

# Building climate change resilience in Victoria's Strathbogie Ranges



*April 2017: The community in the Strathbogie Ranges has identified action priorities to build on the momentum of regional climate change plans to help their community and environment adapt to climate change and build resilience in an uncertain future.*

## Highlights

- Goulburn Broken CMA, RMIT and CSIRO team up with Strathbogie Ranges communities to prepare for climate change.
- Community identifies 'critical attributes' of region to maintain into an uncertain future.
- Key priority NRM activities identified to build resilience include building bio links, drought refugia, soil health and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Between 2011 and 2016, the Australian Government supported Australia's 56 regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations to update their regional NRM plans to address climate change impacts on natural resources in their regions.

In Victoria, the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, RMIT University and CSIRO, are taking this a step further to help regional communities in the Strathbogie Ranges adapt to climate change and build farmer resilience. They are working with the local communities through engagement workshops to identify critical opportunities to prepare both the people and the environment for climate change.

## The identity of the Strathbogie Ranges

The local community defines the 'identity' of the Strathbogie Ranges in terms like 'green', 'productive farmland', 'clear spring water' and 'a healthy lifestyle amongst a natural environment'. Understanding what attributes of the region are important to the local community, helps to identify what should be prioritised in preparing for different climate change scenarios and how the region may change.

## Planning for change

There may be one or multiple pathways to reach the community's preferred future destination and plans for possible future scenarios must be flexible enough to respond to the unknown or unforeseen.



*The Goulburn Broken CMA is finding ways to build climate change resilience in the Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria.*

Planning for an uncertain future includes:

- Identifying the main aspects that make up the identity of an area.
- Determining which of these aspects are critical to maintain an area’s identity (‘critical attributes’).
- Working with scientists to determine the thresholds around each critical attribute to identify possible tipping points that would result in a change in identity.
- Making robust decisions about which critical attributes to respond to now and which ones can be left for later.
- Planning for multiple pathways and unforeseen changes.
- Analysing the costs and benefits of each pathway.
- Monitoring the critical attributes while being flexible enough to adapt as other aspects may become important in the future.
- Implementing and monitoring actions that maintain the identity or result in positive adaptation to change.

### The NRM opportunity

To build on the existing momentum, the following priorities would provide a consistent and robust approach to planning for climate change for local, regional and national organisations:

- Support NRM organisations to share climate change information with land managers in the regions.
- Invest in building soil resilience including improved productivity and soil carbon, management of soil vulnerable to extreme events and

reinstatement of perennial vegetation on vulnerable soils.

- Invest in landscape connectivity including, bio-links, protect drought refugia and reduce pressures on the condition of natural resources that are projected to be affected by climate change.
- Support Aboriginal Cultural Heritage by protecting cultural sites vulnerable to climate change and supporting and facilitating the use of Biocultural Indigenous Knowledge.
- Protect and increase sequestration in carbon rich ‘blue carbon’ coastal and freshwater systems.
- Invest in research needs identified through the Regional NRM Climate Change Adaptation Plans to increase the likelihood of science being applied on the ground.

Information about potential climate change impacts is well developed and, thanks to the Australian Government’s NRM Planning for Climate Change initiative, is widely available to regional NRM organisations.

## Get on board!

Interested in getting involved or want to find out more? Then please contact us.

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