



Vic Catchments Forum Charter

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian CMA chairs and boards are appointed by the government under the Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP Act) as community leaders of the 10 regional CMA's.

The regional boards report to the Minister for Water and Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The boards have agreed to form the Vic Catchments forum (the forum).

Vic Catchments is based on collegiate agreement between all of the 10 regional CMA's to represent Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) at the state level.

Each CMA has appointed their chair as the representative at the forum on the following basis.

This 3 page Charter describes:

- The background, purpose and role of the forum
- The strategic aims

Appendix 1 –Forum operations describes:

- The roles and responsibilities of the chairperson, forum members, executive, and sub committees

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Victorian government has recently released the Our Catchments Our Communities (OCOC) strategy, creating an opportunity for CMA's and VCMC to re-inforce the principles of ICM at a state level.

The forum will ensure the OCOC strategy is delivered through all CMAs in Victoria via a clear, consistent and accountable principles framework. The framework will be managed by the forum on behalf of all CMA's in a collegiate manner.

Further, the forum will lead advancement of the ICM sector through the development of state-wide program and investment packages for future consideration by government.

FORUM CURRENCY

The forum will operate for two years from the date of the inception meeting.

The forum will sunset, unless the bi-ennial review (see page 7) recommends continuance or change.

FORUM ROLE

The forum is accountable to the 10 Victorian CMAs for its performance at a state-wide level. It is not a hierarchical structure, but a collegiate body designed to demonstrate and provide representation of ICM principles at a high level.

The forum's responsibilities include:

- Setting the strategic goals by completing a concise, Strategic Plan (see figure 1, page 3) reviewed every four years.
- Establishing five (5) state-wide frameworks (see figure 2 – appendix 1, page 4) reflecting the major priorities of the OCOC strategy. This includes state-wide objectives and performance targets, reporting and evaluation.
- Establishing five (5) state-wide future ICM program and investment packages e.g. Agricultural public good extension and climate change adaption programs
- Establishing a state-wide prospectus of landscape programs and promoting those programs to state and commonwealth investors
- Assisting DELWP with the development and maintenance of the OCOC Summit
- Appointing the Executive Officer (EO), setting EO remuneration, assessing EO performance annually and providing for EO succession.
- Ensuring resources are available to achieve these goals.
- Reviewing the performance of the forum bi-ennially.

FORUM STRATEGIC AIMS

The forum seeks to increase the level of state-wide influence and confidence in the principles of ICM. To achieve confidence and influence at a high level is beyond the primary role of each regional CMA, but CMA alignment at a high level is critical to achieving influence. For instance, if an individual CMA is seen as acting out of step with government policy it will reflect badly on all CMA's.

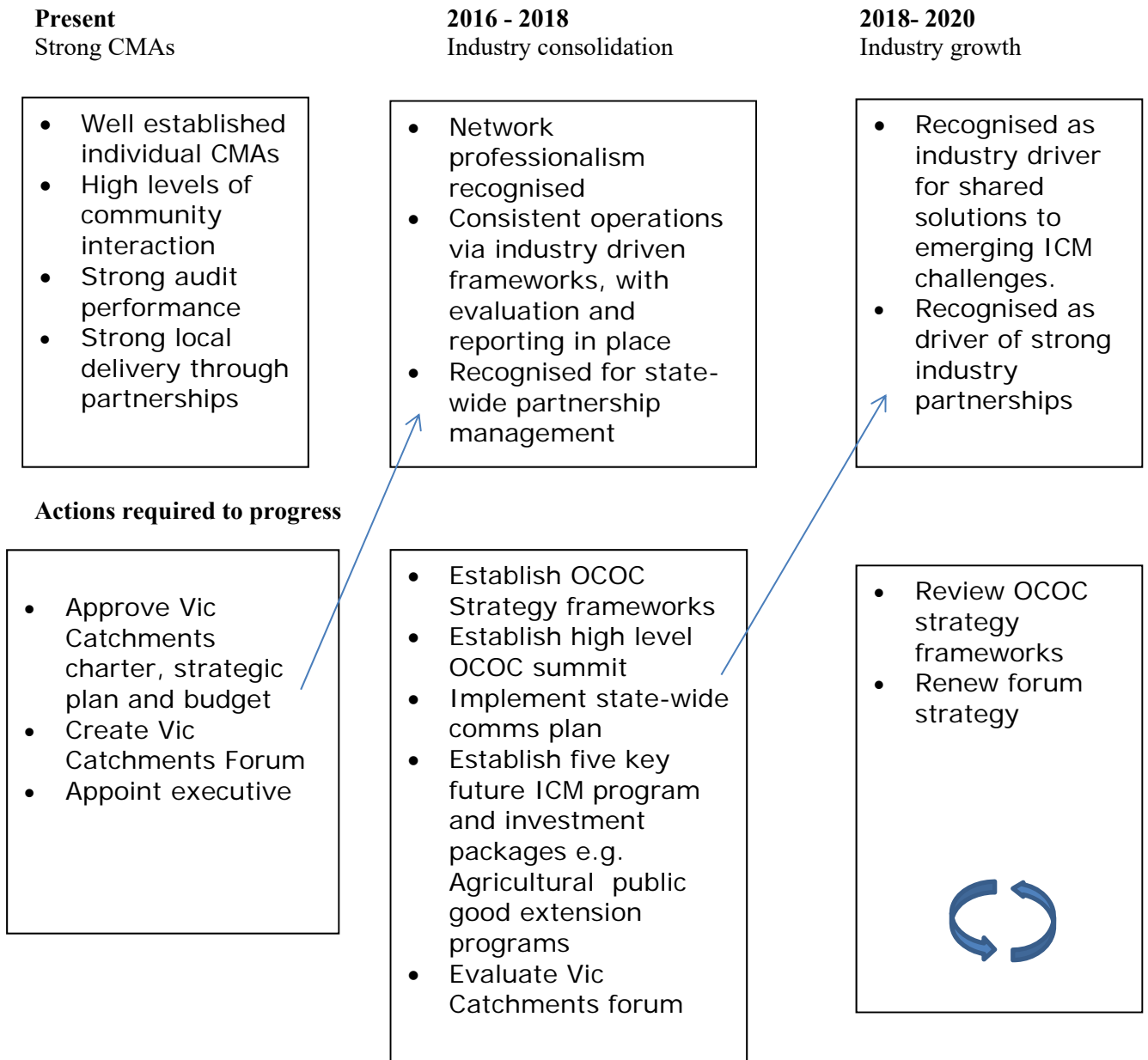
The forum will present the CMA's as a collegiate body of statutory agencies that operates under a consistent set of principles directly reflecting government policy contained within the OCOC.

The forum messaging will also highlight that the local scale of CMAs is critical for coordination of environmental programs and working with local communities. The local nature of CMAs provides agility for quick responses to local issues.

Whilst each catchment has differences in landscape, environmental priorities and community structures, all CMAs manage this complexity to deliver a consistent role for the Victorian government.

To assist these aims the forum has endorsed the following strategic objectives based on a 4-year cycle. The objectives guide the actions of the forum and form the basis for evaluation of forum performance.

Desired objectives



(Figure 1 – Forum Strategy)

APPENDIX 1. - FORUM OPERATIONS

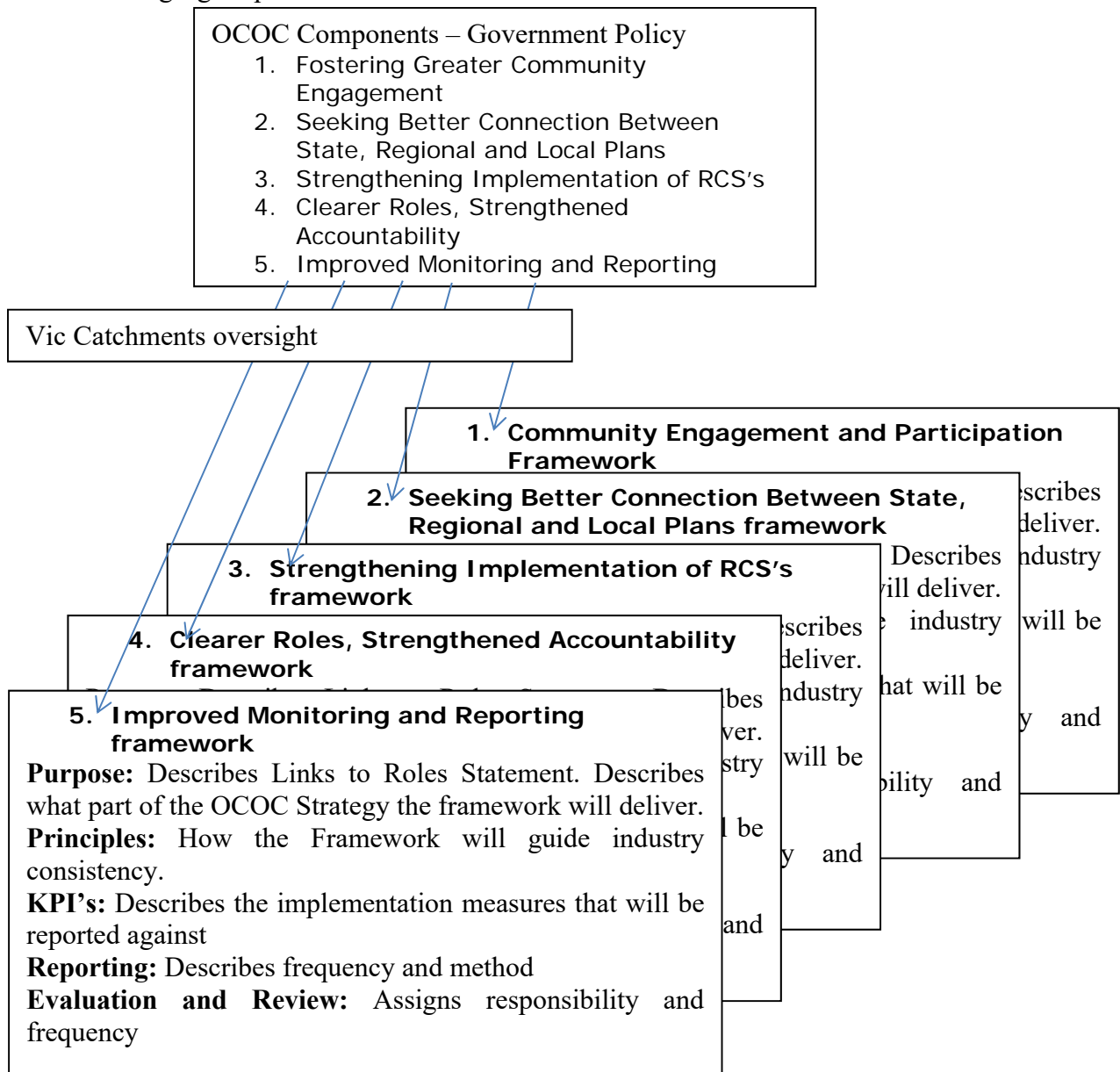
OCOC FRAMEWORKS

Each of the five frameworks is directly related to the five key chapters in the OCOC strategy. They will combine to link to a CMA roles statement. The roles statement is the simple story to show how the CMA industry operates. The frameworks become the underpinning evidence of the roles in operation inclusive of KPI's.

They will look consistent and include the same components, similar to any other corporate policy framework. As per any other corporate policy framework, a cycle of development, implementation, reporting, evaluation and review will be created for each component.

Reporting and evaluation is a key task of the forum.

The following figure pictures the frameworks:



(Figure 2 – Forum principle frameworks)

THE ROLES OF THE FORUM CHAIRPERSON, FORUM MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVE

ROLE OF CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson is appointed by the forum members through a majority vote for a term of no more than 2 years, based on the skills required to complete the chairperson role. A Deputy Chairperson will also be appointed. The chairperson's and deputy's authority extends only to those matters that are agreed prior by the forum members.

The Chairperson's time and expertise requirements are as follows:

- Requires approximately 20-25 days of additional work per year.
- Will be required to Chair meetings of the forum and set agendas in a consultative manner.
- Will be required to develop good relationships with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Water and with other key stakeholders and interested parties.
- Will assist individual members to understand their role, responsibilities and accountabilities and to assist with their involvement in the forum.
- Providing guidance to new members and the Deputy Chair when required.

Sitting fees and travel re-imburement as per government policy will be provided to the chairperson.

ROLE OF FORUM MEMBERS

Forum members are comprised of the Chairs of each of the ten CMA's. The VCMC Chair and Executive Officer and CMA CEO's are ex-officio forum members without voting rights, but are expected to fully participate in meeting discussions.

Each member assumes responsibility for:

- Ensuring the principles and standards expressed within the five state-wide frameworks are consistently delivered through each CMA.
- Ensuring each CMA contributes to framework objectives and performance targets, reporting and evaluation.
- Contributing to development of five state-wide future ICM program and investment packages.

FORUM SUB COMMITTEES

The forum will maintain a number of other sub committees for specific purposes. Most importantly, the use of sub committees will provide opportunity for broader involvement by members on specific matters. For example, members will be sought for involvement in developing and promoting the five (5) state-wide future ICM program and investment packages.

Sub committees will be formed from forum members or delegates with specific expertise and must have written terms of reference approved by the forum. Formal minutes of each committee meeting will be prepared and circulated to each of the forum members together with a list of recommendations and/or other matters and issues for the consideration of the full forum meeting.

Executive sub committee

The Forum will appoint an executive subcommittee with representation comprising the forum Chair, one CEO's representative, the VCMC chair, DELWP catchments ED and Director to ensure the forum maintains alignment between forum and other DELWP initiatives initially as follows:

1. Acting as members of the strategic reference group for OCOC implementation.
2. Providing guidance and oversight to the OCOC summit, a joint initiative between DELWP and CMAs.

ROLE OF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The EO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the forum in accordance with this charter and directions of the forum.

Once the EO position description is completed, the role will be advertised publicly.

In fulfilling their duties, the EO will:

- Establish and maintain forward agendas for the forum directly with the chair
- Establish the CMA roles statement and KPIs
- Establish, maintain and periodically review principle state-wide frameworks that underpin the OCOC strategy
- Align state-wide reporting frameworks so they can aggregate to inform at a state-wide level. E.g. for matters like WHS, risk, finance, audit, legislative compliance, engagement etc.
- Coordinate actions to deliver the DELWP/CMAs governance strategic plan
- Management of MER, outcome and condition reports
- Management of secretariat support
- Establish and maintain a program and investment prospectus for all CMAs
- Establish and maintain a peak single website and social media pages (named Vic Catchments) including a state-wide communication plan with KPIs
- Report directly to the forum through ensuring that reports are developed in a timely and effective manner for review and approval
- Will act as spokesperson to government for forum matters of an operational nature

ANNUAL FORUM CALENDAR

The forum will adopt a rolling twelve-month calendar. The calendar will include all regular forum meetings and major activities scheduled. Unless otherwise agreed, the forum will meet quarterly.

FORUM MEETINGS

The forum meetings are the main opportunity for members to:

- Obtain and exchange information with the executive team
- Obtain and exchange information with each other
- Make decisions.

Meeting Quorum

Half of the current forum members are required to be present to constitute a quorum.

Setting the Agenda

The Chairperson sets forum agendas in conjunction with the members. An agenda will be prepared for each forum and subcommittee meeting and forwarded to members one week in advance. The EO is responsible for the preparation and circulation of forum papers.

Conduct of Meeting

The Chairperson will determine the degree of formality required at each meeting while maintaining appropriate decorum. As such, the Chairperson will:

- Ensure that all members are heard
- Retain sufficient control to ensure that the authority of the Chairperson is recognised (This may require a degree of formality to be reintroduced when it is required to make progress)
- Take care that the decisions are properly understood
- Ensure that an agreed, minuted resolution records the conclusion of the decisions and debate.

Meeting Minutes and Records

Minutes record all decisions made. The forum maintains a record of minutes, submissions and papers and of other material presented. This material is accessible to non-forum members only with the agreement of the Chairperson. All CMA boards will be provided with minutes of all meetings.

Handling conflicts of interest

Forum members must take all reasonable steps to avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest with the forum.

The forum is structured to represent CMA's at a state-wide level. At times state-wide level decisions could present a conflict with a regional CMA position. Forum members will be required to declare conflicts of this nature where they occur. The forum will discuss and decide how conflicts will be managed and document the decision in meeting minutes.

FORUM PERFORMANCE

The forum reviews and evaluates its own performance and the performance of its committees on a bi-ennial basis. The evaluation will be based on the objectives of the forum strategic plan (see figure 1, page 3).

FORUM MEMBER INDUCTIONS

On appointment, forum members are given an induction covering what is expected of them as regards to committing time to forum activities, being a member of committees and participating in their activities.

FORUM BUDGET

The CEO's forum will manage the forum budget as per existing arrangements. The CEO's forum will provide a report on the forum budget at each forum meeting.

Document Control

Version Number	1
Last Review Date	
Frequency of Review	Bi-annual
Next Review Due Date	
Responsible Officer	EO
Approved by	The CMA chairs forum