implementation of relevant conservation management actions (i.e. actions identified in national Recovery Plans, Conservation Advices, Wildlife Conservation Plans, Threat Abatement Plans, any other actions from plans specific to the ecological community / species) • Number of relevant conservation management actions implemented (i.e. actions identified in national Recovery Plans, Conservation Advices, Wildlife Conservation Plans, Threat Abatement Plans, any other actions from plans specific to the species or ecological community) • Number of species or communities known or suspected to be at risk of becoming threatened with relevant conservation management actions implemented. • Area managed to address Recovery Plan, Conservation Advice, Wildlife Conservation Plan, or Threat Abatement Plan actions including through actions that increase the area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o revegetated o managed for pests (incl. disease) o managed for weeds (incl. disease) o of marine debris removal o where improved fire management practices are being implemented o with improved grazing regimes 	<p>(online reporting tool).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes from the Environmental Stewardship Program will continue to be monitored through a scientific monitoring program • Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC
<p>Restoring and Maintaining Coastal Environments</p> <p>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the program helped restore and maintain Australia's costal environment (enhancing the condition, connectivity and resilience of habitats and landscapes) through protecting or restoring ecosystem functions, including nutrient and water flows? • To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to address coastal environment biodiversity and conservation priorities in Australia? 	<p>Within the coastal environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area with improved habitat including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Decrease extent and density of weeds. o Decrease the extent and density of pests. o Improved vegetation condition (including extent and connectivity) o Enhanced dune system condition and resilience o Increase in the abundance and/or diversity of native aquatic and near-shore species • Improved end of catchment (near shore) water quality. 	<p>With regard to projects supported to enhance the condition and function of the coastal environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number projects including those undertaking pollution removal and erosion control activities. • Area revegetated, managed for pests (incl. disease) managed for weeds (incl. disease) managed for solid pollution and debris removal • Weight of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o marine debris removed o debris prevented from entering/removed from urban/coastal waterways • Number of Water Quality Improvement Plans being addressed (and other plans including Catchment Action Plans, Local Government Flood Management Plans, Local Government Coastal Management Plans and Local Government Estuary Management Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). • Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC

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<p>Restoring and Maintaining Urban Water</p> <p>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM</p> <p>and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the program helped restore and maintain Australia's urban environment (enhancing the condition, connectivity and resilience of habitats and landscapes) through protecting or restoring ecosystem functions, including nutrient and water flows? To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to address urban water issues? 	<p>With regard to projects within the urban environment and which aim to enhance water quality and near-shore aquatic habitat condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area with improved habitat including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease extent and density of weeds Decrease the extent and density of pests Improved vegetation condition (including extent and connectivity) Increase in the abundance and/or diversity of native aquatic and near-shore species including listed species Improved end of urban catchment water quality Improved downstream non-urban system water quality Increase in the level of community connection with the local environment resulting from urban water management actions 	<p>With regard to projects within the urban environment and which aim to enhance water quality and near-shore aquatic habitat condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of projects including those undertaking urban water installations and pollution control activities. Area revegetated, managed for pests (incl. disease) managed for weeds (incl. disease) managed for solid pollution and debris removal Volume or weight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of water being treated through urban water installation (modelled) of sediment and nutrient reduction avoided (modelled) debris prevented from entering/removed from urban/coastal waterways Number of Water Quality Improvement Plans being addressed (and other plans including Catchment Action Plans, Local Government Flood Management Plans, Local Government Coastal Management Plans and Local Government Estuary Management Plans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC
<p>Protecting World Heritage sites' outstanding universal values and integrity (WHA)</p> <p>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the program contributed to maintaining appropriate management arrangements for World Heritage sites, reducing critical threats and improving, restoring, enhancing or presenting the outstanding universal value and integrity of World Heritage sites? To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to conserve and protect Australia's World Heritage estate? 	<p>Within WHAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area where (and number of) Outstanding Values have been enhanced, including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved vegetation condition (including extent and connectivity) Decrease in extent and density of weeds Decrease in the extent density of pests Improved public access management Decreased marine debris in the marine environment Increase in the abundance and/or diversity of species that are critical components of the site's outstanding value Improved knowledge and awareness of World Heritage values within the community 	<p>Within WHAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of World Heritage Areas supported to manage, conserve, enhance and promote identified WH values (as per relevant management plan) Number of Executive Officers and /or Advisory Committees supported Area managed for weeds, pests, improved fire regimes, marine debris removal and public access to enhance identified WH values Number of species conservation actions taken to support species or functional groups of species that are critical components of the sites outstanding value Increase in the number of World Heritage Management Plans developed and implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC
<p>Protecting Ramsar sites and values</p> <p>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the program helped to maintain or enhance the ecological character of Ramsar sites including by improving habitat for threatened or migratory species listed under national or international 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area and or number of locations where Ramsar site ecological character has been maintained or enhanced including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved vegetation condition (including extent and connectivity) Decrease in extent and density of weeds 	<p>Within Ramsar areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Ramsar sites with projects that apply improved technologies or land management techniques to maintain or enhance their ecological character (as per relevant management plans) Number of projects that include public engagement activities that are consistent with the Ramsar Convention's Communication, Education, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). The Ramsar Rolling Review. Other targeted monitoring /

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<p>Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</p>	<p>legislation, agreements or treaties or species or functional groups of species that are critical to the site's ecological character?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the program supported projects to contribute to the objectives of the Ramsar Convention and/or the Convention on Biological Diversity, including to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain, or; ○ designate Ramsar sites that contain representative, rare or unique wetlands or wetlands that are important for conserving biological diversity, or; ○ reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use? • To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to maintain or enhance the ecological character of Ramsar sites? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decrease in the extent, abundance or diversity of pests ○ Improvement in soil or water quality ○ Increase in the abundance and /or diversity of species that are critical components of the site's ecological character and / or are listed as threatened or migratory under national or international legislation, agreements or treaties • Improved public engagement on Ramsar site issues and management through the implementation of activities that are consistent with the Ramsar Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) program 	<p>Participation and Awareness (CEPA) program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects and/or area managed (including within Ramsar catchment area) for weeds, pests, fire, or any other relevant management issue to maintain or enhance the ecological character of Ramsar sites • Number of species conservation actions taken for species or functional groups of species that are critical components of the ecological character of Ramsar sites 	<p>evaluation approaches TBC</p>
<p>National Reserve System - Indigenous Protected Areas</p> <p><i>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has NRS expansion through the IPA Program contributed to global targets for well-connected and ecologically representative protected areas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent has the program contributed to meeting the global 2020 target of 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas to be conserved through ecologically represented and well-connected systems of marine protected areas or other area based conservation measures? • To what extent have Plans of Management been implemented through NRM and biodiversity conservation actions, and how has 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of IPA Plans of Management evaluated as 'effective' including measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Level of compliance with the requirements of the protection mechanisms on the land and (for IPA) extent to which the Plan of Management is consistent with "Our Country Our Way" Guidelines • Extent to which Indigenous Protected Area's counted in the NRS are managed in accordance with the Plan of Management and assigned IUCN category to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ protection of values as defined in the management plan ○ integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practice ○ co-operative management arrangements connecting protected areas ○ partnerships contributing to conservation of the protected area network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area added to NRS including through the dedication of new IPAs • Increase in the number of properties formally protected through appropriate legal mechanisms • Number of Australian Government funded NRS projects, including IPAs implementing Plans of Management including as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Area managed. ○ NRM activities undertaken (refer to program logic list if necessary) ○ IPA's integrating Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practice ○ IPA's working with partners to implement management plans and co-operative management arrangements ○ Number of Australian Government funded IPA projects undertaking consultation and planning activities to make informed decisions about dedicating their land/and or sea as an Indigenous Protected Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding Recipient data collected ○ Performance stories by project participants

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	<p><i>this enhanced the condition/value of the NRS (incl. IPA)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How have Australian Government funded NRS (incl. IPA program) supported indigenous communities to engage in NRM and helped conserve Indigenous culture and knowledge?</i> 			
<p>Indigenous Ranger Program (Working on Country)</p> <p><i>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Was the target of 730 Indigenous rangers by June 2015 met?</i> <i>What evidence is there that trained Indigenous rangers have assisted in managing and conserving the natural and cultural values of land and sea country?</i> <i>To what extent has Working on Country contributed to positive social, cultural and economic outcomes in Indigenous communities?</i> <i>To what extent does the investment represent an appropriate and efficient way to engage Indigenous people in environmental management and contribute towards Closing the Gap and broader Caring for our Country objectives?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Number of Indigenous communities, organisations and ranger groups reporting improved capacity to manage their land and seas through engagement with WOC.</i> <i>Maintenance or increase in the number of Indigenous rangers.</i> <i>Improved skills and qualifications of Indigenous rangers.</i> <i>Delivery of environmental and cultural benefits through Indigenous land and sea management</i> <i>Delivery of economic, cultural and social benefits through the employment of Indigenous rangers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Indigenous rangers employed Number of Indigenous people in a management or supervisory position Number of projects providing training and skills development for Indigenous rangers Number of projects with an Indigenous governance group that makes decisions about project activities and implementation Area of Land and Sea country managed by WOC Indigenous Rangers Number of projects protecting of threatened species and/or ecological communities Number of projects addressing Weeds of National Significance and/or other key threatening processes Number of projects undertaking cultural activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Funding Recipient data collected</i> <i>Performance stories by project participants</i> <i>Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC</i>
<p>Commonwealth Marine Reserves</p> <p><i>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To what extent has the program contributed to meeting the global 2020 target of 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas to be conserved through ecologically represented and well-connected systems of marine protected areas or other area based conservation measures?</i> <i>To what extent have indicators of marine environmental health to monitor, report on and respond to changes in pressure on the health of Commonwealth waters and Australia's network of Commonwealth marine reserve, been developed?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To be developed and updated as part of the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Monitoring and Reporting Framework and the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package MERI Plan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of marine reserve managed under statutory Plans of Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Commonwealth Marine Reserves Monitoring and Reporting Framework</i> <i>Fisheries Adjustment Package Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework</i>

Priority Investment Themes	Key Evaluation Questions (Five Year Outcomes)	Outcome KPIs (to test Assumption 2 and 3)	Output KPIs (to test Assumption 1)	Data Source (s) <i>Note: this column will be updated as arrangements to undertake monitoring activities are finalised.</i>
<p>Enhancing Indigenous People's capacity for NRM</p> <p><i>Also see Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement Investment Areas (below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the program promoted and resulted in the continued use, support and reinvigoration of Indigenous ecological knowledge to underpin biodiversity conservation? • To what extent has the program supported employment of Indigenous people (including rangers) to deliver NRM outcomes? • To what extent has the program helped build Indigenous people's capacity to undertake and manage natural resource management initiatives? • How has the program contributed to Closing the Gap, particularly in relation to employment and economic development? • To what extent has the program supported Indigenous people to participate in the delivery of 'on ground works'? • To what extent do the approaches supported represent an appropriate and efficient way to build Indigenous peoples capacity and role in NRM? • To what extent has the program been delivered appropriately and efficiently to help conserve and transmit, and ensure Indigenous knowledge is used to benefit NRM and biodiversity conservation decisions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Indigenous peoples and Indigenous organisation's NRM capacity, including as indicated by. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indigenous people supported to serve on NRM boards and in other leadership/management positions ○ Indigenous people participating and being employed in the planning and delivery of NRM investment and key investment area outcomes ○ Indigenous owned businesses being supported and contracted to deliver NRM investment and key investment area outcomes ○ The documentation and application of Indigenous ecological knowledge in the delivery of key investment area outcomes has increased ○ Clear articulation of the benefit to key investment area outcomes as a result of integration and application of Indigenous ecological knowledge ○ The capacity and number of Indigenous people and Indigenous organisations to inform delivery and lead on NRM investment and key investment area outcomes has increased. ○ Indigenous people are participating in the planning, development and delivery of all regional NRM plans ○ Clear articulation of Indigenous land and sea aspirations, including quantitative measures such as Indigenous employment levels, in all regional NRM plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects involving the documentation, integration/application or transfer of Indigenous ecological knowledge • Number of projects providing Indigenous people with (formal/informal) training and skills development in NRM, leadership mentoring, governance and/or business development • Number of Indigenous people receiving (formal/informal) training and skills development in NRM, leadership mentoring, governance and/or business development. • Number of Indigenous people (non-WoC ranger) employed to undertake NRM activities • Number of new Indigenous NRM based enterprises being developed • Number of contractual arrangements with Indigenous based enterprises to deliver NRM activities • Number of Indigenous Land and Sea Management plans supported (developed, completed, implemented) (or similar): • Number of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements supported (developed, completed, implemented) • Increased compliance to address illegal activities that threaten cultural and natural heritage values • Number of regional NRM Plans that incorporate Indigenous land and sea aspirations • Number of regional NRM Indigenous Participation Plans developed • Number of projects with an Indigenous governance group that makes decisions about project activities and implementation • Number of projects involving community elders in decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). ○ Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC
<p>Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement</p> <p><i>Also see Enhancing Indigenous People's Capacity for NRM (above)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has the program, supported training, skills development and knowledge transfer to build the capacity of the NRM community in Australia? ○ To what extent has the program supported development of community skills, knowledge and connection with the environment? ○ To what extent has the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benefit to projects as a result of integration of technical and / or expert knowledge in design implementation and / or monitoring. • Enhanced knowledge and skills of the NRM and broader community as a result of engaging with Caring for our Country programs. • Maintained or increased engagement, awareness of individuals regarding matters of NRM and biodiversity conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of community groups delivering projects. • Number of datasets collected by projects that contributes to the environmental information base of Australia. • Number of projects providing (formal/informal) training and skills development in NRM, leadership mentoring, governance and/or business development. • Number of projects that engage (on a non-paid basis) (Indigenous/non-Indigenous) community members through activities such as school activities, workshops, field days, on country visits and communication activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding Recipient data collected through MERIT (online reporting tool). ○ Other targeted monitoring / evaluation approaches TBC

Priority Investment Themes	Key Evaluation Questions (Five Year Outcomes)	Outcome KPIs (to test Assumption 2 and 3)	Output KPIs (to test Assumption 1)	Data Source (s) <i>Note: this column will be updated as arrangements to undertake monitoring activities are finalised.</i>
	<p>increased capacity to manage Australia's conservation estate in an integrative and coordinated manner, at a landscape scale and in the context of a changing climate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has the program contributed to the aims of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030? ○ To what extent do the approaches supported represent an appropriate and efficient way to build community skills, knowledge and engagement in NRM? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained or increased capacity of community organisations and NRM groups as a result of Caring for our Country program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects involving formal partnerships (such as MOU's, signed agreements etc) between Indigenous groups, individuals, government, NGO and Business sectors to deliver shared NRM outcomes. • Number of formal partnerships or consultations (individuals / groups) involved in design, delivery, monitoring to guide project implementation. • Number of Community Engagement Plans developed and implemented by regional NRM organisations. • Increase in stakeholder and community awareness and understanding of management issues for Traditional Owners 	

8. Standard Output Measures and Reporting Information

To assist with the reporting of Program Outputs and Outcomes (against the KPIs in section 7 above), projects will be asked to plan (in Project MERI plans) and report against the following Standard Project Outputs (and other additional information), to the extent that it is relevant to the project. The Project Outputs in the Project MERI plan should align with these Standard Project Outputs as much as possible.

Activity Type	Standard Project Outputs	Additional Reporting Information (to be reported where relevant)	Additional Monitoring (outcome) Data
<p>Management Practices - Land, Aquaculture and Fisheries</p> <p>This management activity is supported to increase adoption of more sustainable management actions across grazing, cropping, horticulture, aquaculture and fisheries that lead to enhanced vegetation condition and /or reduce run-off of sediments, nutrients, chemicals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) protected or managed to reduce grazing pressure • Number of farming entities that have adopted sustainable practices (Reef Rescue Projects) • Number of fishing, aquaculture and farming entities trialling innovative practices for improved natural resources management (Reef Rescue Projects) • Number of land owners (properties), within priority (Great Barrier Reef) catchments, participating in farm management system planning, extension and training • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of land (hectares) impacted by adoption of sustainable practices • Target Industry (Sugarcane, Grazing, Grains, Horticulture, Dairy, Cotton, Forestry, Aquaculture, Fishing, Other) • Target action (nutrient management, sediment management, grazing management, pesticide management, other) • Length (kilometres) of fencing installed and number of watering points controlled / closed (if managing grazing impact) • Method (description) • Location of activity (plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation and Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of properties classed A (Reef Rescue ABCD Framework) " • Number of properties classed B (Reef Rescue ABCD Framework) " • Number of properties classed C (Reef Rescue ABCD Framework) " • Number of properties classed D (Reef Rescue ABCD Framework) " • Other
<p>Weed management</p> <p>This management activity is supported to reduce the spread and impact of existing weeds and eradicate / contain new or emerging weeds, and to control the spread of native plant and wildlife disease, in order to protect, conserve and enhance ecosystem condition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) treated for the control and / or eradication of weeds. • Length (kilometres) of riparian / roadside area treated for the control / eradication of weeds. • Other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target weed species (common, scientific name) • Method (removal, biological control etc) • Location of activity (plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) • Extent of target weed infestation (hectares) • Number of (repeat) treatments • Number of individual animals killed/removed • Duration of activities (hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent of weed (hectares) • Change in density of weed (plants per hectare) • Vegetation condition change (using state-based methodologies or Biodiversity Fund Ecological

		Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation and Engagement	Monitoring Guide method) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in density(plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation • Other
<p>Pest and Disease Management</p> <p>This management activity is supported to eradicate or reduce the impact and spread of existing or emerging pests or disease in order to protect, conserve and enhance ecosystem condition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) treated for the control / eradication of pests (including disease) • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target pest species(common, scientific name) • Method (baiting, trapping etc) • Length (kilometres) of fencing installed (id applicable) • Location of activity(plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) • Number of (repeat) treatments • Duration of activities (hours) <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation and Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent (hectares) and / or density (pests per hectare) of pest • Change in extent of disease (hectares) • Vegetation condition change (using state-based methodologies or Biodiversity Fund Ecological Monitoring Guide method) • Change in density(plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation • Other
<p>Urban Water Management</p> <p>This management activity is supported to regulate, and treat the flow of stormwater through urban environments in order to enhance the condition of aquatic, coastal and near shore habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new small-medium scale urban ecosystem improvements installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of activity (flow retention, soft bank rehabilitation etc) • Location of activity(plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) • Area of catchment serviced (hectares) <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation and Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelled or measured maximum volumetric flow rate (cubic metres per second) • Modelled or measured volume of water treated (mega litres) • Modelled or measured reduction in sediment; nutrients; chemicals; debris (kilograms per year or total kilograms) • Other
<p>Plans of Management</p> <p>This management action is supported to develop, and /or complete, and/or implement selected management plans, including Water Quality Improvement Plans, World Heritage Plans, Indigenous Protected Area plans, Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements, and Indigenous Land and Sea Management Plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Plans of Management developed / updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and name of Management Plan • Location (plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) • Area covered by management plan (hectares) • Date of management plan completed <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location, type and area of activities being implemented in accordance with management plan • Other
<p>Revegetation</p> <p>This management action is supported to (re) establish, augment, link or buffer native vegetation to enhance ecosystem function, habitat condition, and connectivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) revegetated • Length (kilometres) of waterway / coastline revegetated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of activity (plain language locality and GPS point or polygon) • Land use type before revegetation (existing native, cleared land etc) • Type of vegetation being restored (woodland, temperate rainforest etc) • Species planted (common, scientific name) • Method (e.g. direct sowing, diverse plantings) • Source of seeds and plants • Number of seedlings planted • Kilograms of seed sown • For projects increasing connectivity - types of connections created (linkages, enlargements, stepping stones, etc) • Duration of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent (hectares)and / or density (plants per hectare)of targeted weed species • Vegetation condition change (using state-based methodologies or Biodiversity Fund Ecological Monitoring Guide method) • Change in density

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation 	<p>(plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedling survival rates (percentage) • Other
<p>Fire Management</p> <p>Activities to reduce impact of fire on native vegetation, weeds and fauna through improved fire management regime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) where improved fire regimes have been implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose(s) of fire management (weed, pest, habitat management) • Location of total improved fire management area (plain language locality and GPS point, polygon) • Location and area actually burnt in reporting period (GPS point, polygon) • Method (roadside, aerial etc) • Type of vegetation burnt • Type of machinery used (light tanker, heavy tanker, bulldozer, aircraft, etc) • Duration of activities <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent (hectares) and / or density (plants per hectare) of targeted weed or pest species • Vegetation condition change (using state-based methodologies or Biodiversity Fund Ecological Monitoring Guide method) • Change in density (plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation • Other
<p>Debris Removal</p> <p>Actions to remove material debris from land, waterways, or the marine environment in order to avoid harm to species or habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) across which debris has been removed • Length (kilometres) of coastline or riparian (waterway) where debris has been removed • Weight or volume of debris removed (tonnes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal methods (e.g. removal by hand, dredging, capture) • Location of activities (plain language locality and GPS points, polygon) • Duration of activities <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other
<p>Erosion Control</p> <p>This activity is to support activities with the specific purpose of stabilising or mitigating erosion of erosion of gullies, dune systems, river banks, creeks etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) erosion control activities have been undertaken across. • Length (kilometres) of coastline, or riparian area treated to mitigate erosion • Number of 'hard' engineering works installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of activity (Slope reduction - Bank & swale, Slope reduction - connected weir ponds, In-stream structure, Vegetative soil stabilisation, Groynes & sand traps, Other) • Location of activity (plain language locality and GPS points or polygon) • Area of catchment serviced (hectares) • Duration of activities <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelled or measured maximum volumetric flow rate (cubic metres per second) • Modelled or measured volume of water treated (mega litres) • Modelled or measured reduction in sediment; nutrients; chemicals; debris (kilograms per year or total kilograms) • Other
<p>Other Conservation Works</p> <p>Activities undertaken with the primary purpose of conserving a threatened species or an ecological community (other than pest management, weed management, fire management, grazing management or revegetation activities). This may include establishing shelter and nesting infrastructure, ex situ breeding programs etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions undertaken • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of action (e.g. installation of nesting boxes, ex-situ breeding programs, seed bank establishment (and description)) • Location of activities conservation activities (plain language locality and GPS points, polygon) • Target species for conservation (common, scientific name) • Area impacted by actions (hectares) • Number of individual animals in captive breeding program • Number of individual animals released back into the wild <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in density (plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation • Other
<p>Public Access Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of sites protected by activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of action (including description) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent (hectares) and / or density

<p>Actions that establish appropriate and restricted public access to reduce negative impact on ecosystem function, site (heritage, ecological etc) values including, vegetation and habitat condition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area (hectares) protected by activity • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of activity (plain language locality and GPS points or polygon) • Length of fencing / boardwalk installed (kilometres) • Number of signs installed • Number of participants (total) • Number of people managed for access (e.g. visitation numbers) <p>Also consider: Knowledge Integration and Transfer; Indigenous Employment and Enterprise and Community Participation</p>	<p>(plants per hectare)of targeted weed or pest species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in extent of plant disease (hectares) • Vegetation condition change (using state-based methodologies or Biodiversity Fund Ecological Monitoring Guide method) • Change in density (plants/animals per hectare) or extent (hectares) of target (or indicator) species for conservation • Other
<p>Community Participation and Engagement</p> <p>This management action is to support activities that aim to involve the local community in NRM projects, and associated information and awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of community participation and engagement activities • Number of community groups participating in project • Number of individual participants engaged in project • Number of Indigenous participants • Number of farming entities engaged in project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of engagement (Workshops, Planning Days, Field Days, Volunteering, Seminars, Farm Visits, Property Planning, Farm Risk Assessment, Extension, School Activities, Other) • Type (and names) of community groups participating (Landcare Groups, Farmers Organisations, Indigenous Community Groups, Aboriginal Land Councils, Community Environment Groups, NRM Organisations, Friends of Groups, Other) • Number of partnerships with businesses • Location of activity (plain language locality and/or GPS or polygon) • Duration of activity (hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured capacity change of community, organisation or individuals (qualitative, quantitative). • Other
<p>Training and Skills Development</p> <p>Actions that enhance the capacity of individual NRM practitioners and / or NRM community to deliver NRM more effectively through formal training events or programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people participating in training and skills development activities. • Number of Indigenous participants in training and skills development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of activity (Certificates or other formal qualifications, Accredited NRM training, Leadership training, Mentoring, Governance training, Business development training, Health and safety training, Other certificates or formal training) • Number of qualification gained • Location of activity (plain language locality and/or GPS or polygon) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured capacity change of community, organisation or individuals (qualitative, quantitative). • Other
<p>Indigenous Employment and Enterprise</p> <p>This is supported to increase Indigenous capacity and participation in NRM through employment and enterprise development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Indigenous persons employed (Full Time Equivalent) • Number of Indigenous enterprises established • Number of formal (contractual) engagements of an Indigenous enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of employment • Work Description (e.g. planning, NRM works, management etc) • Type of enterprise developed • Type of contract work • Employment location (plain language locality and/or GPS or polygon) • Number of Indigenous ranger supervisors who began role in last reporting period • Number of Indigenous ranger supervisors who were previously Indigenous rangers • Number of Indigenous people employed in supervisory/management role through project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured capacity change of community, organisation or individuals (qualitative, quantitative). • Other
<p>Knowledge Integration and Transfer</p> <p>This is supported to encourage the specific integration of ecological, cultural, and NRM knowledge to support project design, delivery or monitoring AND / OR preservation of that knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of on-country visits • Number of on-country visits attended by younger and older people together • Involvement of Indigenous decision-making bodies in project (Yes or No) • Involvement of community elders in decision-making (Yes or No) • Documentation of Indigenous ecological knowledge (Yes or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of activity (documentation, consultation etc) • Number of individuals involved • Number of Indigenous participants • Number of formal consultations (individuals/private sector) involved in design, delivery, monitoring to guide project implementation. • Number of formal partnerships (e.g. MOUs/joint delivery) involved in design, delivery, monitoring to guide project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured capacity change of community, organisation or individuals (qualitative, quantitative). • Measured benefit of knowledge integration for project (qualitative, quantitative). • Other

	<i>No)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Number of datasets collected by projects and provided to the Australian Government and/or made publically available</i>		
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Maintenance of ecosystem services, including ecological and cultural values, now and into the future

20 yr projections (2008 – 2028) against our strategic objectives:

- The declining trend of Australia's biodiversity has been reduced and our native flora, fauna and ecosystems have the best protection possible, increasing their resilience to climate change and other pressures at all scales.
 - Threats to Australia's unique biodiversity, which underpins the functioning of our natural and productive landscapes, are systematically addressed and reduced where possible.
 - High ecological value ecosystems, including protected species habitat and ecological communities in poor condition, are healthy and fragmentation across the landscape has been reduced.
 - The conservation status of threatened species and ecological communities has improved and this improvement can be sustained.
- Activities to conserve and manage Australia's biodiversity and natural systems are integrated across the Australian land and marine environments.
 - The conservation benefits that can be drawn from complementary management of Australia's conservation estate, and other public and private lands are maximised.
 - Natural resources management is occurring at appropriate and multiple scales to maintain high value ecosystems and build the capacity of the natural environment to maintain critical functions over time (including the ecological and cultural values of places).
 - Threats to coastal, aquatic and marine environments has been reduced, and water quality and aquatic health has been improved through sustainable land management practices and social and institutional structures to effectively address local threats.
 - The impact of threats to the Great Barrier Reef from sediments and nutrients has been reversed, and water quality and aquatic health has been improved. Management arrangements are established in Reef catchments to prevent further deterioration, especially given the Reef's vulnerability to climate change.
 - Australia's tropical and arid landscapes and ecosystems in northern and remote Australia are protected and appropriately managed.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities are strongly connected to local environments.
- An informed Australian community that supports, and is effectively and actively engage in, activities to protect our environment and sustainably manage our natural resources.

By 2018, Caring for our Country – Sustainable Environment stream will:

- Better protect and conserve nationally and internationally significant ecosystems, species, ecological communities and landscapes, through actions that:
 - Identify and address key threatening processes at a range of scales.
 - Support recovery and threat abatement for species and ecological communities identified under national environmental law.
 - Enhance the condition, connectivity and resilience of habitats and landscapes by protecting or restoring ecosystem functions, including nutrient, water and energy flows.
 - Incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge into planning and on ground outcomes.
 - Reflect a whole of landscape approach to biodiversity conservation.
- Advance the use of indicators of marine environmental health to monitor, report on and respond to changes in pressure on the health of Commonwealth waters and Australia's network of Commonwealth marine reserves.
- Build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef to the impacts of climate change by improving the quality of water leaving the catchments and entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.
- Build community capacity and connection with the environment, including through activities that re-establish urban bushland, areas of Indigenous significance and the health of urban waterways.

Protection of our conservation estate

20 yr projections (2008–2028) against our strategic objectives:

- A well managed, comprehensive, adequate and representative National Reserve System has been established to protect in perpetuity examples of at least 80 per cent of the intact native ecosystems present in Australia.
 - Australia has met the global 2020 target of 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water ecosystems to be conserved through ecologically representative and well-connected systems of terrestrial protected areas or other area-based conservation measures.
 - The national network of marine protected areas adequately represents the full diversity of Australia’s marine environments and is managed to a high standard.
- The National Reserve System is integrated with and complements efforts by the Australian Government and its investment partners to conserve biodiversity in a changing climate, and meet Australia’s international obligations to protect our native and migratory species and their habitats.
- Threats to the ecological character of Ramsar-listed wetlands of international importance have been reduced.
- The outstanding universal value and integrity of Australian World Heritage site are protected, meeting Australia’s commitments under the world heritage convention.
- An informed Australian community that supports, and is effectively and actively engage in, activities to protect our environment and sustainably manage our natural resources.

By 2018, Caring for our Country – Sustainable Environment stream will:

- Contribute to global targets for the establishment of ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas, across land and sea bioregions.
- Support the establishment and management of a national network of marine reserves in Commonwealth waters.
- Support Australia to meet the global 2020 target of 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas to be conserved through ecologically represented and well-connected systems of marine protected areas or other area based conservation measures.
- Expand the area that is protected within the National Reserve System, including Indigenous Protected Areas.
- Support management actions for the National Reserve System, including Indigenous Protected Areas.
- Meet the requirements of the World Heritage Convention by maintaining appropriate management arrangements for all World Heritage sites and investing in actions to reduce critical threats, and improve, restore, enhance or present the outstanding universal value and integrity of World Heritage sites.
- Reduce critical threats to Ramsar sites and to improve and restore their ecological character through the development and adoption of improved technologies or land management techniques.
- Increase government and community capacity to manage our conservation estate in the context of landscape-scale approaches that are adaptive to changing conditions, build on traditional and contemporary knowledge and integrate management activities across natural resource sectors.

Enhanced capacity of Indigenous communities to conserve and protect natural resources

20 yr projections (2008–2028) against our strategic objectives:

- Effective partnerships between Indigenous Australians and governments, communities, industry, philanthropic organisations, regional bodies and non-Indigenous land managers to help maintain Australia’s long-term environmental and productive sustainability.
- Indigenous people have the information, are supported to effectively conserve and protect natural and cultural resources.
- Local capacities are integrated with broader national efforts to maintain and improve the quality, protection and management of our environment and natural resources.

By 2018, Caring for our Country – Sustainable Environment stream will:

- Facilitate Indigenous participation in the development of local and regional management plans and support management activities to control weeds and feral animals, reduce threats from modified fire and grazing regimes, restore vegetation, protect wildlife and monitor environmental condition.
- Build capacity for Indigenous people to undertake and manage natural resource management initiatives through access to appropriate training, education, organisational and natural resource management planning and on-ground activities.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that Indigenous people can initiate and be essential partners in activities that have an environmental and cultural management focus.• Realise opportunities for Indigenous natural resource management employment and enterprise through building the capacity of Indigenous people to deliver services to conserve and protect natural and cultural resources.• Promote the continued use, support and reinvigoration of Indigenous ecological knowledge to underpin biodiversity conservation. |
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