

ACT and Region Catchment Management
Coordination Group Annual Report

2016-17





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Chair's Foreword

This year began with the election of the current ACT Government, which involved a revision of Ministerial portfolios. The new ACT Minister responsible for Environment and Heritage, and Planning and Land Development, is Minister Mick Gentleman MLA, to whom this report is submitted. Two formal meetings have been held with the Minister this year, to report progress and indicate the areas in which the Coordination Group are active. These areas are described in this Annual Report.

Following the reorganisation of NSW local area boundaries and consequent local government elections, we are pleased to welcome the Mayor of Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council, Mr Tim Overall, the Mayor of the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Mr John Rooney, and the ongoing Mayor of Yass Valley Council, Ms Rowena Abbey. Their senior officers are members of the Coordination Group.

The main focus of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group (Coordination Group) is on inter-jurisdictional cooperation, which has been strengthened by the NSW Government's South East and Tablelands Regional Plan that was adopted by the NSW Government in July of this year. The vision of this plan is 'A borderless region in Australia's most geographically diverse natural environment with the nation's capital at its heart'.

The Coordination Group endorses the NSW Government's regional goals of commitment to collaboration with the ACT to leverage opportunities from the borderless Canberra region, as this is entirely compatible with the Coordination Group's Strategic Plan.

At a recent meeting, Coordination Group member, Mr Chris Berry, Director of Planning for the Yass Valley Council, led a discussion on the recently released Yass Valley Settlement Strategy. The foreseen population increase in the vicinity of Canberra has implications for water and sewerage, roads, schools, emergency services, health and the environment. The Coordination Group were pleased to see the Settlement Strategy included a no-development zone surrounding the ACT border, ensuring that strip development does not radiate out from the ACT. Provision of drinking water supply to the increased population in Yass Valley will be an area of mutual activity, involving ACT members of the Coordination Group with the Yass Valley Council.

The on-going discussions between Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Icon Water and the ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) on the 'Best for Region' sewage management project are facilitated by a leadership group, established to coordinate planning for construction of a new sewage treatment plant. This is intended to allow for an increase in the population of the area in NSW, as well as catering for the increased ACT population in the eastern and southern parts of the ACT into the future. Efficiencies of scale will allow a high quality effluent to be discharged into the Molonglo River while integrating in a single plant the functions of both the old existing plants upstream of Lake Burley Griffin.

The water quality improvement program for the rivers and lakes of the region is well underway, with major components of constructed wetlands and rain gardens well advanced in the planning / construction phase.

A stormwater education program, which is starting to gain traction with the community, is detailed in this report and involves agencies, communities and schools participating to improve our water quality.

The recent Catchment Health Indicator Program report (CHIP) from Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch shows the variable quality of our waterways, mainly good and fair, but highlights that all reaches that scored poorly were in urban environments, confirming that there is room for improvement in land development practices in the ACT. Preliminary results from the 2016–17 CHIP report indicate a general improvement in catchment health, mainly resulting from a wet winter and spring providing good flushes to the system, although variability between years is mostly due to seasonal variation in rainfall.

The CHIP water quality survey is carried out by volunteers from Cooma to Burrinjuck Dam, and is the best overall assessment of river and lake quality in our region, highlighting the very valuable role of volunteer citizen science. Strengthening support for our landcare, catchment and Waterwatch volunteers is an essential activity for the Group.

We look forward to continuing to implement our strategic plan, with enhanced coordination across the region through regional councils, ACT Government directorates and volunteer organisations.

**Emeritus Professor Ian R. Falconer AO, DSc
Chair, ACT and Region Catchment Management
Coordination Group**

Clean Up Australia Day Volunteers - Lyneham Wetlands



1. Background

This report outlines the activities of the Coordination Group from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 as required under s. 67D of the *Water Resources Act 2007*:

67D Annual report by coordination group

1. For each financial year, the coordination group must prepare a report about the group's activities during the financial year, including any advice given, or recommendations made, to the Minister.
2. The group must give the report to the Minister within 3 months after the end of the financial year.
3. The Minister must, within 21 days after receiving the report, table the following in the Legislative Assembly:
 - » the report;
 - » a statement by the Minister responding to any advice given or recommendations made to the Minister in the group's annual report.
4. However, if there are no sitting days during the 21-day period—
 - » the Minister must give the report and the statement, and a copy of each for each member of the Legislative Assembly, to the Speaker; and
 - » the report and the statement are taken for all purposes to have been tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the day the Minister gives it to the Speaker (the **report day**); and
 - » the Speaker must arrange for a copy of the report and a copy of the statement to be given to each member of the Legislative Assembly on the report day; and
 - » despite paragraph (b), the Speaker must present the report and the statement to the Legislative Assembly on the next sitting day.

In October 2014, the ACT Government approved the establishment of an inter-jurisdictional coordination body to strengthen governance and catchment management in the ACT and surrounding regions. The Coordination Group was established on an interim basis on 25 February 2015. On 4 August 2015, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed the *Water Resources (Catchment Management) Amendment Act 2015*, which amended the *Water Resources Act 2007* and established the Coordination Group as a statutory body. This amendment allowed for the appointment of both an Independent Chair and a Community Representative. Emeritus Professor Ian Falconer AO was appointed as Independent Chair and Dr Fiona Dyer as Community Representative on 2 October 2015 (Notification NI2015-581).

The Coordination Group is specified in the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration (December 2016) (the MoU). Consistent with the intent of the MoU, the considerations of the Coordination Group and the contribution of staff and financial resources are negotiated on a project-by-project basis. The format of this annual report sets out the range of activities undertaken by the Coordination Group, focussing on key priorities, achievements over the period and the future activities.

The Catchment Management and Water Policy Branch of EPSDD provides secretariat support to the Coordination Group, which is funded by the ACT Healthy Waterways (Basin Priority Project) until June 2019.

1.1 Functions

The Coordination Group is committed to improving the governance of catchment management within the region. It works for the long-term benefit of the ACT and Region catchment and the people who reside therein. It aims to:

- » be a responsive, dynamic and representative body which works in a fair, open and collaborative manner
- » take a holistic approach to understanding and managing the catchment
- » promote a whole-of-catchment and governmental approach to improving catchment health in the long term, using best available science and community engagement to support its work.

The Coordination Group was established to:

- » advise the ACT Minister for the Environment and Heritage on water catchment management in the ACT and Region catchment
- » improve coordination, cooperation and direction of effort in catchment management across the ACT and Region
- » facilitate collaborative problem solving for inter-jurisdiction and interagency issues
- » provide advice on opportunities to align national, regional and territory investment in the context of integrated catchment management
- » oversee the development of an integrated catchment management strategy with agreed principles and actions
- » provide advice on proposed developments in terms of their likely impacts and strategies and actions to mitigate any risk to catchment health
- » undertake other matters as determined by the Minister.

Denman prospect- need for improved building practices





Volunteers cleaning up Lyneham Wetlands on Clean Up Australia Day

1.2 Membership

[ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group Chair Emeritus Professor Ian Falconer](#)

Professor Falconer was appointed on 1 October 2015. The role of the Chair is to independently facilitate a collaborative process between jurisdictions to ensure the best outcomes are achieved. Emeritus Professor Falconer has extensive experience in water and catchment-based research and consulting. Prior to coming to the ACT he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Adelaide and advised international universities on their development of environmental and pre-medical sciences. This, alongside experience in staff training and academic administration, has been invaluable in guiding the Coordination Group in developing and executing the regional catchment management strategy.

[Community Representative Dr Fiona Dyer, Community Representative, Chair of the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Network](#)

The Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Network is a community-based organisation made up of agencies and groups that are responsible for natural resource management in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. It operates as a regional cross-border network to enhance communication between agencies and groups in NSW and the ACT and represents the interests of and provides a link to the broader community within the region. Dr Dyer is the immediate past Chair of the Network.

[Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate Director-General, Mr Ben Ponton](#)

EPSDD has several roles in managing water in the ACT, including responsibility for high-level strategic water policy development and participating in the national water reform agenda and competition issues relating to water access, pricing and trading. In addition, the directorate regulates the Territory's water resources and monitors and reports on water quality. The directorate also has a role in the demand management of water resources and in developing strategies to address catchment management issues in the ACT and wider region.

[Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate Head of Service, Ms Kathy Leigh](#)

Ms Leigh supports the Chief Minister at intergovernmental forums, notably the Council of Australian Governments. The directorate manages and coordinates the ACT's relationship with other jurisdictions, most significantly the Australian and NSW governments, Australia's other capital cities and NSW councils surrounding the ACT.

[ACT Emergency Services Agency Commissioner, Mr Dominic Lane](#)

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) comprises the ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT State Emergency Service and ESA Support Services. ESA plays a key role in helping the Coordination Group coordinate risk analysis, and in planning for and managing emergency situations such as storms, floods and bushfires.

[Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#)
[Director-General, Ms Emma Thomas](#)

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) is responsible for managing Canberra’s urban lakes and ponds, including managing stormwater control, and is also responsible for providing services to manage the territory’s waste and other infrastructure.

[ACT Health Directorate](#)
[Director-General, Ms Nicole Feely](#)

In respect to environmental health, the Health Directorate protects and promotes the good health of the ACT community through the fostering of safe and healthy environments. It provides information, policy development, monitoring and enforcement in relation to public health activities including the Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality. The directorate provides a framework for the management of recreational water sites within the ACT, addressing risks from blue-green algae as well as microbial pathogens.

[South East Local Land Services](#)
[General Manager, Mr Anthony Marshall](#)

South East Local Land Services (South East LLS) brings together agricultural production advice, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single organisation. Its services add value to local industries, enhance natural resources, protect industries from pests and disease, and help communities respond to emergencies such as flood, fire and drought. South East LLS will ensure the natural assets, local industries, landholders and communities of the surrounding tablelands region are represented on the Coordination Group.

[National Capital Authority](#)
[A/g Chief Executive, Andrew Smith](#)

The National Capital Authority (NCA) manages some of Canberra’s nationally and culturally significant landscapes and attractions including the nationally iconic Lake Burley Griffin and surrounding lands. NCA is keen to see national land and water bodies used and enjoyed by visitors and Canberra residents for a range of recreational uses; however, it aims to ensure an appropriate balance between public access to national land with the protection of national assets.

[Icon Water](#)
[Managing Director, Mr John Knox](#)

Icon Water owns and operates the ACT’s network of dams for drinking water and its water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, reservoirs, water and sewage pumping stations, mains and other associated infrastructure. It provides water and sewerage services to the ACT and bulk water to Queanbeyan. Icon Water’s interests in healthy catchments include the security, quality and sustainability of water resources for a range of uses, and minimising the impact of our network on the region’s waterways.

[Queanbeyan—Palerang Regional Council](#)
[General-Manager,](#)
[Mr Peter Tegar](#)

[Yass Valley Council,](#)
[Director of Planning, Mr Chris Berry](#)

[Snowy Monaro Regional Council,](#)
[Director of Environmental Services,](#)
[Mr Peter Smith](#)

Queanbeyan—Palerang Regional Council, Snowy Monaro Regional Council and Yass Valley Council all make a significant contribution to the management and protection of the region’s natural resources.

Local governments undertake a wide range of activities related to catchment management, including the development and implementation of land use planning, managing public land and regulating private activities. They play a key role in translating the policies of the Australian and state governments into local and on-ground projects. As such, their input to strategic planning, economic development and stormwater management is vital to providing the best outcomes for an inter-jurisdictional catchment.

2. Highlights of Committee Business

(Actions Taken)

2.1 Stakeholder Engagement

In order to strengthen partnerships between jurisdictions and identify opportunities for Coordination Group involvement to implement the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy, the Chair of the Coordination Group continued to liaise with key stakeholders in the region. A brief synopsis of these activities is provided below.

Mr Philip Glyde,
CEO Murray Darling Basin Authority

Consideration of issues relating to water supply and water trading for the ACT within the Murray–Darling Basin context.

Dr Kate Auty,
ACT Commissioner for Sustainability
and the Environment

Discussion on environmental management in the ACT. The Commissioner attended the Coordination Group’s meeting in June 2017 to provide an overview of current work and will continue look for opportunities to support the Coordination Group in its activities.

Dr Peter Bridgewater,
Chair Landcare ACT

Meetings centred on how Landcare can assist in coordinating the Group activities with the landcare community and the catchment groups, and strengthening volunteer support.

Mr David Maxwell,
CEO Ginninderry Development

A site visit and briefing on the Ginninderry development, a joint venture between the ACT Government and the Riverview Group to develop a community in West Belconnen of 11,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure that spans the ACT/ NSW border.

Mr Paul Davies,
Chair ACT NRM Council

Integration of the ACT Natural Resources management program with the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy.

NSW Planning (Southern Region)—
Ms Fatima Abbas, Regional Director,
Ms Deanne Frankel, Team Leader, and
Ms Meredith McIntyre, Planning Officer

Following the release of the NSW Government South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036, the Southern Region team of NSW Planning hosted a briefing session for relevant stakeholders on 2017–19 implementation priorities. The NSW Government’s vision for the South East and Tablelands Region is for ‘A borderless region in Australia’s most geographically diverse natural environment with the nation’s capital at its heart’. This vision is shared by the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy. Three key initiatives that align with actions of the Catchment Strategy include development of:

- » an agreed set of principles to inform a new cross-border infrastructure funding model
- » a coordinated strategic approach to water supply and investigate water supply options for growth areas
- » a cross-border land and housing monitor.

The Coordination Group will work with appropriate NSW agencies to explore opportunities that meet the shared outcomes of the Regional Plan and Catchment Strategy.

2.2 Advice to ACT Minister for the Environment and Heritage

The Chair met with Minister Gentleman in November 2016 and May 2017 to brief him on progress with the implementation of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy.

2.3 Progress on Catchment Action Implementation Plan 1 (2016–21)

Background

After the establishment of the Coordination Group, the primary focus was to develop a strategy for the Catchment as a framework to guide and deliver priority actions for the benefit of the region as a whole. The ACT and Region Catchment Strategy 2016–46 (the Catchment Strategy), released in August 2016, establishes a 30-year vision, recognising that the region is the economic hub and the centre for current and future growth for south-east NSW. The Catchment Strategy details the key factors predicted to affect the catchment, being climate change, an increasing population and the challenges of multi-level governance.

The Catchment Strategy, which identifies 19 actions to promote a healthy catchment region, aims to bring governments, community and industry together to produce a healthy, productive, resilient and liveable catchment region.

Keep soil on your block - Improving Building Practices H2OK



The Catchment Strategy's key themes

Governance, policy and planning—

a framework for coordination of policy, planning, investment and knowledge processes that provide a foundation for our work.

Communities—

acknowledging the outstanding contribution that catchment groups and volunteer programs play in protecting our natural resources, motivating people to connect to their catchment and increasing their capacity to adapt to change.

Regional development—

recognising that the catchment is a growth area and strategies are needed to support the prosperity of the region with sound catchment management planning principles and technical expertise to support sustainable growth.

Water and land and biodiversity—

support the biophysical processes that maintain the resilience and health of natural resources that are essential for thriving communities and ecosystems.

A copy of the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy can be found at: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act-and-region-catchment-strategy>

The ACT and Region Catchment Action Implementation Plan (2016 – 21) (the Implementation Plan) was developed as a supporting document to the Catchment Strategy and was released concurrently with the strategy for public comment.

The Implementation Plan lists the 19 actions under the respective themes and provides additional detail in terms of what each action will achieve, key stakeholders, who should be involved, resourcing status and likely timeframes.

The Implementation Plan includes criteria for determining the project timeframes and an outline of the principles for applying adaptive management based on issues such as ease of implementation, budget availability, existing data, technology and appropriate policy settings.

The Coordination Group meeting on 2 August 2016 agreed that six of the 19 actions within the Implementation Plan would commence in 2016–17.

ACTION 4: Continue to inform a catchment-wide assessment of vulnerability to climate change

Action 9 in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy focuses on working regionally to improve awareness of climate change impacts to build resilience and adaptive capacity. EPSDD's Climate Change and Sustainability Division is working with the Canberra Urban Regional Forum (CURF) to undertake a legal and regulatory analysis of laws, regulations and guidelines relevant to the geographical area and predicted climate impacts in the region. Using participatory scenarios they will explore options for reform to enhance adaptive capacity and regional collaboration. The aim of the project is to:

- » identify both the opportunities and barriers to regional collaboration towards climate adapted futures as well as options for innovation in formulating adaptive planning, policy and regulatory settings
- » understand the various ways in which the law is understood, interpreted and relied on by key decision-makers, in and for climate change adaptation
- » catalyse innovative ideas on regulatory and legal options for adaptation
- » develop and test methods for exploring the challenges and opportunities for regional collaboration on climate adaptation.

Initial themes being explored include:

- » flood, fire and disaster
- » settlements and infrastructure
- » regional productivity.

The themes will explore the legal and regulatory frameworks that span specific local details through to broad national policies such as:

- » building codes and standards
- » land use planning systems
- » disaster relief policies and frameworks.

Key stakeholders in the ACT, NSW and local government have been briefed on the project overview, and invited to attend a workshop in October 2017.

ACTION 8: Develop an integrated catchment and emergency response plan

Investigations on this action commenced early 2017 with the assistance of funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP). EPSDD engaged consultancy firm, Alluvium to develop the ACT and Region Catchment Post-Emergency Recovery Plan. The project is jointly managed by a working group of representatives from Icon Water, ESA and EPSDD.

The Recovery Plan is designed to enhance the capability of the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment community, including government, private and civic bodies, to recover effectively from natural disasters and emergency events in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

The Recovery Plan identifies the intrinsic uses and values of each catchment; the potential impact of an emergency event on catchment and waterway uses and values and the objectives and desired outcomes for the catchment and waterway, post an emergency event.

To assist with interpretation and understanding of uses and values in each catchment, the Recovery Plan provides a number of maps that describe catchment values with respect to biodiversity and threatened species; cultural heritage; nature-related social amenity; agriculture/primary industries/forestry; urban water supply and wastewater management.

The Recovery Plan is in the final stages of development and is undergoing extensive consultation with key stakeholders prior to being submitted to the Coordination Group for adoption.



Drain Stencilling Lyneham High School

ACTION 9: Build Community understanding about catchment health to promote behaviour change through a broad range of communication and education strategies (H2OK Stormwater Education Program)

H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy is funded by ACT Healthy Waterways, a joint Australian and ACT government initiative to improve the quality of water entering our waterways and flowing downstream into the Murrumbidgee River system. Launched on 20 February 2017, region-wide stormwater education campaign runs until June 2019. The education program H2OK was developed in response to monitoring data and a 2015 catchment-wide community survey that revealed the community identified there was limited knowledge about actions around water and resultant impacts on water quality.

This program is delivering a tiered program of awareness, education, incentive and behavioural change components that target suburban block dwellers, rural residents and the building and construction industries.

During the reporting period the program made significant progress included:

- » a five week media campaign promoting the key message 'Only rain down the stormwater drain', which included print ads in the Canberra Weekly and Canberra Chronicle, radio ads, sponsored advertising and stories in HerCanberra and RiotACT, plus Twitter and Facebook postings

- » a regional 'Clean Up Our Catchment Day' as part of the National Clean Up Australia Day event on 28 February and 5 March 2017
- » presentations and dissemination of campaign collateral (magnets, flyer, stickers etc.) to catchment groups, community councils and other key stakeholders
- » Adopt-a Drain being rolled out as part of key campaign messaging—this has been promoted through presentations to catchment groups, community councils and other key stakeholders, and through drain stencilling. The drain stencilling program rolled out 47 stencils to 30 June 2017.
- » an autumn media campaign (April–May 2017) promoting behaviour that keeps leaves out of the stormwater drain
- » a request for expressions of interest for a DrainART project that invites local artists to paint stormwater drains that lead straight from Civic to Lake Burley Griffin. The artwork will draw pedestrians' attention to what goes down drains and influence change, and be supported by additional digital design work on asphalt. DrainART projects will also be rolled out in Cooma, Queanbeyan and Yass. A Schools DrainART design competition is planned for National Water Week in October 2017
- » a call for grant applications for a demonstration site project to implement innovative, best practice stormwater management practices on rural and residential blocks—61 applications were received with 16 applications shortlisted
- » preparation of a winter media campaign to target behaviour change about for rubbish, plastics and other gross pollutants going down the stormwater drain and litter left on our street.



Volunteer Kerry monitoring at the top of the Murrumbidgee Catchment (above Tantangara Dam)

ACTION 10: Provide an integrated catchment management planning approach for growth and settlement patterns in the ACT and Region

The Catchment Strategy and the NSW South East and Tablelands Regional Plan involve collaborating on policy and planning opportunities to consider the management of water, sewage, waste and renewable energy on a regional scale. Two opportunities have been raised regarding land use planning that relate to stormwater. As a starting point, a regional comparison is being developed that:

- » summarises the similarities and differences in various land use planning instruments that affect stormwater run-off across jurisdictions
- » provides some commentary on the respective merits of these instruments
- » identifies any gaps or perverse outcomes that may result from these instruments.

This will provide a common language and clear points for discussion and clarification. It will guide a framework to define actions that may be taken to align planning throughout the region and improve catchment outcomes.

ACTION 11: Develop regional capacity to implement and manage sustainable water infrastructure

'Best for Region' Sewage Management Project

The inaugural meeting of the Coordination Group in February 2015 identified that the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council's (QPRC) sewage treatment plant (STP) would require an upgrade to continue to service the growth of Queanbeyan and surrounding region. Icon Water has a sewage treatment facility in the eastern ACT catchment that will require substantial capital investment and eventual upgrade in the medium term. It was therefore timely to jointly investigate a regional approach to sewage management to assess if a regional solution is preferable to two standalone solutions.

In January 2016, a Best for Region Leadership Committee was established to ensure Icon Water, QPRC and the ACT Government work together to identify a possible regional sewage management solution. The Committee comprised Icon Water's Managing Director, QPRC's General Manager and EPSDD's Director-General. The Chair of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group, Professor Ian Falconer also attends the committee's meetings as an observer. The committee has provided regular updates on its progress to the Coordination Group.

In April 2017, Icon Water and QPRC established a committee, comprised of key representatives from both parties (including Icon Water's Managing Director and QPRC's General Manager), to meet on a monthly basis to guide progress on all aspects of the Best for Region STP.

Ginninderry Project

The Ginninderry Project is a joint venture between the ACT Government and the Riverview Group to develop a master planned community in West Belconnen of 11,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure that spans the ACT/NSW border. The development includes a large area of conserved environmental land and the scenic Ginninderra Falls. The Ginninderry Project seeks to be a world class development in terms of its environmental protection and has challenged itself in implementing environmentally sound building practices and integrating water sensitive urban design (WSUD) elements in a cross-border development.

The Coordination Group see the development as an excellent opportunity to progress the intent of Action 11 of the Catchment Strategy in terms of:

- » trialling WSUD projects across the region
- » assisting developers, designers and builders to implement design solutions that support WSUD principles
- » developing regional technical capacity for innovative WSUD outcomes.

To date, the group has received briefings on the initial approach to Stage 1 of development and have highlighted key areas where the group will be involved.

ACTION 19: Consider regional approaches to dealing with contaminated land and illegal dumping of contaminated waste

In August 2016 the NSW Government hosted a workshop on options to prevent soil from ACT construction sites being poorly disposed of in NSW and causing soil erosion and sedimentation of regional waterways.

This workshop was attended by a representative of the Coordination Group, Yass Valley Council, Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council, NSW EPA and NSW Planning. The NSW Planning and Environment Act has amended the exempt provisions related to earthworks under the State Environmental Planning Policies (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 to address this issue.

Waterwatch - Waterbug Sampling



3. 2017–18 Priorities and way forward

The key focus for the Coordination Group in 2017–18 will be to further the actions within the Implementation Plan.

ACTION 1: Build an inter-jurisdictional decision making framework related to catchment policy and planning

The Coordination Group is looking to establish a working group to investigate integration and alignment of strategies. The NSW South East and Tablelands Regional Plan and Yass Valley Settlement Strategy will be a starting point to draw a comparison between inter-jurisdictional frameworks.

ACTION 2: Establish an inter-jurisdictional investment and resourcing framework

Action 2 in the Strategy seeks to establish an inter-jurisdictional investment and resourcing framework for on-going resourcing of the Group and its priority actions.

This is to be achieved by developing a framework for permanent resourcing for the Coordination Group's core activities, including investment in regional catchment management. The resourcing framework will provide principles on how the Coordination Group will co-invest, align, collaborate and cost share in resourcing activities for improved catchment management.

In November 2016 the Coordination Group agreed in principle to cost sharing arrangements. The work in 2017–18 will further this agreement via the development of an annual business plan for joint investment.



Kybeyan Erosion Gully

ACTION 7: Strategically support the role and work undertaken by peak stakeholder groups, volunteers and land owners

A key focus for 2017–18 will be finding ways to support the catchment community groups in our region. Neither the upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Network nor the ACT catchment groups are well funded at present and require additional support to be effective.

ACTION 9: Build Community understanding about catchment health to promote behaviour change through a broad range of communication and education strategies (ongoing)

H2OK Stormwater Education Program Demonstration Sites

On 15 August 2017, Minister Gentleman and ACT Senator Zed Seselja announced that 15 H2OK demonstration sites would be established across the region at private urban and rural residences. \$62,958 is being invested in these sites. Two further sites in Yass and Cooma are being investigated. Site owners will be opening their properties to inspection in partnership with Open Gardens Canberra.

Industry Training in Erosion and Sediment Control

Work is progressing to deliver an awareness raising and training package in erosion and sediment control to build capacity in the building and construction industry. This project, scheduled for November 2017, is in partnership with the ACT Master Builders Association (MBA) and will target both the private and public sector construction industry. A video toolbox on sediment and erosion control endorsed by the MBA is being developed. A media campaign—‘Your site, keep it right’—will run from 30 October to 24 November 2017 to support industry engagement.

A spring media campaign will target grass mowing and other behaviours such as car washing, paints chemicals, fertilisers and sediments through the radio and print media.

ACTION 10: Provide an integrated catchment management planning approach for growth and settlement patterns in the ACT and Region (ongoing)

Upon finalising the regional comparison on common areas where policy and regulation misaligns across jurisdictions, further project plans will be developed to address these issues.

ACTION 11: Develop regional capacity to implement and manage sustainable water infrastructure (ongoing)

‘Best for Region’ Sewage Management Project

The Leadership Committee will form a memorandum of understanding to formally define the QPRC and Icon Water relationship. In August 2017 Icon Water and QPRC established a technical working group to begin considering key technical aspects for a Best for Region Sewage Treatment Plant with a view to developing a concept design in due course.

ACTION 13: Improve water quality, protect and restore aquatic ecosystem health and reduce nutrient, sediment and pathogen loads at key sites across the catchment

The Snowy 2.0 Project is a proposal to link Tantangara Reservoir and Talbingo Reservoir to provide a pumped hydro-electric supply source, aimed to deliver affordable and renewable energy at peak demand periods. The Coordination Group has identified this as a potential threat to environmental flows through Tantangara Dam into the Murrumbidgee River, since the water source for this pumped electricity generation is also the source water for the Murrumbidgee River. A representative from Snowy Hydro has already addressed the Coordination Group describing the extent of the project and will attend the group meeting in the first quarter of 2018 to consider further issues.

