

PART B: THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL STRATEGY

Chapter 3: An Integrated Strategic Framework for Improved Southern Natural Resource Management

CONTENTS

- 3.1 State-wide principles and priorities
- 3.2 Regional Vision
- 3.3 Regional Goals
- 3.4 Regional Outcomes
- 3.5 Targets
- 3.6 Management Actions
- 3.7 Focus of the Strategy

Figure 2 illustrates the framework for the Southern NRM Strategy. See Appendix 3.6 for the Community 'Core Values'.

3.1 State-wide principles and priorities

The Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Framework proposes a set of **principles and priorities** to guide NRM decision-making. The Southern NRM Strategy is based on the Tasmanian NRM Framework, and has adopted the principles and priorities of the Framework as appropriate for the Southern Region. They have been incorporated into the structure of the Strategy and its prioritisation process.

Tasmanian NRM Framework Principles

1. **Ecosystem Approach-** Natural resource management should be based on an understanding of the relationship between natural resources and the ecosystems they support, and upon careful monitoring of change over time.
2. **Balanced Decisions-** Natural resource management decisions should take proper account of the range of environmental, social and economic benefits, values and costs in accordance with the objectives of the Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System.
3. **Integrated Management-** The management of natural resources should be integrated within regions and catchments, as well as across industry sectors, government agencies and specific issues.
4. **Priority Based-** Natural resource management actions are to be undertaken according to priorities that are based on the best available science and information, and relevant experience, as well as on assessment of the relative cost-effectiveness of various options.
5. **Prevention is Better than Cure-** It is often more efficient to prevent damage rather than repair it. Therefore, where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
6. **Partnerships-** To be effective, natural resource management requires the establishment of voluntary partnerships between all levels of government and the community, including the Aboriginal community, industry, land holders and individuals, with agreed roles and responsibilities.

7. **We are all Responsible** – Everyone in the Southern Region receives benefits from the use, development and conservation of our natural resources. Landowners alone cannot be expected to cover the cost of resource conservation. We all share responsibility for managing natural resources sustainably, and for providing economic resources to do so.

Figure 2. Strategic Framework

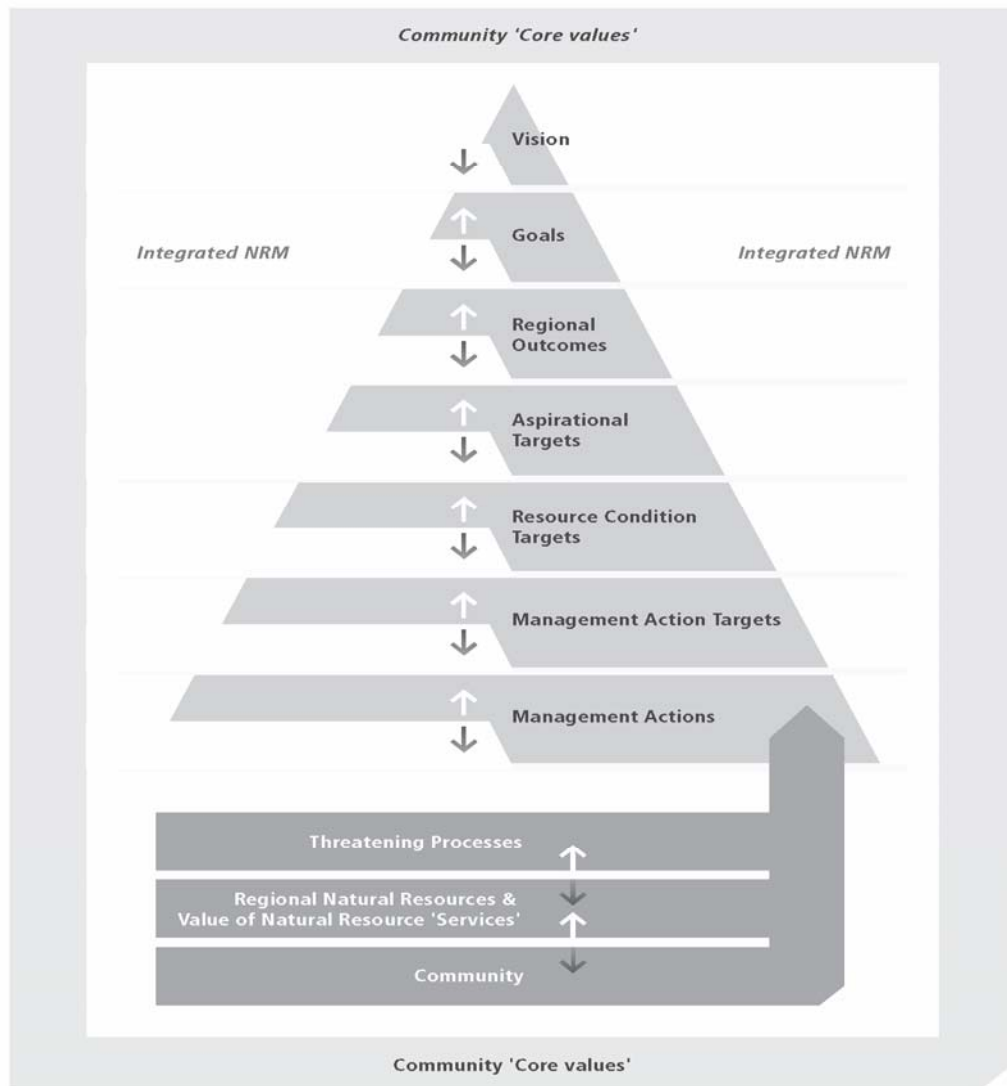


Figure 1: Strategic Framework

Tasmanian NRM Framework Priorities

- Capacity building
- Education/communication
- Research
- Water management
- Vegetation management (forest and non-forest)
- Soil management

- Management of weeds, pests and diseases
- Management of coastal and marine environments

3.2 Regional Vision

The Regional Vision is an aspirational statement that defines the desired long-term outcomes of this Strategy:

The Southern Region's natural resources will be protected, sustainably managed and improved for the shared environmental, social and economic benefit of our Region by a well-informed, well-resourced and actively committed community.

3.3 Regional Goals

'Goals' are the key things that this strategy is to achieve. They are not necessarily measurable or tied to a specific time-frame, although they tend to be longer term.

Through efficient structures and strategies, the Goals of the Southern NRM Strategy are to:

1. *facilitate participation, communication, networks and partnerships with all sectors of the community to develop and implement the Southern NRM Strategy*
2. *maintain and improve the condition of the Southern Region's natural resources*
3. *contribute to the development of sustainable human communities to provide employment and a quality lifestyle*
4. *assist in the development of a sustainable and balanced approach to economic development*
5. *build the capacity of all sectors of the community to work together and share responsibility for sustainable natural resource management, to monitor resource condition, and to ensure well-informed decisions*

3.4 Regional Outcomes

The following set of eleven regional outcomes has been developed for the Southern Strategy following community consultation, with reference to the National Outcomes (see Appendix 4.1):

1. The impact of salinity on natural resources and infrastructure in the Southern Region is minimised, avoided or reduced.
2. The impact of threatening processes other than salinity on locations and systems which are critical for the conservation of biodiversity, rural production, towns, infrastructure and cultural and social values in the Southern Region is avoided or minimised.
3. The extent, diversity and condition of native ecosystems in the Southern Region are maintained or rehabilitated.
4. Populations of significant species and ecological communities in the Southern Region are maintained, rehabilitated or improved.
5. Ecosystem services and functions are maintained or improved in the Southern Region.
6. Surface and groundwater quality is maintained or improved in the Southern Region.
7. Surface and groundwater is securely allocated to support the environment, production and other human uses in the Southern Region.
8. Sustainable production systems are developed and management practices are in place which maintain, rehabilitate or improve biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintain or

enhance resource quality, maintain productive capacity and profitability and prevent or manage degradation in the Southern Region.

9. The community at large supports the Regional NRM Vision and has access to the skills and resources to manage the Southern Region's natural resources sustainably.
10. Institutional arrangements support effective natural resource management.
11. Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Landscape values are recognised and protected.

3.5 Targets

Consistent with the *National Framework for Standards and Targets* (see Appendix 4.2), the Strategy contains three sets of targets:

- Aspirational Targets (with a 50-year timeframe)
- Resource Condition Targets (with a 10 to 20-year timeframe)
- Management Action Targets (with a short timeframe, 1-5 years)

The targets are required to respond to the ten Matters for Target specified in the *National Framework for Standards and Targets*, and must be set in response to specific threats and to protect specific values.

A number of the existing relevant Tasmanian policies and strategies, including *Tasmania Together*, identified 'targets' which were considered when developing targets for the Southern NRM Strategy. Many existing targets are more 'aspirational' in nature. If existing targets were measurable and time-bound, and if they addressed one or more of the indicators proposed in the *National Standards and Targets Framework* for the ten Matters for Target, then they were considered suitable for use within the Southern Strategy. The links between the Strategy's targets and *Tasmania Together* targets are in Appendix 4.3.

Each of the core chapters includes a table of Aspirational Targets, Resource Condition Targets and Management Action Targets to match the content for the chapter. Management Actions in the Integration chapter (*Chapter 4*) and the Sustainable Communities and Economy chapter (*Chapter 9*) potentially address all Aspirational and Resource Condition Targets. Achievement of one target should not be at the expense of another target.

3.5.1 Aspirational Targets

These are long-term 'targets' with associated statements about the desired condition of natural resources in the longer term (eg 50+ years). The Aspirational Targets are not required to be directly measurable, but set out long-term 'aspirations' as guidance for the Region's long-term planning. They provide an overarching context for the measurable and achievable targets – Resource Condition Targets – required under the *National Standards and Targets Framework*. Aspirational Targets for each natural resource are provided in the table of Targets in each core chapter. These targets guide the overall Strategy.

3.5.2 Resource Condition Targets

The proposed Resource Condition Targets address the ten Matters for Target in the *National Standards and Targets Framework*. Resource Condition Targets must be set for a 10 to 20 - year time frame. They protect natural resource services and values and address key threats to those values. They provide the basis for evaluation of the success of the strategy in improving environmental outcomes across the Region. Resource Condition Targets focus on examining the decline, maintenance or improvement in the condition and extent of particular aspects of the environment over time, and use specific indicators to do this. The *National Standards and Targets Framework* (see Appendix 4.2) has identified a set of indicators which have been agreed nationally as the basis for measuring change in resource condition. In

choosing to use any of the proposed indicators, regional strategies must follow the methodology and measuring mechanisms proposed for those indicators.

Resource Condition Targets must be specific, measurable, practical, achievable and time-bound (SMART), and they must be able to demonstrate that particular actions, or sets of actions, are having an effect.

In the case of a number of the nationally agreed indicators, Tasmania does not have adequate baseline data at a regional level to allow Resource Condition Targets to be set with confidence. Where adequate baseline data is not available, a Management Action is required to collect the data to establish the Resource Condition Target.

The Resource Condition Targets presented in the Strategy were the subject of extensive consultation with technical specialists and stakeholders in April/May 2004 and again between July and September 2004. The targets presented were approved by NRM South in October 2004 and reflect the best information available to the committee at that time. Further information is emerging which means that some targets may need refinement. All targets will be subject to further technical and stakeholder review in the first year of the Strategy. The Bilateral Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian governments for the NHT2 specifies that regions have up to three years from date of signing to finalise the Resource Condition Targets, ie until June 2006.

3.5.3 Management Action Targets and Process Targets

Management Action Targets and Process Targets are short-term targets (1-5 years) relating to specific Management Actions. Management Action Targets will generally reflect interim outcomes towards achievement of the longer-term Resource Condition Targets. Process Targets are a subset of Management Action Targets that identify necessary steps or outputs that must be completed. The proposed Management Action Targets and Process Targets will also be subject to further review in the light of technical advice and the level of investment likely to be achieved from all sources.

3.6 Management Actions

Management Actions are the initial activities proposed to be undertaken (subject to stakeholder agreement and adequate levels of investment) to improve the condition of the Region's natural resources and to address the causes of both threatening processes and management challenges. Some of the actions identified are already being undertaken. Continuation of these actions is essential to prevent degradation of the Region's natural resources, and they are included to ensure that they are recognised and supported through the Strategy.

Satisfactory delivery of Management Actions will achieve the Management Action Targets over the first one to five years. In turn, they will contribute to achievement of the Resource Condition Targets. Management Actions and Management Action Targets will need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure ongoing progress towards the Resource Condition Targets and, eventually, the Aspirational Targets. Similarly, over time, Resource Condition Targets will need to be reviewed for each 10-20 year period, to assess progress towards the Aspirational Targets.

In addition to prioritising threatening processes (see Appendix 1.9 in the Supplementary Information), NRM South, in consultation with the community, has also identified the Management Actions of greatest strategic importance. These are identified as 'high priority'. These may not all require regional investment, particularly where they are already being implemented.

Some Management Actions will need to be undertaken immediately to put in place the information required to measure progress or prevent irreversible damage to a natural

resource. Other Management Actions are not so time critical, although they may still be of high importance. It may not be possible to carry out some Management Actions until others have been completed.

Appendix 6.2 summarises the criteria used by NRM South to prioritise the Management Actions.

Appendix 4.3.3 and the Regional Investment Proposal provide a summary of the main links between Management Actions, Resource Condition Targets and Management Action Targets.

3.7 Focus of the Strategy

The focus of the Southern NRM Strategy is on:

- Ensuring a balance between **environmental, economic** and **social** outcomes
- Maintaining and/or improving **water quality** in freshwater and marine, coastal and estuarine systems
- Securely and sustainably allocating **surface** and **groundwater** resources for domestic, agricultural, industrial and environmental purposes
- Ensuring a minimum level of **native vegetation** in good condition is retained in each of the bioregions to maintain landscape character and integrity and protect the Region's biodiversity
- Protecting key terrestrial, freshwater and marine, coastal and estuarine **ecosystems, species** and their **habitats**
- Preventing further spread, and eradication where possible, of **weeds, pests** and **diseases**
- Maintaining and/or improving **soil condition**
- Preventing further spread of **salinity**
- Protecting key landforms (**geodiversity**) and **Cultural Landscapes**

These issues are all the subject of targets, and are addressed by:

1. Ensuring availability of adequate **information and data**
2. Promoting natural resource management principles in **policy, planning** or **decision-making**
3. Supporting **on-ground actions** that can be confidently related to achieving Resource Condition Targets
4. Supporting the community to participate more effectively in NRM by building **community responsibility, awareness and capacity**
5. Ensuring **baseline** information is available and establishing a **monitoring and evaluation** framework to assist achievement of the Resource Condition Targets.

All Management Actions address this focus and are grouped in each chapter under these five headings.