



LAKE EYRE BASIN

STRATEGIC PLAN



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Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia



*And many voices such as these
Are joyful sounds for those to tell,
Who know the Bush and love it well,
With all its hidden mysteries*

*Our tales are told where campfires blaze
At midnight, when the solemn hush
Of that vast wonderland, the Bush,
Hath laid on every heart its spell.'*

'Song of the Future' A B Paterson



Lake Eyre Basin





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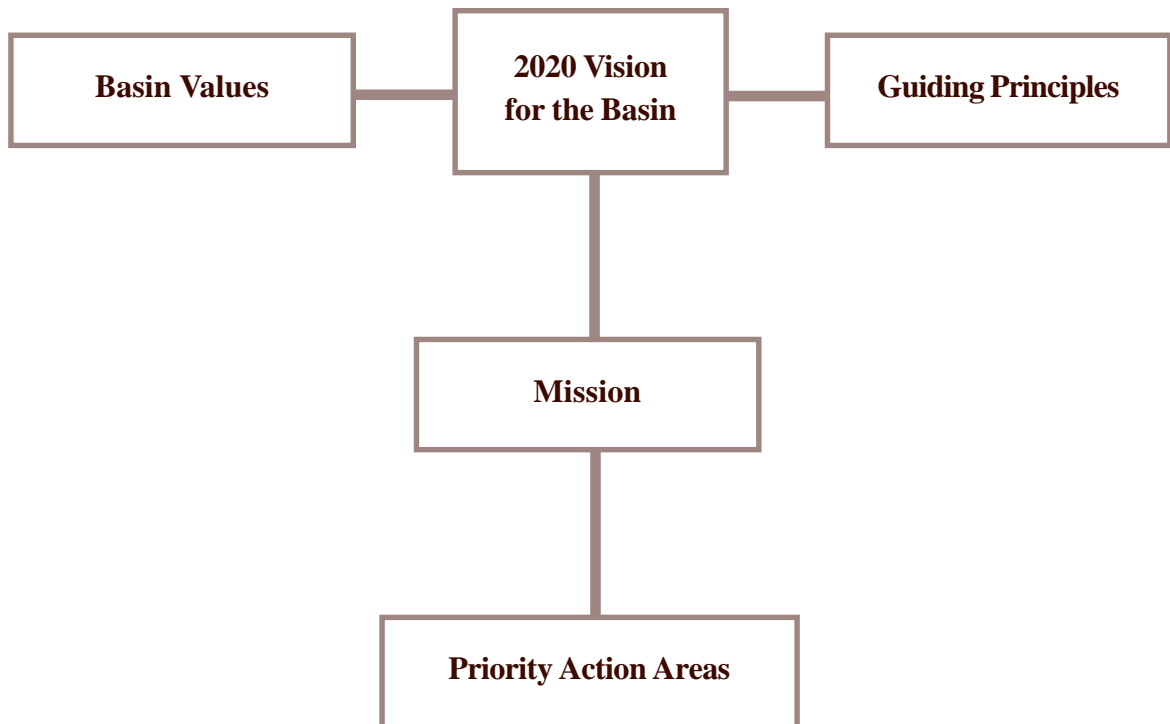
The Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group is a community driven initiative working in partnership with governments for integrated natural resource management across the Basin. It is a groundbreaking process developed by communities and stakeholders of the Lake Eyre Basin. It is working across State borders to create partnerships across a huge portion of Australia. The Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group is an advocate for the Basin and its people, not for any particular stakeholders' interests or views.

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan proposes a vision for the future of the Basin supported by a set of guiding principles and Basin-wide values. The proposed vision is a clear and simple expression of what the community might want for the Basin by the year 2020.

The vision statement for the Basin leads to a mission statement, which expresses how the vision will be realised. Priority action areas are identified from the mission and these provide specific detail on how the vision will be delivered.

The important point to note about this structure, which is summarised below, is that the vision has its origins in what the community values about the Basin and their principles for achieving it.



The intention of the strategic plan is not to continually redefine the vision but to establish one that is relevant for 10 to 20 years. The mission should be appropriate for 5 to 10 years and the actions will have a lifespan of 1 to 5 years. In this way the plan will be continually revisited and adapted as actions are completed and new ones devised.



Basin values

*Using natural resources sustainably and wisely
Conserving biodiversity
Creating economic prosperity
Respecting and using local knowledge
Valuing the outback lifestyle*

Guiding principles

*Inclusiveness
Accountability
Social equity, respect for diversity, fairness
Transparency
Lifelong learning, opportunities for
keeping pace with change*

2020 Vision for the Lake Eyre Basin

*The Lake Eyre Basin is a healthy system,
a region of high ecological integrity with
forward-looking, vibrant communities secure in a
sustainable and diverse regional economy.*

Mission

*Through community-based participation
and action we will achieve sustainable
and integrated natural resource
management outcomes.*



What do we want outcomes on?

Community consultations over the past three years have identified a number of issues that require action. These are summarised below.

There is also an ongoing need for long term and integrated planning to identify outcomes that avoid problems and protect future opportunities.

Natural resource management issues

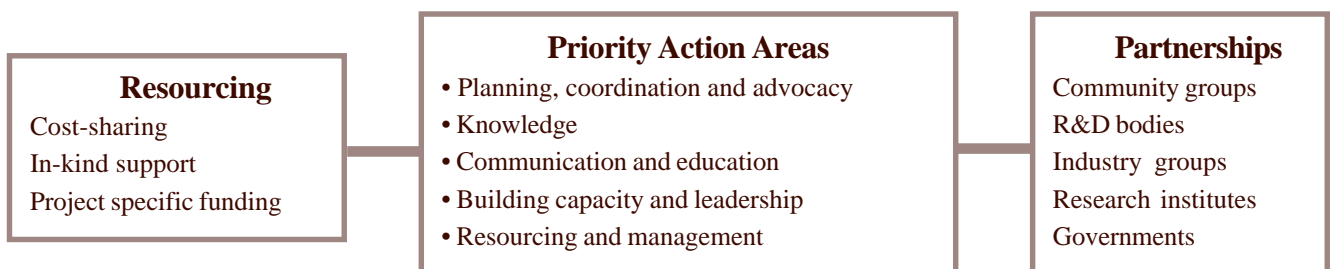
Weeds and feral animals
 Surface water management
 Total grazing pressure
 Vegetation management
 Biodiversity conservation
 Salinity
 Tourism impacts
 Chemical usage and pollution risk
 Great Artesian Basin
 Wildlife use and harvesting

Social and economic issues

Economic viability
 Diversification of enterprises
 Security of tenure
 Education and awareness
 Cultural heritage

How will these outcomes be achieved?

Priority Action Areas have been identified to address these issues. These Actions are also consistent with the objectives of the LEB Coordinating Group. Priority Action Areas are supported by strategic partnerships and appropriate resourcing arrangements, which are not an end in themselves, but are the means through which the community is able to initiate action.



IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN – PRIORITY ACTION AREAS



The following plan proposes specific actions for each of the identified priority areas based on issues identified by the community.

The role of the Coordinating Group and its strategic plan is not to carry out on-ground work itself but to create the conditions for this to occur through the priority areas – planning, resourcing, capacity building etc. In this way we will be better able to address issues such as weeds, surface water management and economic viability.

Each year Action Plans will be developed outlining specific tasks, responsibilities, time frames, funding and evaluation for selected actions in the priority areas. Every twelve months they will be reviewed. The actions will be selected taking into account the priorities and action plans of the catchment committees and Basin-wide issues.

The outcomes identified for each of the priority areas are intermediate steps along the way to the overall goal of sustainable and integrated natural resource management. Performance indicators need to be developed for the actions so that we know we are achieving our identified outcomes in the most effective way. There are many potential indicators, however establishing useful and effective performance indicators is an action in itself.

Security in the long-term persistence of the LEB initiative is crucial for realising the investment made to date and for ensuring increased involvement and investment by Basin stakeholders in the future.



Planning, coordination and advocacy

The LEBCG has a unique responsibility. It is the only community-based organisation that works across state borders and with all governments and stakeholders. This scale of involvement in planning and coordination helps avoid major problems before they arise and also helps to provide a consistent long-term and integrated approach that has community support. Integrated regional planning should minimise duplication and ensure efficient use of resources.

Outcome: Improved cooperation between organisations and individuals leading to integrated, long-term planning and management.



Action: A Basin-wide strategic planning process that links together stakeholders, organisations and governments in partnership.

Timetable: First strategic plan completed end 2000, ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG, stakeholders and governments

Category: Direct action



Action: Encourage and support regional, community-based planning.

For example:

- development of codes of practice for ecologically sustainable rangeland management
- community input into other strategic policy and planning activities (already active in this area)
- weed control programs (already active in this area)
- new business and marketing opportunities
- links to catchment and local activities (already active in this area)
- telecommunications and rural infrastructure needs
- access to benchmarking and best practice information for sustainable development

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG with specific partners

Category: Influence

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Fulfil community advisory role for the proposed Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum.

Timetable: On finalisation of Inter-governmental Agreement - ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Build on Aboriginal involvement in Basin-wide processes.

- Engage appropriate consultants to work with Aboriginal communities and organisations in the Basin to determine appropriate representation and involvement
- Contact all Aboriginal organisations with land and related interests in the Basin to promote their awareness of the LEBCG and the strategy and to encourage involvement
- Place articles in appropriate publications and electronic media to build awareness of the LEBCG
- Hold meetings in and for Aboriginal communities/settlements to ensure views are canvassed in a more comprehensive way
- Seek funding for an Aboriginal Liaison officer on the Lake Eyre Basin staff
- Promote and encourage cross-cultural awareness in the Basin
- Develop linkages and partnerships with key indigenous stakeholder agencies involved in Aboriginal land management

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG in partnership with Aboriginal communities and groups

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Build on the involvement of other catchments in the Basin-wide processes.

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Respond to issues and requests from catchment committees and regions.

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Provide Basin input to relevant national and regional policy and management plans and forums.

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Work and increase cooperative efforts with other regional natural resource management organisations.

For example:

- Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council and Advisory Committees,
- Relevant Aboriginal land management organisations (NT, SA, Qld, NSW and national)
- South West Strategy (Qld),
- Arid Areas Catchment Water Management Board (SA),
- Desert Uplands Build-up and Development Strategy Committee (Qld),
- Soil Conservation Boards (SA),
- Western Catchment Management Committee (NSW)

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Develop cooperative working partnerships between catchment groups, resource users and government agencies for research and on-ground projects.

Timetable: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Be the community voice on significant issues of concern

Timetable: Ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG, catchment committees and stakeholders

Category: Direct action



Action: Take a leadership role in actively protecting and enhancing the interests of all Basin communities with government and industry

Timetable: Ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG and catchment committees

Category: Direct action

Knowledge



Communities and governments have identified a need for access to scientific, cultural and local knowledge that helps achieve their outcomes and on which to base sound decision-making.

Outcome: Communities and policymakers using an integrated information base that is accessible, reliable and relevant and includes environmental, social and economic information about the Basin and the relationships between these factors. It will reflect different types of knowledge.



Action: Develop a database on:

- natural resource projects (past and current) in the Basin
- relevant scientific, cultural and technical experience and contact details

Timetable: Beginning 2000 with 12 months to establish and thereafter ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG (Communications officer), catchment committees and LEBIIS

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Hold or support forums such as workshops that bring together communities, researchers and policy makers for dialogue, learning and seeking alternative solutions on priority issues.

Timetable: First in 2000 and ongoing

Responsibility: All communities as appropriate

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Network research projects and people to minimise duplication and optimise the appropriate use of local knowledge in all its forms.

Timetable: Ongoing

Responsibility: All communities as appropriate

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Catalyse support and resources for a ‘State of the Basin’ report that:

- integrates existing information and local knowledge across jurisdictions and land use types
- identifies, more comprehensively, gaps in existing information
- describes the ecological, economic and social condition of the Basin including benchmarks and indicators
- stimulates further work

Timetable: Two years, beginning 2001

Responsibility: Partnership between LEBCG, state governments, industry, community and research groups

Category: Influence



Action: Produce a Lake Eyre Basin Profile, a snapshot that presents existing information at a Basin-wide level for:

- Socio-economic
- Biophysical, and
- Cultural values of the Basin.

Timetable: One year, beginning early 2000

Responsibility: Partnership between LEBCG, LEBIIS and Commonwealth agencies

Category: Direct action



Action: Initiate and support processes that bring together, collect and use local, cultural and scientific knowledge to promote sustainable practices.

Timetable: 2000 and ongoing

Responsibility: Partnership between LEBCG, catchment committees, government agencies, research and other organisations.

Category: Direct action and Influence

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Encourage the use of the best available information in decision-making and natural resource management.

Timetable: 2000 and ongoing

Responsibility: Partnership between LEBCG, catchment committees, government agencies, research and other organisations.

Category: Influence

See also catchment strategic plans

Communication and education



Improved natural resource management and effective community involvement in regional planning and management require enhanced communication and education across the Basin. Stakeholders have also identified the need to educate and inform people outside the Basin about its unique characteristics and issues.

Outcome: Increased awareness both inside and outside the Basin about the LEB, natural resource management and biodiversity conservation issues of the Basin, and methods for dealing with them.



Action: Hold a public forum every two years bringing together community, government and politicians to:

- raise and discuss new issues
- review progress
- initiate new actions

Timetable: First in 2000

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Maintain and develop the Internet website established by the LEBCG. Expected developments include:

- providing up-to-date information and links on issues, people and groups
- providing a forum for discussing issues of common interest and concern

Timetable: Started and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG (Communications officer)

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Collaborate on developing interpretative information on the Basin, its environments and people for use by tourists and locals in order to:

- raise awareness
- encourage better use of resources eg codes of conduct

Timetable: Begin by mid 2000 and thereafter ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG in partnership with appropriate industry and community groups and government agencies

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Initiate and collaborate on a pilot program that provides Lake Eyre Basin environmental and cultural education kits for schools.

Timetable: Scope pilot by mid-2000

Responsibility: LEBCG in partnership with education providers and users

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans

Building capacity and leadership

The LEBCG will support people to expand their own and others capacity to participate in decision-making. Effective participation requires ability to:

- find acceptable solutions
- manage conflict
- network
- interpret complex information
- understand public and private sector institutions

The LEBCG community processes encourage and facilitate lifelong learning through improved training and work opportunities. As the primary community-based consultative forum, the LEBCG will lead by example and encourage others to be leaders.

Outcome: Increased capacity of a broader cross-section of the LEB community to participate in effective decision-making and sustainable management practices.



Actions: Provide opportunities for all community committee members to participate in training workshops, conferences and other relevant forums

Timing: Started and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG with specific partners

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Actions: Build capacity for more productive working relationships between government officers and resource users

Timing: Started and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG and partners

Category: Influence



Actions: Work with, and build links between, community groups (eg Landcare, catchment management, Aboriginal organisations) to share knowledge and experience, and to build capacity.

Timing: Started and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG and partners

Category: Direct action

Resourcing and management

As a new and innovative organisation we are working with stakeholders and governments to create a model for partnerships in integrated natural resource management. The LEBCG will establish resourcing arrangements that protect the investment of time, resources and goodwill already made in this process and that enable the fruition of this investment in outcomes. Security in the long-term persistence of the LEB initiative is crucial for realising the investment made to date and for ensuring increased involvement and investment by Basin stakeholders in the future.

Outcome: Expanded investment in the LEB through increased numbers and diversity of partnerships. This will be reflected in greater numbers of on-ground and research projects.



Action: Shift core funding of organisation from reliance upon NHT.

Timetable: 2000/2001

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Actions: Work to attract investment and funding for initiatives that benefit the whole community and promote sustainable practices

Timing: Commenced and ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG and partners

Category: Influence

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Establish a funding arrangement with South Australia, Queensland and Commonwealth Governments for the community advisory role.

Timetable: 2000

Responsibility: LEBCG and governments

Category: Direct action



Action: Establish partnerships between community, industry, governments and other organisations to fund and carry out projects.

Timetable: Ongoing

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action

See also catchment strategic plans



Action: Develop a ten year business plan for the LEBCG that promotes the values of the Basin and the group as a regional organisation with an expanded capacity to contribute to economic, social and ecological initiatives within the Basin.

Timetable: Finalised 2001

Responsibility: LEBCG

Category: Direct action



Action: Develop a framework for monitoring and reporting on Priority Action Areas, including establishing further appropriate performance indicators for measuring outcomes.

Timetable: Finalised by mid - 2001

Responsibility: LEBCG and consultant

Category: Direct action