

SOUTHERN RIVERS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY: LANDCARE GROUPS BENCHMARKING SURVEY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report was to benchmark the capacity of Landcare groups; the extent of engagement of Landcare groups in NRM and CMA activities; and the beliefs of Landcare groups about the effectiveness of the Southern Rivers CMA and community engagement in NRM.

Although the project provides a basis for developing initiatives in relation to increasing the capacity and effectiveness of Landcare groups, the project focuses on benchmarking these attributes and is not an explanatory study which seeks to identify and explain the underlying causes or determinants of Landcare capacity or effectiveness. As the first in a series of future benchmarking studies, this project provides the basis for future comparisons and the assessment of change across time.

A questionnaire was distributed by Southern Rivers CMA community support officers to Landcare groups as an Acrobat form, which when completed was automatically returned to the consultants. The survey was undertaken in February and March 2008 and completed forms were returned from 33 Landcare groups.

Landcare group characteristics

It was found that 42% of Landcare groups had been operating for between 11 and 15 years, with 13 years being the average years of operation for a Landcare group.

Across all Landcare groups, 43% had less than 15 active members. In addition, a third of all Landcare groups considered themselves not active or to have low activity levels; a third indicated they had moderate activity levels and an additional third indicated they had high activity levels.

Landcare groups were asked to identify threats to their group and the groups' ability to meet their objectives. The most common threat, identified by 58% of Landcare groups focussed on issues associated with their membership and in particular the inability to attract new volunteers and the ageing of the existing membership. Additional threats included funding and resources, which included the potential loss of funding and the consistency in obtaining funds (42%); and community characteristics, which included apathy towards Landcare and NRM issues and the lack of community support (32%).

Of the NRM issues being addressed by Landcare groups, 87% were currently addressing issues related to the management of weeds and a further 40% were addressing issues related to erosion.

Relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA

Of the 33 Landcare groups, only one indicated they had had no contact or communication with the CMA in the last 12 months. Of those Landcare groups who had contact with the CMA in the last 12 months, the two most common types of contact with the CMA included attending a meeting or event organised by the CMA (87%) and gaining advice or assistance from CMA staff (84%).

Eighty-four percent of Landcare groups believed they had an effective relationship with the CMA, which represented a marginal improvement over two years ago where 78% of Landcare groups believed they had an effective relationship with the CMA.

The analysis indicated a very positive relationship between Landcare groups and the Southern Rivers CMA, where the majority of Landcare groups believed that:

- The CMA took the views of Landcare groups into account in decision making;
- Landcare groups had a high level of trust in the CMA;
- There had been effective communication between the CMA and Landcare groups;
- The CMA provided regional leadership in relation to NRM; and
- The CMA had an ongoing commitment to maintaining relationships with Landcare groups

Knowledge of the Southern Rivers CMA

All respondents were asked to consider all the members of their Landcare group and judge how much knowledge their membership had of the Southern Rivers CMA. Amongst Landcare groups, 72% indicated their membership had average or below average knowledge of the CMA.

Approximately 60% of Landcare groups also indicate they had a low understanding of 'regional NRM process undertaken by the CMA, including plan development, investment strategies, implementation and on-ground actions'.

In addition there was considerable variability amongst Landcare groups in their understanding of the role of the CMA, with a third of all Landcare groups each indicating a low, moderate or high understanding of the role of the CMA.

Southern Rivers CMA support

Amongst all Landcare groups, 94% or 31 of the 33 groups, indicated that in the last 12 months the Southern Rivers CMA had provided support to their Landcare group.

Of those Landcare groups that had received support, support was provided primarily by community support officers (90%) and project officers (60%), with the majority of Landcare groups indicating the type and level of support provided to be either 'good' or 'very good'.

Amongst Landcare groups who had received support from the CMA, the three most valuable areas of CMA support were identified as (i) access to technical support and advice; (ii) training opportunities; and (iii) assistance in obtaining funding.

When asked, 94% of Landcare groups indicated they would need support or additional support from the CMA in the next 12 months, with the three most common areas of additional support being (i) assistance in obtaining funding; (ii) access to technical support and advice; and (iii) project or strategic planning assistance.

Beliefs about community engagement

The majority of Landcare groups believed the CMA had:

- a well understood process for engaging with the community;
- a more opportunistic rather than strategic approach to engaging with the community; and
- had supported sufficient activities for community engagement.

There were mixed views in relation to the level of participation by the community in CMA activities, with 57% of Landcare groups indicating participation was moderate or higher and 43% indicating participation was low.

Funding and incentives for NRM

Across all Landcare groups, 78% indicated that within the last two years their group had received funding for NRM with 86% also indicating they had had moderate or greater success in obtaining external funds. However, Landcare groups varied in terms of their knowledge of grants and incentives provided for NRM, with 30% of Landcare groups indicating they had low knowledge of NRM grants and incentives.

Effectiveness of the Southern Rivers CMA

Landcare groups believed the CMA was somewhat successful in progressing towards the achievement of NRM targets and that their Landcare group had a successful relationship with the CMA.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA) is one of 13 regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies in NSW. The CMAs were established in 2004 and each CMA has developed a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) and Investment Strategies to support the management of natural resources and achievement of NRM targets within each region.

In achieving the NRM targets as identified in the CAP, capacity building and engagement are integral activities which need to be undertaken to *enable* the achievement of core NRM targets and objectives. These enabling activities, which lead to intermediate outcomes within the program logic of NRM, include for example increasing community awareness and knowledge of NRM issues and increased participation and involvement in NRM activities. By increasing the capacity and involvement of landholders, the community and key stakeholders in NRM, the greater the likelihood that the resource condition targets, as identified in the CAP are able to be achieved.

This project provides the basis for benchmarking the existing capacity of Landcare groups, their relationship with the SRCMA and their involvement in NRM and will form a reference point for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of Landcare groups over the life of this and future CAPs.

2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this project was to benchmark the capacity of Landcare groups to achieve their objectives; the engagement of Landcare groups in NRM and CMA activities; and their beliefs about the effectiveness of the SRCMA and community engagement in NRM.

The objectives of the study was to allow benchmarking of the Community and Partnerships Target¹ which stated that:

“By 2016 communities of the Southern Rivers region are willing and adequately supported to actively engage in natural resource management”

Furthermore, this benchmarking project specifically addresses three of the community and partnership management targets, which state that:

C1: Engagement: From 2006 the willingness of communities to engage in NRM and the quality of that engagement will be enhanced, with the number of people working collaboratively maintained or increased.

C2. Community Support: From 2006 the support system that resources local communities to contribute to natural resource management will be improved.

C4: Capacity and Practices: By 2016 there will be an increase in community awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to NRM and an increase in the adoption of practices that improve NRM outcomes

Although the project provides a basis for developing initiatives in relation to increasing the capacity and effectiveness of Landcare groups, the project focuses on benchmarking these attributes and is not an explanatory study which seeks to identify and explain the underlying causes or determinants of Landcare capacity or effectiveness. As the first in a series of future

¹ Southern Rivers CMA (2006). *Catchment action plan*. Southern Rivers CMA, Wollongong, NSW.

benchmarking studies, this project provides the basis for future comparisons and the assessment of change across time.

3 METHODOLOGY

There were two core components to the project methodology which included (i) the design of the questionnaire and (ii) the survey of Landcare groups.

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was based on issues as identified and discussed in a project workshops with CMA staff and other stakeholders and through consultation with individual staff and Landcare members. The questionnaire was designed so that it could be self completed. Furthermore the questionnaire consisted primarily of structured and close ended questions, which because they are more quantitative, are more suited to a monitoring program where comparisons and trends can be examined across time.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) included questions which focussed on:

1. Southern Rivers CMA support to Landcare groups;
2. NRM funding and incentives to Landcare groups;
3. Landcare group relationships with the Southern Rivers CMA;
4. Beliefs about community engagement;
5. Effectiveness of the Southern Rivers CMA; and
6. Characteristics of Landcare groups.

3.2 Survey Sampling

The sampling frame consisted of all Landcare groups within the Southern Rivers NRM region².

The questionnaire was distributed by Southern Rivers CMA community support officers to Landcare groups as an Acrobat form which enabled it to be emailed as an attachment. The form was completed using Acrobat software and was automatically returned as an Acrobat form to the consultants once completed³.

The survey was undertaken in February and March 2008 and completed forms were returned from 33 Landcare groups.

² CMA staff estimated the number of Landcare groups in the region to be approximately 100, which included groups that were both active and inactive.

³ In some instance Landcare groups printed and completed the form and returned it in the mail to the CMA

4 LANDCARE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses from Landcare groups within each Landcare district, with 40% returned questionnaires being from the Upper Shoalhaven and Upper Snowy Landcare districts.

Table 1. "In which Landcare district are you located?"

Response	Count	Percent
Upper Shoalhaven	6	20.0
Upper Snowy	6	20.0
Eurobodalla	5	16.7
Far South Coast	5	16.7
Snowy Interstate	4	13.3
Illawarra	2	6.7
Shoalhaven	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Note: Three Landcare groups did not identify the Landcare district in which they were located.

Source: EBC (2008)

Forty-two percent of Landcare groups had been in operation for between 11 and 15 years, with the average years operation for a Landcare group being 12.8 years (Table 2).

Table 2. "How long has your group been in operation?"

Years	Count	Percent
1-5	5	20.8
6-10	4	16.7
11-15	10	41.7
16-20	4	16.7
21+	1	4.2
Mean (years)	12.8	
Total	24	100.0

Note: Nine Landcare groups did not identify the number of years they had been in operation

Source: EBC (2008)

Table 3 shows that 43% of all Landcare groups have less than 15 active members, with 33% having between 16 and 20 active members.

Table 3. "About how many active members would you say there are in your Landcare group"

Number of active members	Count	Percent
0	3	10.0
1-5	3	10.0
6-10	3	10.0
11-15	4	13.3
16-20	10	33.3
21-25	1	3.3
26-30	2	6.6
31+	4	13.3
Mean (number)	17.9	
Total	30	100.0

Note: Three Landcare groups did not identify how many active members they had.

Source: EBC (2008)

Figure 1 shows the current activity level of Landcare groups, where approximately a third of all Landcare groups are not active or have low activity levels; a third have moderate activity levels and an additional third have high activity levels. The current activity levels within Landcare groups is similar to the levels two years ago.

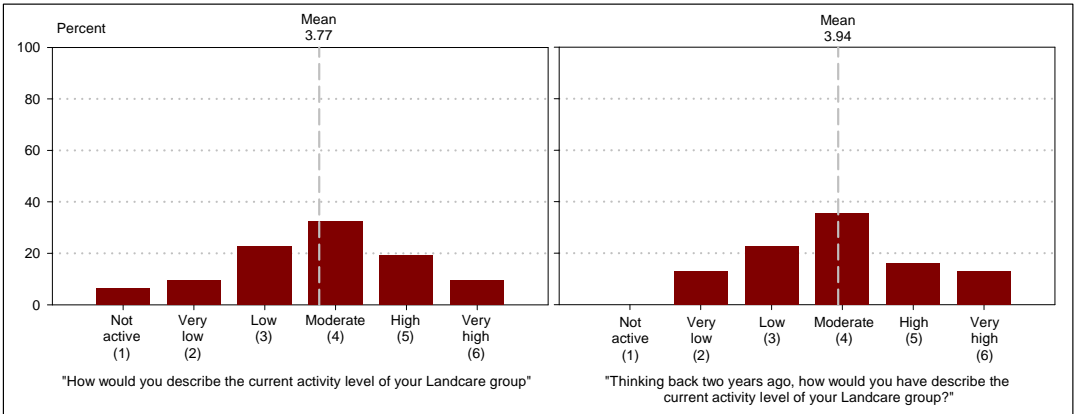


Figure 1. Activity levels of Landcare groups

Table 4 shows the common threats to Landcare groups and their ability to meet their objectives. The most common threat, identified by 58% of Landcare groups focussed on issues associated with their membership and in particular the inability to attract new volunteers and the ageing of the existing membership.

Additional threats as shown in Table 4 included funding and resources, which included the potential loss of funding and the consistency in obtaining funds (42%); and characteristics of the community, including apathy towards Landcare and NRM issues and the lack of community support (32%).

Table 4. "If you were to list the most common threats to your Landcare group and its ability to meet its objectives, what would they be?"

Response	Count	Percent
Membership characteristics		
Lack of volunteers (inc. younger volunteers)	11	35.5
Ageing membership	4	12.9
Burn out of members	2	6.5
A real lack of understanding of the issues amongst members	1	3.2
Total	18	58.1
Funding and resources		
Funding (loss off, consistency)	12	38.7
External costs (insurance, vehicle registration etc)	1	3.2
Total	13	41.9
Community characteristics		
Apathy in community	6	19.4
Lack community support	3	9.7
Ageing of rural population	1	3.2
Total	10	32.3
Landcare group characteristics		
Increase in paperwork for voluntary office bearers	2	6.5
Lack of focus on directions and objectives	1	3.2
Lack of leadership	1	3.2
Loss of grass roots directed system (bottom up)	1	3.2
Maintaining lines of communication and enthusiasm from office bearers	1	3.2
Tasks beyond our capacity	1	3.2
Threat of increased legal implications for executive	1	3.2
Total	8	25.8
Relationship with State or Local Government		
Loss or reduced support from Government	3	9.7
Lack of cooperation from local councils	3	9.7
Loss of support from CMA	1	3.2
Total	7	22.6
Landholder characteristics		
Drought and poor grazing returns	1	3.2
How to get the 'cynical' or 'What's in it for me' landholder	1	3.2
Distance to travel	1	3.2
Poor landholder attitudes	1	3.2
Total	4	12.9
Control of weeds	6	19.4
Lack of time	1	3.2
Total	31	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.
Source: EBC (2008)

In terms of the NRM issues being addressed by Landcare groups, 87% of Landcare groups were currently addressing issues related to the management of weeds and a further 40% were addressing issues related to erosion and the control of erosion (Table 5).

Table 5. “What are the major natural resource management issues your Landcare group is currently addressing?”

Response	Count	Percent
Weed management	26	86.7
Erosion control	12	40.0
Grazing management	6	20.0
Revegetation	6	20.0
Water and the environment	4	13.3
Rehabilitation projects	3	10.0
Riparian protection	3	10.0
Biodiversity	2	6.7
Change management	1	3.3
Climate change	1	3.3
Establishment of wind breaks as livestock shelters	1	3.3
Estuary management	1	3.3
Expanding vegetation corridors	1	3.3
Fauna surveys	1	3.3
Feral animals	1	3.3
Lobbying government to control development	1	3.3
Management and maintenance of completed projects	1	3.3
Pedestrian access to beaches	1	3.3
Perennial pastures and carbon sequestration	1	3.3
Planning and development to take account of waterways	1	3.3
Urban/bushland interface impacts	1	3.3
Vegetation management	1	3.3
Weeds	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.

Source: EBC (2008)

5 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

When completing questions about the Landcare groups' relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA, all respondents were asked to firstly review a list of CMA staff in order to ensure they understood which of those staff with whom they had contact with were from the CMA. Landcare groups have contact with a number of catchment officers, project officers and other individuals from Government and non-Government organisations, including the Southern Rivers CMA; and this initial procedure enabled Landcare respondents to clearly identify with of those individuals were from the Southern Rivers CMA.

Of the 33 Landcare groups that were interviewed, only one Landcare group indicated they had had no contact or communication with the CMA in the last 12 months.

Of those Landcare groups who had contact with the CMA in the last 12 months, the type of contact they reported with the CMA is shown in Table 6. The two most common types of contact with the CMA included attending a meeting or event organised by the CMA (87%) and gaining advice of assistance from CMA staff (84%).

Table 6. "In the last 12 months has your organisation had any contact or communication with the Southern Rivers CMA?"

Response	Count	Percent
Attended a meeting or event organised by the CMA	27	87.1
Gained advice or assistance from CMA staff	26	83.9
Received written information from the CMA	23	74.2
Obtained funding or incentives through the CMA	19	61.3
Applied for funding or incentives through the CMA	17	54.8
Other type of contact or communication	2	6.5
Total	22	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.

Source: EBC (2008)

Figure 2 shows that 84% of Landcare groups believed they had an effective relationship with the CMA. This also represents a marginal improvement over two years ago where 78% of Landcare groups believed they had an effective relationship with the CMA.

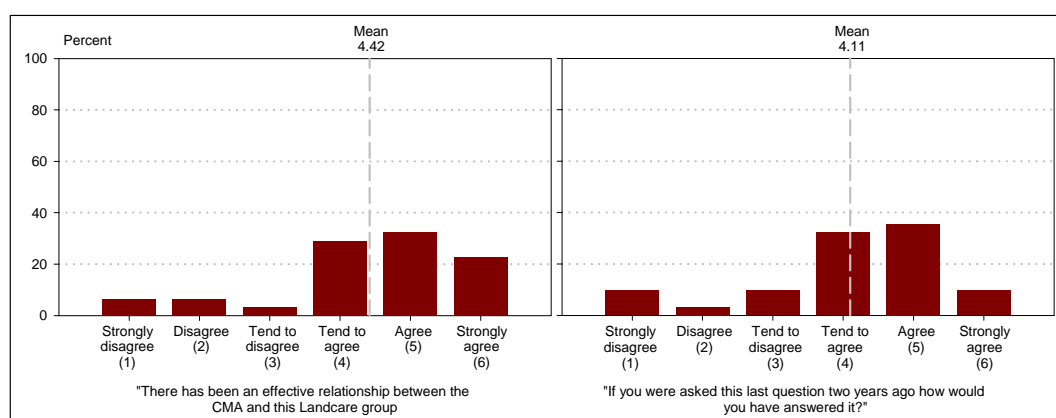


Figure 2. Effectiveness of the relationship with CMA

The quality of the relationship between Landcare groups and the Southern Rivers CMA is also shown in Figure 3. These graphs show a very positive relationship between Landcare and the Southern Rivers CMA, where the majority of Landcare groups believed that:

- The CMA takes the views of the Landcare groups into account in decision making;
- Landcare groups have a high level of trust in the CMA;
- There has been effective communication between the CMA and Landcare groups;
- The CMA provides regional leadership in relation to NRM; and
- Landcare groups believe the CMA has an ongoing commitment to maintaining its relationship with Landcare groups

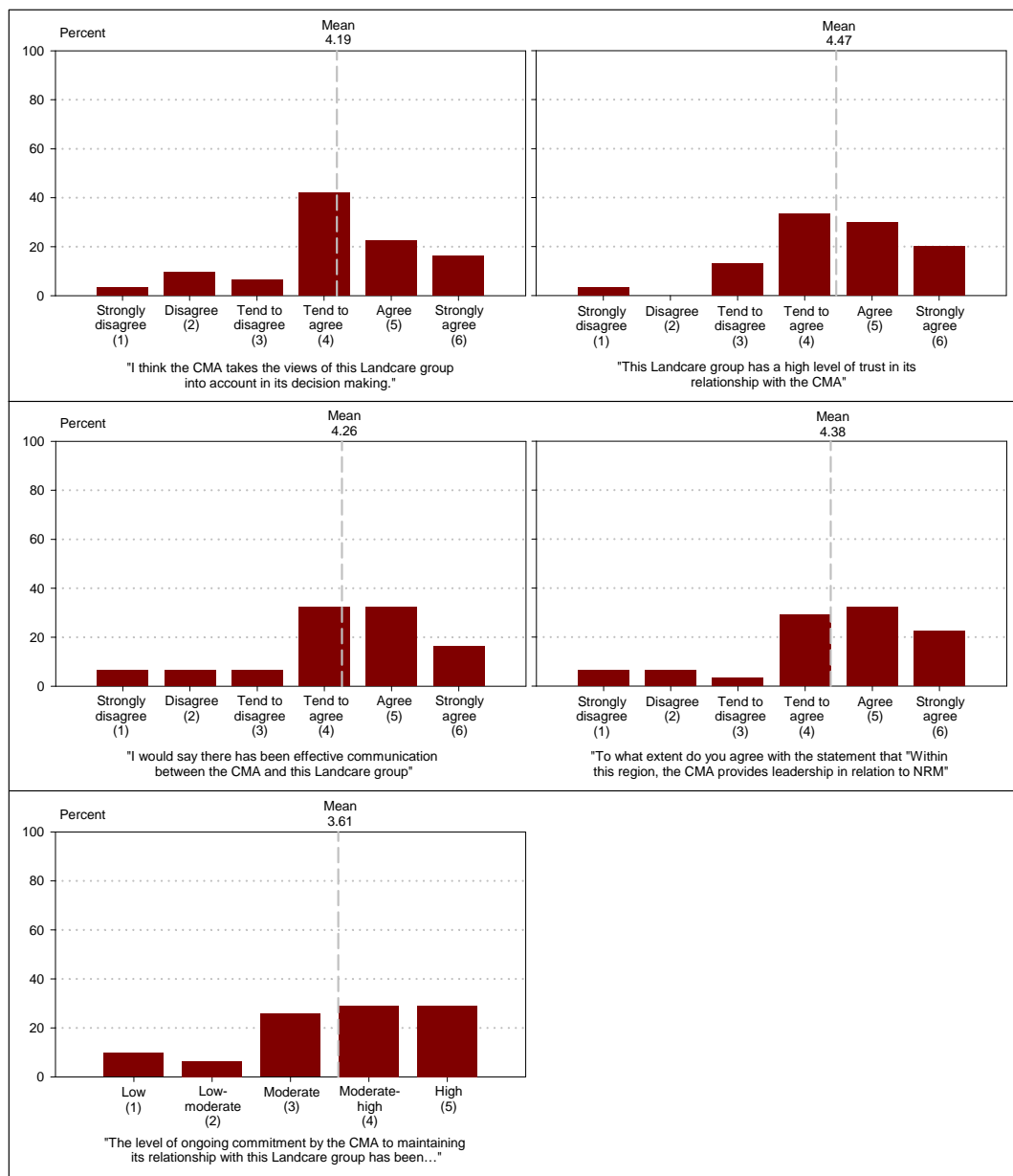


Figure 3. Landcare group relationships with the CMA

6 KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

Each respondent was asked to consider all the members of their Landcare group and judge how much knowledge their membership would have on average of the Southern Rivers CMA. Figure 4 shows knowledge of the CMA amongst Landcare members to be slightly below average, with 72% of Landcare groups indicating their membership had average or below average knowledge of the CMA.

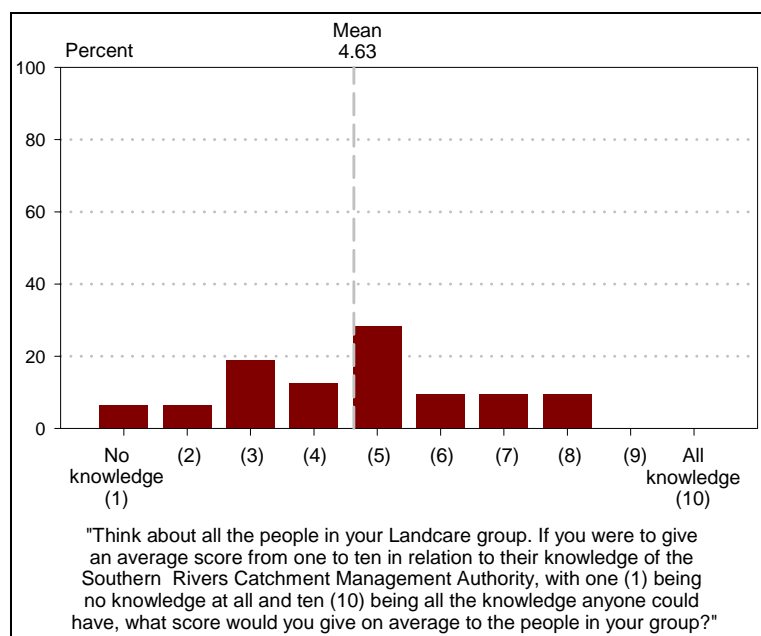


Figure 4. Knowledge of the CMA

Figure 5 also confirms the information presented in Figure 4, with Landcare groups split three ways between those with a low, moderate and high understanding of the role of the CMA.

Figure 5 also shows that approximately 60% of Landcare groups indicate they have a low understanding of 'regional NRM process undertaken by the CMA, including plan development, investment strategies, implementation and on-ground actions'.

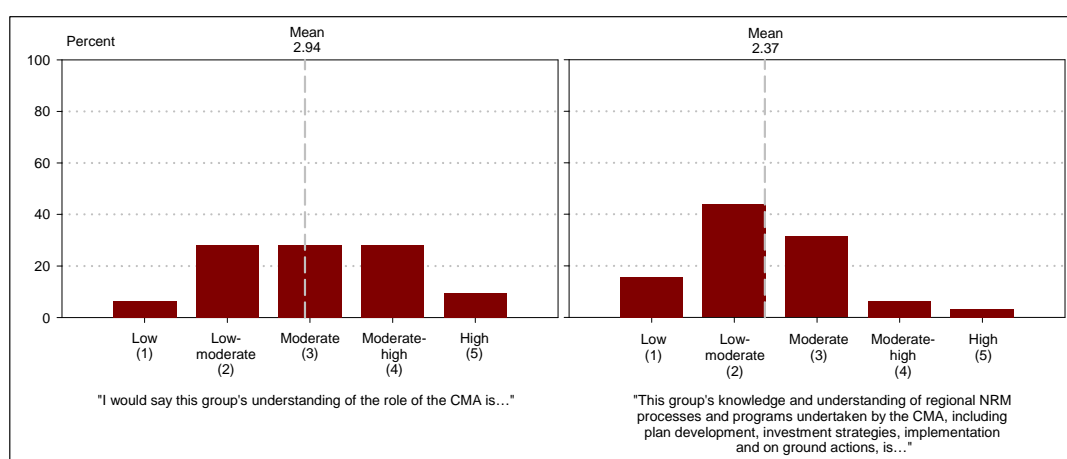


Figure 5. Knowledge of the role of the CMA

7 SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA SUPPORT

Amongst all Landcare groups, 94% or 31 of the 33 groups, indicated that in the last 12 months the Southern Rivers CMA had provided support to their Landcare group.

Amongst those Landcare groups that had received support (Table 7), support was provided primarily by community support officers (90%) and project officers (60%).

Table 7. "Using the list of staff on the back page, what type of staff have you had support from?"

Response	Count	Percent
Community support officers	27	90.0
Project officers	18	60.0
Catchment officers	14	46.7
Other staff	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns. Respondents referred to a list of CMA staff included in the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Source: EBC (2008)

Figure 6 shows that the majority of Landcare groups believed the type and level of support provided by the CMA to be either 'good' or 'very good'.

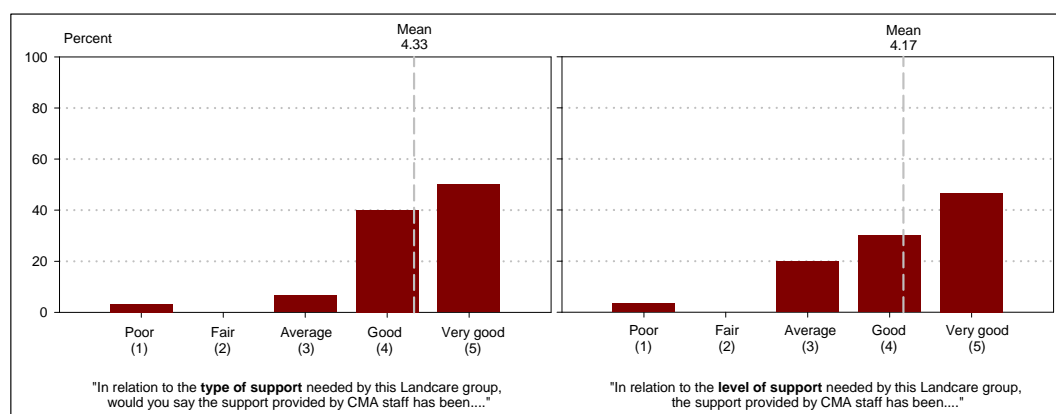


Figure 6. CMA support to Landcare groups

Amongst Landcare groups who had received support from the CMA (Table 8), the three most valuable areas of CMA support were identified as (i) access to technical support and advice; (ii) training opportunities; and (iii) assistance in obtaining funding.

Table 8. "The support provided by CMA staff which our Landcare group has valued includes..."

Response	Count	Percent
Access to technical support and advice	21	70.0
Training opportunities	21	70.0
Assistance in obtaining funding	20	66.7
Project or strategic planning assistance	17	56.7
Help and support in providing local Landcare awards, dinners etc	10	33.3
Help in developing partnerships with others	9	30.0
None of the support particularly valued	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.

Source: EBC (2008)

When asked, 94% or 31 of the 33 Landcare groups indicated they would need support or additional support from the CMA in the next 12 months. As shown in Table 9, the three most common areas of additional support included (i) assistance in obtaining funding; (ii) access to technical support and advice; and (iii) project or strategic planning assistance.

Table 9. “What type of support or additional support would you like from the CMA [in the next 12 months]. Would it include....”

Response	Count	Percent
Assistance in obtaining funding	22	71.0
Access to technical support and advice	21	67.7
Project or strategic planning assistance	20	64.5
Help in developing partnerships with others	19	61.3
Training opportunities	17	54.8
Help and support in providing local Landcare awards, dinners etc	7	22.6
Other support needs	6	19.4
Total	31	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.

Source: EBC (2008)

Table 10 provides a more detailed description under each of the headings identified in Table 9, of the specific type of support required in the next 12 months.

Table 10. Descriptions of the specific type of support required

Response	Count	Percent
Assistance in obtaining funding		
Assistance in applying for funds (funding applications)	6	18.2
Funding for weed control	4	12.1
Information about available funding sources	4	12.1
Funding for fencing	3	9.1
Funding for seed collecting and plants	2	6.1
Funding for CSOs and Project Officer in Cooma	1	3.0
More paid assistance	1	3.0
Provision of conference fees, travel cost where applicable	1	3.0
Help in developing partnerships with others		
Coordination with Local Government/Shires	4	12.1
Co-ordination and interaction with other groups and associations	3	9.1
Coordination and interaction amongst Landcare groups	3	9.1
Coordinated weed management	2	6.1
Working better with rural landholders	2	6.1
Advice on relevant conferences/consultations	1	3.0
Continuation of feral pig project with the Braidwood RLPB	1	3.0
Explaining Landcare to others	1	3.0
Help getting Landcare working in our area	1	3.0
Project or strategic planning assistance		
Assessing the funds required for tasks	1	3.0
Assistance with administrative responsibilities	1	3.0
Assistance with pasture identification and landscape planning	1	3.0
Continuation of the Braidwood Granites revegetation project	1	3.0
Developing a catchment strategy or plan	1	3.0
Encouraging member participation, submissions of EOIs	1	3.0
Establish a central national weeds body and weeds research	1	3.0
Improved grassland management	1	3.0
Need information and encouragement from CMA staff on new projects	1	3.0
New projects for waterways protection in the Tuross estuary	1	3.0
Plan coordinated activities within Bomaderry Creek catchment	1	3.0
Prioritising activities	1	3.0
Project management and auditing	1	3.0
Repair Myack Creek	1	3.0
Technical advice on methods, techniques and materials etc	1	3.0

...Continued

Table 10. Descriptions of the specific type of support required (*continued*)

Response	Count	Percent
Access to technical support and advice		
Advice on new weed threats and control measures.	5	15.2
Plant identification (botanical knowledge)	2	6.1
Advice on climate-change affecting coast & estuaries	1	3.0
Advice on legislation controlling development threatening catchments	1	3.0
Assistance with mapping data collection and monitoring	1	3.0
Best way to control pedestrian access to beach	1	3.0
Carbon sequestration opportunities for grasslands	1	3.0
Explaining Landcare to the community	1	3.0
Information on latest proven techniques for projects	1	3.0
Ongoing maintenance of our Landcare project at Josh's Beach	1	3.0
Production and distribution of 'Upper Snowy Landcare News' newsletter	1	3.0
Riparian corridor restoration	1	3.0
Shelter belt design	1	3.0
Support in identifying land management issues relevant to their properties	1	3.0
Technical advice on how to plant/protect E. Viminalis on riverbank	1	3.0
Wetland management and water quality monitoring	1	3.0
Training opportunities		
Demonstration of weed control methods	4	12.1
Native grasslands management (inc. identification)	3	9.1
First aid	3	9.1
Chemical handling	2	6.1
Bush regeneration skills	1	3.0
Chain saw training	1	3.0
Continue to provide information at field days	1	3.0
Erosion control techniques	1	3.0
Feral animal control	1	3.0
Financial control of projects	1	3.0
Mentoring skills for project officers	1	3.0
Planting and caring for trees	1	3.0
Protecting water quality	1	3.0
Reforestation methods	1	3.0
Soil improvement	1	3.0
Training in wetland management	1	3.0
Help and support in providing local Landcare awards, dinners and events		
Additional support (people and funds) to increase the number of field days	1	3.0
Annual dinner is quite a good night	1	3.0
Assistance with annual social events should be continued on a regional basis	1	3.0
Encouragement of volunteer workers by recognition	1	3.0
Information distribution (events, meetings and promotions)	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.
Source: EBC (2008)

8 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

Landcare groups' beliefs about the effectiveness of the Southern Rivers CMA were assessed through understanding (i) how successful they believed the CMA was in progressing towards the achievement of its NRM targets and (ii) how successful the relationship was between the CMA and their Landcare group.

Figure 7 shows that Landcare groups believed the CMA was somewhat successful in progressing towards the achievement of NRM targets and that their Landcare group had a successful relationship with the CMA.

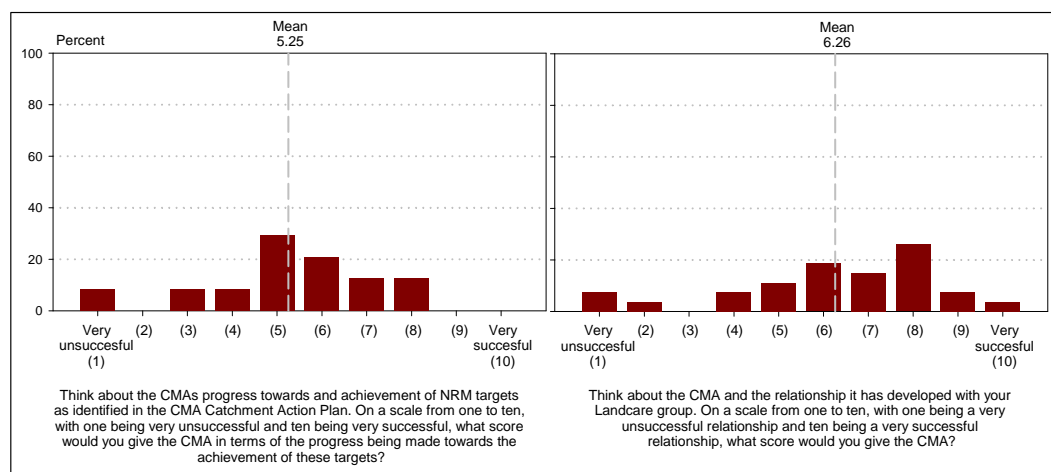


Figure 7. Effectiveness of the Southern Rivers CMA

9 BELIEFS ABOUT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As shown in Figure 8, the majority of Landcare groups believed⁴ the CMA had:

- a well understood process for engaging with the community;
- a more opportunistic rather than strategic approach to engaging with the community; and
- had supported sufficient activities for community engagement.

As is also evident in Figure 8 there were mixed views in relation to the level of participation by the community in CMA activities, with 57% of Landcare groups indicating participation was moderate or higher and 43% indicating community participation was low.

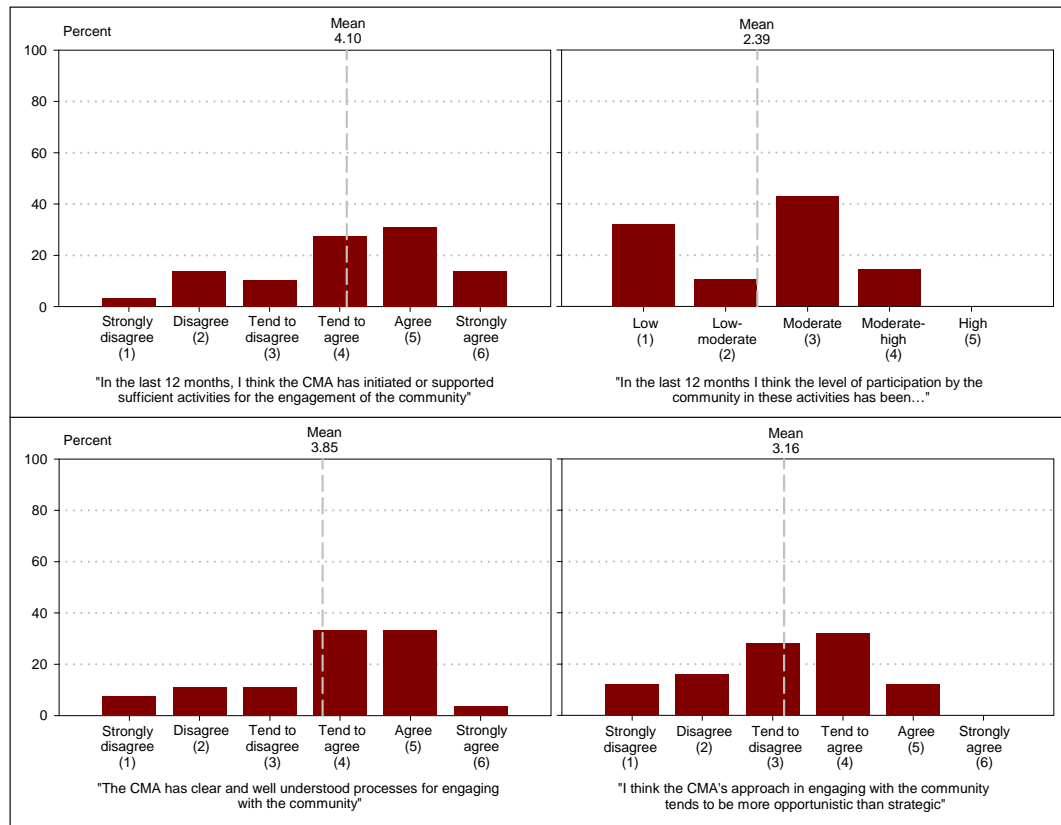


Figure 8. Beliefs about community engagement

⁴ Respondents were informed that the term 'community' in the questions referred to residents, landholders, organisations and groups in the region.

10 FUNDING AND INCENTIVES FOR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Across all Landcare groups, 78% indicated that within the last two years their group had received funding for NRM. Table 11 shows the range of activities for which funding was obtained.

Table 11. "What was the NRM funding for....?"

Response	Count	Percent
Riparian works/management	9	45.0
Weed management and control	5	25.0
Revegetation/tree planting	3	15.0
Management plan/strategic planning	2	10.0
Construction of walkways	2	10.0
Erosion control	2	10.0
Pest animal control	2	10.0
Bush regenerator technical support	1	5.0
Provision of newsletters	1	5.0
Small equipment grant	1	5.0
Ongoing granites program bush incentives	1	5.0
Training in the identification and function of wetland plants	1	5.0
Travelling environmental education stall	1	5.0
Fencing	1	5.0
Water infrastructure	1	5.0
Drought recovery - protecting land, water and biodiversity	1	5.0
Threatened species assessment	1	5.0
Foreshore works	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: EBC (2008)

Figure 9 shows that in the last two years, 86% of Landcare groups indicated they had had moderate or greater success in obtaining external funds. However, Figure 9 also shows some diversity in the knowledge Landcare groups have of grants and incentives provided for NRM, with 30% of Landcare groups indicating they had low knowledge of NRM grants and incentives.

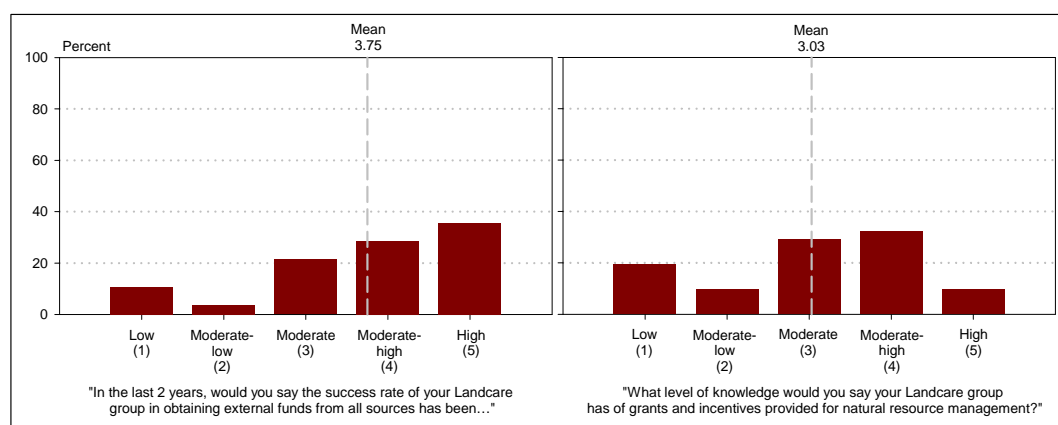


Figure 9. Funding for natural resource management

Appendix A
Landcare Questionnaire

(Some minor modification to the format of the questionnaire as presented in Appendix A may have occurred as the questionnaire was distributed as an Acrobat form)



SOUTHERN RIVERS NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT (NRM) BENCHMARK SURVEY:
LANDCARE SURVEY

This survey, which includes all Landcare groups within the Southern Rivers CMA region, is being undertaken for the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority. The objective of the survey is to provide a baseline against which to monitor changes in the level of engagement and support provided by the CMA over time. The questionnaire includes an assessment of:

- Your group's interaction and knowledge of the CMA;
- Support provided by the CMA to your Landcare group
- Quality of partnerships and relationships; and
- Community engagement; and
- The effectiveness of the CMA

The questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete and should be completed by someone who is knowledgeable of the Landcare group, the views of its members and its relationship with the CMA. Try and answer all questions. However, there maybe some questions which you feel you cannot answer. In this case leave the question blank.

If you require assistance please contact your local Landcare Coordinator or Community Support Officer whose details can be found on the email accompanying this form.

You can complete this as an Adobe Acrobat form and submit it via email once completed.

If you do not have Acrobat, print and complete the form. Return it by fax to the CMA (02 4224 9669) or post to the CMA at Sothern Rivers CMA, PO Box 3095, Wollongong East, NSW 2520.

The completed questionnaire should be submitted by **Friday the 29th of February**.

READ THIS FIRST! - THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

The Southern Rivers CMA has offices in Bateman's Bay, Bega, Braidwood, Cooma, Nowra and Wollongong. CMA staff from these offices provide support to individual landholders, organisations and groups throughout the region. On the last page of this questionnaire you will find a list of CMA staff from the different offices. Before you complete this questionnaire take some time to review the list of CMA staff you are familiar with. Note that the list includes several Community Support Officers who are employed by partner organisations through funding from the CMA.

YOUR LANDCARE GROUP AND THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

1. In the last 12 months has your Landcare group had any contact or communication with the CMA?

☐ No

☐ Yes...what type of contact or communication has occurred (*You may tick more than one*)

☐ Attended a meeting or event organised by the CMA

☐ Gained advice or assistance from CMA staff

☐ Applied for funding or incentives through the CMA

☐ Obtained funding or incentives through the CMA

☐ Received written information from the CMA

Describe any other type of contact _____

2. Think about all the people in your Landcare group. If you were to give an average score from one (1) to ten (10) in relation to their knowledge of the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, with one (1) being no knowledge at all and ten (10) being all the knowledge anyone could have, what score would you give on average to the people in your group?

Score _____

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA TO YOUR LANDCARE GROUP

3. Look at the list of CMA staff on the back page of this questionnaire.

In the last 12 months has your Landcare group had support from any of the CMA staff identified on this list?

☐ Yes

☐ No → Go to Question 8

4. Again using the list of staff on the back page, what type of staff have you had support from?
(*You may tick more than one category*)

☐ Community support officers

☐ Catchment officers

☐ Project officers

☐ Other staff

5. In relation to the **type of support** needed by this Landcare group, the support provided by CMA staff has been...

☐ Very good

☐ Good

☐ Average

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

6. In relation to the **level of support** needed by this Landcare group, the support provided by CMA staff has been...

☐ Very good

☐ Good

☐ Average

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

7. The support provided by CMA staff which our Landcare group has valued includes...
(You may tick more than one)

☐ None of the support has been particularly valued

or

- ☐ Access to technical support and advice
☐ Assistance in obtaining funding
☐ Help in developing partnerships with other groups and organisations
☐ Help and support in providing local Landcare awards, dinners or similar events
☐ Project or strategic planning assistance
☐ Training opportunities

Other areas of support which include...

8. In the next 12 months do you need support or additional support from the CMA and its staff?

☐ Yes

☐ No → Go to Question 10

9. What type of support or additional support you would like from the CMA?
(You may tick more than one)

☐ Access to technical support and advice

...What type of technical support and advice do you need? _____

☐ Assistance in obtaining funding

...What type of assistance do you need? _____

☐ Help in developing partnerships with other groups and organisations

...What type of help do you need? _____

☐ Help and support in providing local Landcare awards, dinners or similar events

...What type of help and support do you need? _____

☐ Project or strategic planning assistance

...What type of assistance do you need? _____

☐ Training opportunities
...What type of training do you need? _____

☐ Other areas of additional support required
1. _____
2. _____

FUNDING AND INCENTIVES

10. In the last 2 years, would you say the success rate of your Landcare group in obtaining external funds from all sources has been...
- ☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low
11. What level of knowledge would you say your Landcare group has of grants and incentives provided for natural resource management?
- ☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low
12. Within the last two years has your Landcare group received funding for NRM?
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes...what was the funding for?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

LANDCARE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

13. What is the name of your Landcare group?
- _____
14. In which Landcare district are you located ?
- ☐ Upper Shoalhaven
- ☐ Far South Coast
- ☐ Snowy Interstate
- ☐ Shoalhaven
- ☐ Illawarra
- ☐ Eurobodalla
- ☐ Upper Snowy
15. How long has your group been in operation?
- _____ years

16. How would you describe the current activity level of your Landcare group?
- ☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low ☐ Very low ☐ Not active
17. Thinking back two years ago how would you have described the activity level of your Landcare group then?
- ☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low ☐ Very low ☐ Not active
18. About how many active members would you say there are in your Landcare group?
- _____ active members
19. If you were to list the most important threats to your Landcare group and its ability to meet its objectives, what would they be?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
20. What are the major natural resource management issues your Landcare group is currently addressing?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

21. I would say this group's understanding of the role of the CMA is...
- ☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low
22. This group's knowledge and understanding of regional NRM processes and programs undertaken by the CMA, including plan development, investment strategies, implementation and on ground actions, is...
- ☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low
23. I think the CMA takes the views of this Landcare group into account in its decision making.
- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
24. This Landcare group has a high level of trust in its relationship with the CMA
- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
25. I would say there has been effective communication between the CMA and this Landcare group
- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
26. There has been an effective relationship between the CMA and this Landcare group
- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
27. If you were asked this last question two years ago how would you have answered it?
- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
28. The level of ongoing commitment by the CMA to maintaining its relationship with this Landcare group has been...
- ☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low
29. To what extent do you agree with the statement that "Within this region, the CMA provides leadership in relation to NRM"

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(The following four questions are about you believe – there are no right or wrong answers. If you feel as though you cannot answer the questions then leave them blank)

In the following questions the term ‘community’ means residents, landholders, organisations and groups....

30. In the last 12 months, I think the CMA has initiated or supported sufficient activities for the engagement of the community

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

31. In the last 12 months I think the level of participation by the community in these activities has been...

☐ High ☐ Moderate-High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low-Moderate ☐ Low

32. The CMA has clear and well understood processes for engaging with the community

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

33. I think the CMA’s approach in engaging with the community tends to be more opportunistic than strategic

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

34. Think about the CMAs progress towards and achievement of Natural Resource Management targets as identified in the CMA Catchment Action Plan. On a scale from one (1) to ten (10), with one (1) being very unsuccessful and ten (10) being very successful, what score would you give the CMA in terms of the progress being made towards the achievement of these targets?

Score ____

☐ Don’t know

35. Think about the CMA and the relationship it has developed with your Landcare group. On a scale from one (1) to ten (10), with one (1) being a very unsuccessful relationship and ten (10) being a very successful relationship, what score would you give the CMA?

Score ____

☐ Don’t know

LIST OF SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA STAFF

LOCATION OFFICER DESCRIPTION

WOLLONGONG

Amanda Hogbin	Community Support Officer
Andrew Britton	Community Support Officer
David Curtis	Project Officer
Debra Thompson	Other staff
Elizabeth de Vries	Other staff
Jane Caldwell	Catchment Officer
Ken Davies	Catchment Officer
Laura Mehl	Other Staff
Martine Fraser	Catchment Officer
Neil Rendell	Catchment Officer
Nikki Plunkett-Cole	Project Officer
Noel Kesby	Other Staff
Rebecca Hamilton	Catchment Officer

BATEMANS BAY

Bob Slokee	Community Support Officer
Jillian Keating	Catchment Officer
Peter Gow	Community Support Officer
Prue Woodford	Catchment Officer

BEGA

Andrew Taylor	Catchment Officer
David Newell	Community Support Officer
Don McPhee	Other Staff
Graham Scott	Catchment Officer
Helen Davies	Catchment Officer
Jock Morse	Project Officer
Justin Gouvernet	Catchment Officer
Len Gazzard	Project Officer
Les Kosez	Community Support Officer
Liz Clark	Catchment Officer
Pip Russell	Catchment Officer
Shannon Brennan	Catchment Officer
Sue-Anne Nicol	Catchment Officer

LOCATION OFFICER DESCRIPTION

BRAIDWOOD

David Hilhorst	Project Officer
David Rush	Community Support Officer
Donna Hazell	Other Staff
Frank Exon	Catchment Officer
Ian Vardanega	Project Officer
Matthew Dickinson	Catchment Officer
Rebecca Bradley	Catchment Officer
Rebecca Hall	Catchment Officer
Richard Stone	Catchment Officer

BOMBALA

Andrea Mitchell	Community Support Officer
Jo Haggard	Community Support Officer
Nocole Parsons	Community Support Officer

COOMA

Brett Miners	Other Staff
Danny Henderson	Project Officer
Leon Miners	Project Officer
Mark Robertson	Community Support Officer
Tim Fletcher	Project Officer

NOWRA

Andrew Craig	Catchment Officer
Chris Presland	Other Staff
Eric Zarrella	Community Support Officer
Jason Carson	Catchment Officer
Leesa Swan	Catchment Officer
Lyall Bogie	Project Officer
Marianne Jones	Project Officer
Michelle Perry	Catchment Officer
Peter Pigott	Catchment Officer
Sandy Fritz	Catchment Officer
Stan Braddick	Community Support Officer