

APPENDIX 3

PROJECT VISION

The Steering Group has adopted the Torbay Catchment Group's vision for the project:

"An environmentally clean, balanced ecology supporting a prosperous community in which people respect each other's use of the catchment and waterways."

The achievement of this vision rests on our ability to translate its meaning into practical objectives, actions and targets.

Themes and objectives

A practical way of approaching the translation of a vision into reality is to consider pivotal themes that require attention and to then set objectives within these themes. Seven umbrella themes have been identified from community forums held in June 2002, and from issues of prominence defined by the Torbay Catchment Group. The seven themes are:

1. Algal blooms and Water Quality

The availability of good quality water is a fundamental requirement to sustaining our communities. Since settlement, there has been a gradual decline in the catchment's water quality. Algal blooms are the most obvious sign that our waterways are unhealthy. As well as being a health risk, algal blooms smell bad and look ugly, resulting in an unpleasant living environment for nearby residents and a turn-off for our growing tourism industry.

2. Water Quantity

The quantity of water in the catchment's streams and receiving waterbodies is an important determinant of environmental values, recreation opportunities and general amenity. In some parts of the catchment, water levels are a critical aspect of agricultural production and the likelihood of residential flooding. Of particular importance are implications arising from:

- the possible use of Marbellup Brook as a source of drinking water for Albany, and
- the ecological water requirements of Torbay Inlet.

3. Drainage management

Controlling floods and surface water in the lower catchment has always been a challenge for farmers. This challenge is even greater today because of the different needs of farmers, residents, tourism operators and the local fishing industry. A compromise is needed that addresses these needs while providing benefits to the environment.

4. Habitat and biodiversity management

One of the best things about living in the Torbay catchment is the feeling of being close to nature. However, many of our land uses and management practices have resulted in a decline of our native flora and fauna. To regain a sense of harmony with the natural environment we need to actively address threats to the wildlife of the area.

5. Farming systems

The existence of Cuthbert, Torbay, Elleker and Redmond owes much to the historical success of local farming enterprises. There is a strong feeling within the community for farming to remain a major land use as a driver of the local economy and as a key attraction of the local landscape. However, farming practices will need to become economically and environmentally sustainable in order to meet community expectations regarding the protection of environmental values.

6. Land use conflict

In some parts of the catchment, land use conflict exists. Planning provides an opportunity to resolve these conflicts. In working towards the achievement of a community vision, we need to ensure that the Local and State Governments understand the particular and special needs of the Torbay catchment, and coordinate planning strategies to address environmental problems or reduce environmental degradation

7. Whole of community education and communication

For the project's vision to have lasting relevance there is a need for an ongoing sharing of ideas, values and information. Education and communication is not just about making the latest scientific findings available to landholders. It is about the whole community – including government agencies, industry interest groups, community groups and individuals – making a commitment to resolve conflict through mutual respect for the legitimate needs of others.

For each issue, one or more 'community objectives' were identified, together with several sub-objectives. The objectives were identified by a working committee of the project and subsequently endorsed by the Steering Group. Community objectives will form the basis for an Annual Report Card to be sent to all catchment households. Sub-objectives will guide the selection of actions and targets, and will be used to focus ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Community objectives for each of the themes are shown in Table 1 overleaf.

Theme	Community objectives
Algal blooms and water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise algal blooms. • Maintain Marbellup Brook at a standard suitable for drinking water. • Ensure all other waterways and waterbodies are suitable for recreation, domestic use and agricultural use. • Ensure Lake Powell, Manerup Lagoon and Torbay Inlet are suitable for the survival and growth of native aquatic plants and animals.
Water quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is enough flow in Marbellup Brook to maintain ecological requirements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Lake Powell, Manerup Lagoon and Torbay Inlet are suitable for the survival and growth of native aquatic plants and animals.
Drainage management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the drainage district to best meet the needs of current land uses, future land uses, and the environment.
Habitat and biodiversity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage biodiversity by planting, replanting and protecting remnant vegetation. • Encourage biodiversity by improving in-stream habitat. • Minimise the introduction and spread of introduced weeds. • Minimise the introduction and spread of pest animal species.
Farming systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in ways that both aid the viability of farming and result in better environmental outcomes.
Land use conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a prominent role for primary production in the local economy, consistent with environmental values. • Support planning strategies that are consistent with the promotion of environmental values. • Encourage an appreciation of natural attractions of the catchment through passive recreation.
Education and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a shared vision for the waterways of Torbay Catchment. • Ensure all key stakeholders are involved in implementing the whole of catchment river restoration plan. • Increase community awareness about the values of the catchment and how to manage natural assets sustainably. • Increase active participation in implementing on the ground actions for waterways and catchment protection. • Ensure research in the catchment is responsive to community needs.

Table 1- Themes and Community objectives for Watershed Torbay.

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