Namoi CMA Engagement and Communications Strategy

Introduction

The Namoi CMA Strategic Plan 2012-2017 has a vision of “resilient communities and landscapes for the future. The Plan highlights the need for the CMA to work and collaborate with a wide range of individuals and organisations to achieve its corporate objectives. The strategic objectives in the Strategic Plan contain important specific engagement and communications objectives, which are:

- “1.1 Broker and share information about natural resources and ‘resilience’ in the Namoi Catchment”
- 1.3 Work with government, industry and the catchment community to plan and deliver CAP targets
- 2.1 Increase whole of community involvement in natural resource management in the Namoi Catchment
- 2.4 Engage the community in NRM through education, extension and incentive programs”.

The success of Namoi CMA depends on implementing a successful engagement and communications strategy.

This document outlines the engagement and communications strategy that will be followed to achieve the collaboration and information sharing required and, as a result, the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.

The strategy has been developed using the Engagement and Communications framework adopted by Namoi CMA in November 2011. The framework is included as Appendix 1. The goals, objectives, audiences and context for the CMA’s engagement and communications activities were all evaluated to determine this strategy.

Context

A review of the internal and external context for Namoi CMA’s engagement and communications activities has shown that there a number of challenges to overcome, but there are also advantages and assets Namoi CMA can use.
Internally there are sufficient resources to implement a sound strategy, the organization is well known\(^1\) throughout the Catchment, there is basic communications infrastructure established including the website, the newsletter and most importantly Namoi CMA staff are well regarded and connected to the Community. The main challenge is to better integrate these elements into a comprehensive, flexible and responsive communications effort to deliver on the new Namoi CAP and the Strategic Plan.

An internal review of the communications context found that the catchment community contains a wide range of views. Some see Namoi CMA as an honest broker and somewhat separate from Government. There also appears to be support for science based, objective decision making for important natural resource management issues such as coal seam gas and coal mining. At the same time there are groups and individuals in the Community who are strongly in favour of development, see the CMA as another Government Department and who view any constraint on land management practices as an unfair infringement of their rights. From a practical perspective all CMA engagement and communications activities have to fit into a very crowded calendar. There are significant parts of the Community who know little about the actual operations of Namoi CMA and for them natural resource management is not a primary concern.

Given this context the challenge for Namoi CMA is to identify and connect with those groups and individuals in the Community who have already worked with the CMA, those who have expressed an interest in working with the CMA and importantly reaching those individuals with whom Namoi CMA would like to work. A priority group to target are members of the Community who manage land in areas identified in the CAP as requiring action. Recent research completed for the Community Partnerships program clearly demonstrates that there are many groups who are keen to improve natural resource management and would like to partner with Namoi CMA.

The regulatory and institutional framework within which Namoi CMA works is also important context for the engagement strategy. The State and Federal Agencies and other state and national organisations are important audiences for Namoi CMA.

**Objective**

The overall objective of the engagement and communications strategy is to communicate the goals of the on-ground programs of Namoi CMA and to engage land managers and others in implementing them.

This strategy seeks to achieve the outcomes that were first identified in the 2007 Engagement and Communications Strategy, which were:

- a catchment community that is encouraged to have a sense of ownership of NRM initiatives;
- voluntary and enthusiastic participation in activities;
- informed and motivated stakeholders, empowered to undertake their own NRM activities and decisions;

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\(^1\) Ipsos 2010 Report
feedback on the performance of Namoi CMA to enable modification to future engagement activities.”

Audiences

Namoi CMA works with three main audiences. It is important to note that these are not three discrete groups as individuals may be part of more than one audience group. The groups are broadly defined as:

- **Land managers.** These are mainly individuals and groups with whom Namoi CMA enters into contracts as part of implementing the Annual Investment Plan on ground. This sector also includes not only current partners but also past and potential future partners.
- **Partners and stakeholders.** Individuals and organisations Namoi CMA interacts with on a regular basis such as contractors, researchers and community groups, e.g. the NAAC, NLGG and Landcare. This is a large and diverse sector. Namoi CMA works with them in different ways; some as contractors to the CMA, some as colleagues and partners such as neighbouring CMAs and fellow members of Namoi councils, and some other organisations with a general interest in natural resource management in the catchment, as potential co-investors.
- **Regulators & Funders.** Organisations and individuals who influence and set the regulatory and institutional framework the Namoi CMA operates in, and provide funding for the organisation. State and Federal agencies are the largest group within this sector.

Each of these sectors has different information needs in regard to:
- Content
- Medium or mode of receiving information
- Timing and frequency of contact
- Interactivity, or the degree to which the information is part of a two-way exchange.

These issues have all been considered in developing of this engagement and communications strategy.

The strategy

Namoi CMA will use an adaptive management approach to its engagement and communications. Such an approach recognises that a robust engagement strategy involves two way communications. Feedback and input from the Catchment Community and others who work with Namoi CMA works will be used to modify the strategy over time so that it remains responsive to and in line with community expectations.

The strategy involves developing engagement and communications activities on two main levels, at a corporate level to communicate the messages of Namoi CMA as a whole and to set the framework for Namoi CMA communications, and at a program level to communicate specific messages to achieve the objectives of each Annual Investment Plan program and other programs that may be funded from time to time. The Framework will be applied to each program or project to develop the specific approach.

An overall theme that can be modified and applied at both levels is proposed. It is proposed that a theme based on the idea of **linking individual and community well being with the health of the**
natural resources of the Catchment be adopted. This theme is based on analysis of feedback\(^2\) from the audiences which indicates that a theme that relates the health of the biophysical resources in the Catchment and the viability and strength of the socio-economic systems in the catchment will be well received. For example, soil and plant health can be related to farm profitability; river health can be related to social activities such as fishing and other forms of recreation; and the overall state of natural resources in the catchment can be related to the vibrancy and health of the catchment community.

The theme will be applied to a wide range of situations and can be used for all CAP targets.

**Communications activities and methods**

The strategy will use the full suite of communications methods, including the website, external and internal e-newsletters, Namoi Matters and Team Talk respectively, media releases and advertising in traditional print media, direct contact with selected audiences, publication of research and scientific reports in digital and print formats, and face-to-face activities such as seminars and workshops. The overall theme, relating Catchment natural resource condition with the concerns of each audience, will be integrated and used across all these platforms. More specific themes and messages will be refined to suit particular program needs.

All communications activities will be integrated so that each individual communication event complements all others. For example, items in the newsletter will direct people to the website and promote seminars and workshops as appropriate. At workshops and seminars follow up information will be made available on the website. In all communications activities the main theme will be reinforced.

The following methods will be used;

- On-line methods including the website, e-newsletters and social media, where appropriate and an audience exists
- The website will be further developed to act as a key information resource for anyone wanting to know more about specific issues such Upland wetlands or the benefits of habitat restoration. This will not just involve using the site as a library from which people can download information but it will host interactive services so that individuals can select information of particular relevance to them and their enterprise
- Printed publications and reports will be prepared for situations when Namoi CMA has commissioned key research such as the Cumulative Risks Approach
- Seminars and workshops will be used where they support specific programs as the current series of soil health workshops are supporting the Groundcover and Precision Agriculture programs. These events are an opportunity to further promote Namoi CMA staff who are well regarded by the Catchment Community.
- Briefings are proposed for selected important groups such as key regulators, politicians and groups such as the Namoi Local Government Group
- Print, radio and television media is proposed for key interviews and for situations where the traditional media is the best communication channel
- The Community Reference Panels will play a role in engaging the wider Catchment Community as well as acting as a sounding board for particular Namoi CMA communications strategies.

\(^2\) Issues impacting on the sustainability of rural communities. A Hogan et al joint project with the Cotton Communities CRC.
A key feature of the strategy will be the integration of the message across all the channels of communication so that a consistent picture of Namoi CMA will be projected to different audiences, in different ways and at different times and all with the same goal of improving engagement with all Namoi CMA partners and stakeholders.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The strategy will be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that it meets Strategic Objective 3 of “driving Namoi CMA as an NRM centre of excellence through collaborative innovative leadership”. Progress on all the initiatives undertaken under this strategy will be included in the Engagement and Communications report section of the monthly report to Namoi CMA Board.

Monitoring and evaluation activities associated with this strategy will be implemented in line with the Namoi CMA MERI Strategy and annual investment plan. The efficacy of the strategy will also be evaluated in the triennial social benchmarking evaluation which is due to be conducted in F13.

Regular monitoring and evaluation will ensure that we improve our engagement and communications performance and build on our current good relationship with the Catchment Community.

Conclusion

In summary the strategy will involve further development of the website to make access to key information easier and to build the interactivity of the site and thus a two way conversation with our audiences. Namoi CMA will integrate activities across programs and for organisation as a whole so that messages are consistent and promote the general theme of linking the health of the natural resources in the catchment with the health and wellbeing of the Community. Finally we will continue to enhance the reputation of Namoi CMA staff as trusted and reliable members of the Namoi Catchment.
Appendix 1: Namoi CMA Engagement and Communications Framework

Connecting with the Catchment Community

Engagement and communications framework

May 2012
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Executive Summary

From its inception Namoi CMA has recognised the importance of engaging with its clients, partners and other stakeholders to achieve landscape-scale improvement in the sustainable management of natural resources. The CMA has developed a number of strategies over the years to achieve the best possible engagement with the Namoi community. The advent of a new Catchment Action Plan (CAP) provides an opportunity to update and integrate current engagement and communications strategies.

Accordingly a new engagement and communications framework has been developed to replace the existing strategies. It is recognised that Namoi CMA needs to engage with the community on a number of levels. The CMA works with public and private institutions, commercial and volunteer organisations and individuals. It engages with them over different lengths of time which range from part day information sessions to projects which might last for several years. The new engagement strategy recognises the wide range of engagement situations and establishes a process which can be applied across the organisation and across themes, programs and projects.

The process will follow six steps. It will be applied at an organisational level on a regular basis and it will be integrated into the project development process. The process recognises the critical importance of clarifying the aims of each engagement and setting Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time bound (SMART) objectives which can be used to evaluate the success of the engagement and communications activities. The steps in the process are:

Step One: Ask the big questions about the purpose of the engagement and communications plan under development. This step should attempt to answer questions such as; what is the major goal? What are the specific objectives? Who are the key people whose cooperation we need?)

Step Two: No engagement plan begins in isolation so it is important to establish the context for the plan both inside the CMA and externally. A review of the context for the engagement and communications will indicate how the audience feels and thinks about the issue as well as how it is perceived within the organisation.

Step Three: Step one will have identified the target of the engagement, for example the Catchment Community as opposed to other Government Departments. There are likely to be different sub groups within the main target audience group. Strategic choices should be made about issues such as the audience, readiness, core concerns, theme, message and messenger.

Step Four: In this step the communications activities including tactics, timeline, assignments and budget, will be planned.

Step Five: Once the detail of the plan is worked out the monitoring and evaluation strategies and activities will be decided.

Step Six: As a final check before the plan is put into practice it should be reviewed by people not involved in developing the original plan.

Completing these steps will ensure that the appropriate communication tools and techniques are used to convey the right message to the selected audience. In this way we will build the capacity of the community to understand and work towards the CAP targets by engaging with them through communicating key messages using the full range of media and social media and a full range of techniques such as education, extension and partnerships.

The purpose of this engagement strategy is to ensure the catchment community understands the importance of the CAP targets adopts the targets as their own and works cooperatively with the CMA to make progress towards them.
Purpose

The purpose of this engagement and communications strategy is to document the principles and approach the Namoi Catchment Management Authority (Namoi CMA) will use to engage with the Namoi catchment community.

From its inception Namoi CMA has always recognised that it must engage with its clients, partners and other stakeholders to achieve landscape scale improvement in the condition of the natural resources and the economic conditions of the catchment. This strategy describes how the Namoi CMA will work with the community to meet the targets and commitments identified in the Namoi Catchment Action Plan (CAP).

The CAP was developed in consultation with the community and with other partners including state and federal agencies, public and private research institutions and key experts to ensure that the targets identified in the CAP reflected the aspirations of the whole community.

This document describes an engagement and communications strategy that builds on the previous work done by the CMA and the community and identifies how the CMA will engage with the community in the future to achieve the CAP targets.

This engagement framework will result in the catchment community understanding the importance of the CAP targets, adopting the targets as their own and working cooperatively with the CMA to make progress towards them.

Context

The Namoi CMA operates as a statutory authority established under New South Wales legislation. As a result it must comply with certain requirements including:

- The Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003
- NSW Natural Resources Commission Standards and State wide targets
- State and Australian government preferences as to where investment funds are directed
- Caring for Our Country and Catchment Action NSW funding requirements.

As noted in the 2010 CAP;

“The contribution and collaboration of industries, producer organisations, landholders, Aboriginal and other community groups, Local Government, non-government organisations and the Australian Government along with the NSW Government is critical to achieving good natural resource management in NSW.”

NCMA has identified more than twenty different types of organisations, ranging from farmer and industry groups to state and local government organisations, which are critical to achieving good natural resource management in the catchment. A summary of the clients, partners and stakeholders of NCMA has worked with and will work with is detailed in Appendix 1.

Independent surveys show that the NCMA has developed a sound reputation and is well thought of by the community (IPSOS Eureka 2010 Survey). However, a review of the CAP by the Natural Resources Commission of New South Wales noted that the NCMA would benefit from introducing a new engagement and communications strategy that is adopted right throughout the organisation from the board to all staff members and integrated into its operations.
NCMA has previously developed strategies and guidelines for community capacity building, engagement, partnerships, and communication. These documents were developed at different times, by different authors and by different units within the NCMA. This document replaces the capacity building guidelines, engagement and communications strategy documents, as the strategy builds on and integrates the previous strategies. The partnership policy document will be updated separately. Appendix 2 contains a list of the documents commissioned or prepared by Namoi CMA which have informed this strategy.

The Namoi CMA engagement process

The Namoi CMA engagement and communications strategy is based on integrating an engagement process into its operations. The process will be used at an organisational, program and project level to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged in the most effective way.

The dynamic nature of the issues the NCMA is dealing with and the changes in stakeholder groups and organisations mean that it will be more effective to adopt a process for engagement that can be updated regularly and for each particular target audience. Appendix 3 details the range of engagement for the NCMA as described in the April 2010 Capacity Building Guideline. This engagement strategy is based on a consistent set of principles that can be applied to all circumstances NCMA is likely to face.

This will ensure NCMA engages with the community on their terms and in a way that will result in joint ownership of projects and plans to meet CAP targets. Decisions about specific communications and extension activities will be made with reference to particular members of the community.

Community engagement is an ongoing process that requires constant monitoring and modification to remain effective. It involves listening to the community and adapting to their concerns so that the relationship is nurtured and develops strength and robustness over time.

The CAP details critical thresholds for each of the three biophysical themes, biodiversity, land and water, and identifies areas within the catchment for potential investment. The CAP also details how the thresholds are used to prioritise investment in programs and finally projects to achieve the strategic goals of the CAP.

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CAP
   sets strategic direction for
   Investment plans

Programs defined

Projects are identified and prioritised for each program

Project 1

Project 2

Project 2
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Figure 1 the project identification process.
Projects are ranked according to a number of criteria including the potential socio-economic impact of the project and its “achievability”. A key aspect of achievability is identifying the individuals and groups with whom the Namoi CMA must collaborate to make the project a success.

This engagement process will be used at a project level to ensure the right people and organisations are engaged with each project and that the right communications methods and media are deployed.

The Namoi CMA also needs to engage with all stakeholders on a corporate level which will require different engagement and communications strategies and actions. However all engagement and communications activities should be integrated so the Namoi CMA “brand” is continually enhanced.

The engagement process comprises the following steps which will be applied to all critical engagement and communications decisions at an organisational, program and project level.

Figure 2 shows the first stage in the Namoi CMA investment planning process.

**Figure 2 Namoi CMA project development process; first stage**

The engagement process will begin during this stage of the investment process and be used to determine the programs which Namoi CMA will invest in. As the investment planning starts to identify specific projects to achieve the program goals the engagement process will be repeated for each individual project as shown in figure 3.
The engagement process steps

There are six steps in the engagement process which will be followed at each stage of program and project development. The steps are outlined below and discussed in more detail under each step.

**Step One:** Ask the big questions about the purpose of the engagement and communications plan under development. This step should attempt to answer questions such as; what is the major goal? What are the specific objectives? Who are the key people whose cooperation we need?

**Step Two:** No engagement plan begins in isolation so it is important to establish the context for the plan both inside the CMA and externally. A review of the context for the engagement and communications will indicate how the audience feels and thinks about the issue as well as how it is perceived within the organisation.

**Step Three:** Step one will have identified the target of the engagement, for example the Catchment Community as opposed to other Government Departments. There are likely to be different sub groups within the main target audience group. Strategic choices should be made about issues such as the audience, readiness, core concerns, theme, message and messenger.

**Step Four:** In this step the communications activities including tactics, timeline, assignments and budget, will be planned.

**Step Five:** Once the detail of the plan is worked out the monitoring and evaluation strategies and activities will be decided.

**Step Six:** As a final check before the plan is put into practice it should be reviewed by people not involved in developing the original plan.

**Step One: Asking the big questions**

The first step is to identify the **broad goal**, **objectives** and key **decision makers**. In other words, why are we doing this, what do we want to achieve and who do we need to work with to make it happen. No planning for how to engage should take place until these decisions are made.

The **broad goal** should be an ambitious goal that summarises the Namoi CMA’s vision for change. These goals will change from situation to situation. As an example at an organisational level the Namoi CMA might aim to have the CMA identified as the best regional natural resource management body in Australia. At a program or theme level the goal will relate to some of the CAP targets and for a specific project the broad goal will also relate to a CAP target but will be a more tightly focussed goal.

Once the broad goals are clear and agreed, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound) objectives are identified. There may be more than one objective for a particular program or project and different communications strategies and tactics may be required for each objective. **SMART objectives** will be identified for each goal. Actions detailed in the CAP are potential objectives, but some may need to be modified to be SMART. As an example, CAP actions 64 and 65 which currently read as:

- Action 64; Ensure that information moves through the Catchment about shocks, drivers and how they are likely to impact on the people of the Catchment
- Action 65; Invest in supplying information about natural resources and how they underpin human activity

Could be expressed as:
• Supply information about shocks and drivers and their potential impacts to five key industry groups in the catchment so they implement revised management strategies.

The final stage of Step One is to identify the key decision maker/s in the target audience who has/have the power to deliver on an objective, e.g. if an objective is to change behaviour, the decision maker may be a group; if it is to change policy it might be an elected official or key bureaucrat; and if it is a change in corporate policy then the decision maker might be the CEO or other senior executive. If the objective is to have five industry groups change their management strategies, as written in the objective above, then the decision makers might be the committees or executive officers of those industry groups.

Step Two: Context

Once the key program decisions have been made the context for engagement is established by conducting an internal and an external scan. This involves detailing the assets and challenges, both internal and external, faced by the organisation.

An internal scan would define such information as staff skills, budgets, resources and tools available to implement the strategy. The scan would also identify challenges to be overcome or considered. The scan would also identify organisational strengths to be taken advantage of. The internal scan will be part of the “achievability” discussion that forms part of the project development process.

The external scan is an opportunity to assess the environment for communications and engagement efforts. This could include the current state of debate on a key issue; identifying other organisations working on the issue and whether they are working with NCMA or against NCMA; obstacles and partnership opportunities; and any communications opportunities the CMA can take advantage of.

The aim of the external scan is to decide whether the engagement plan needs to frame, fortify and amplify or reframe the debate. If the issue is not being debated then a plan can frame the debate, if you support the direction a current debate is heading you can fortify and amplify the debate and if you wish to change the direction of the debate you can reframe it.
Step Three: Strategic choices

1. Audience

No engagement plan will work unless it is designed with a specific audience in mind. The more clearly the audience is defined, the more strategic we can be about reaching that target audience. Audiences can be segmented by demographics, geography and other categories relevant to the issue. The Namoi CMA will allocate resources to understanding as much as possible about the stakeholders with whom it will work.

If five industry groups are the target audience the audience profile will focus on the composition, location, characteristics and values of the five groups. It may be necessary to develop five different strategies to achieve the overall objective.

2. Readiness

When thinking about the audience it is important to understand what they feel about the issue to be raised. Communications and engagement can be thought of in stages – sharing knowledge or providing information, building will and reinforcing action by providing feedback and congratulating people on their achievements.

   a. **Sharing knowledge and information.** People need basic knowledge about an issue before they consider acting. If the audience is at this stage it is important to share information that is comprehensive but does not overwhelm but helps them develop a personal response to the issue so they care. The issue will become important if it is relevant to the values they believe are important. It is also critical to share empowering solutions so people feel they can make a difference.

   b. **Building will** is about overcoming barriers to action which the target audience may have. Instead of sharing information this step is about minimising the risk of participation by offering simple steps within their power or by showing them actions already taken by their acknowledged leaders or peers.

   c. **Feedback and celebration.** Once people have taken action it is important to reward them for doing the right thing. It is important to celebrate victories with people who have done the right thing.

3. Core concerns

It is critical to understand how the audience thinks about our concerns. By understanding how the audience feels about an issue it is possible to build a bridge so the NCMA’s issues and concerns can be shared by them.

All the individuals and groups the NCMA would like to work with have their own agendas, timetables and issues that are important to them. As an example, an irrigator might be concerned about water quality because his pumps are wearing out but the NCMA is concerned about water quality from a habitat perspective. If the NCMA can show the irrigator how pump maintenance can be reduced by improving water quality by undertaking riparian zone management, there may be support from the irrigator for such a program.
4.  Theme

The theme of the engagement is the big picture message to be conveyed to the audience. It could be negative or positive. In a natural resources context a positive message might be framed around restoring a stretch of river that could be used for recreation or fishing while a negative theme would focus on the damage done to the environment and to the other members of the community by a particular practice. The choice will depend on the research and information obtained in the external scan and in the review of the audience.

5.  Message

The next step in engagement is deciding the message. The message selected can be tested against the following questions:

- Is it based on the audience’s core concerns?
- Does it overcome – not reinforce – their barriers to action?
- Does the message ask for action that is within easy reach of the audience?
- Does it convey a vision of a desirable future?
- Is it consistent with the overall theme?

Thinking about the objective; “Supply information about shocks and drivers and their potential impacts to five key industry groups in the catchment so that they implement revised management strategies”, one possible message might be: “Stopping new weeds entering the Namoi will save you time and money” Such a message could be part of a strategy that encourages the audience to seek information from the NCMA.

6.  Messenger

The final strategic choice is the selection of the messenger to deliver the message. Research shows that people listen to people not institutions, and that they listen most to people; “just like me”. This explains the choice by some mining companies to use “farmers” in their recent campaigns promoting them as looking after the country.

Organisations often use case studies of successful people from similar backgrounds to the audience as the messengers for communications strategies as they usually have more credibility than any “expert”.

**Step Four: Communication activities**

It is only when all of the previous strategic decisions have been made that an organisation can decide what communications activities it will use. The communications activities are the tactics by which the message is conveyed to the audience. It could include meetings, web sites, newsletters, a press conference, letters, paid advertising, and social media and telephone calls. What is important is not so much the media used, rather that the media used are the ones most likely to reach the audience.

Once activities have been agreed the next step is to plan timing, taking into consideration the work schedule of the organisation as well as the schedule of the audience. There may be other events that could be used or should be avoided to ensure that our message/s gets through. Any engagement and communications strategy should be integrated into the CMA operations and the work plans of the target audience.

Key tasks should be assigned to appropriate people so that roles and responsibilities are clear. This may involve staff, volunteers and collaborating partners.
Finally a budget should be prepared which takes into account key information on capabilities, resources and skills defined in the internal scan.

**Step Five: Monitoring and evaluation**

The Namoi CMA will include in each engagement and communications plan how it will monitor and evaluate its success. While the overall measure of success for the CMA is progress towards the CAP biophysical and socio-economic targets project, specific project plans will have more detailed objectives which will also be monitored and evaluated.

The success of each engagement and communication plan will be measured in outputs as well as in outcomes. As an example engagement activities may be measured by the number of people reached and made aware of a particular issue as well as by the number of people changing practice and adopting new practices. Outcomes may be measured in a number of ways, such as quantitative and qualitative surveys, which will all be related to the objectives identified in the planning phase of the engagement.

**Step Six: Final reality check**

The final step in any engagement process before it is implemented will be a review. The following questions are examples of what will be asked to ensure that strategies are realistic and can be achieved with the available resources.

- Are our resources in line with our strategy?
- Does our internal and external scan support the decisions we’ve made?
- Have we listened to the concerns of the target audience?
- Are we motivating the right people to take the right action at the right time?
- Will the tactics move us toward our objective? Will they reach the appropriate audience(s)?
- Are we using the best persuasion practices, such as respecting the audience’s lifestyle, sharing hope, making them the hero, positioning the issue within the social norm, etc.?
- Are there any assumptions built into the plan that require further research to confirm or correct?
- Can we measure progress?

**Implementing the framework**

In the 2007 Engagement Strategy Namoi CMA identified the following desired outcomes:

- “relationships based on trust, honesty, equity and transparency;"
- a catchment community that is encouraged to have a sense of ownership of NRM initiatives;
- voluntary and enthusiastic participation in activities;
- effective shared decision making;
• informed and motivated stakeholders, empowered to undertake their own NRM activities and decisions; and

• feedback on the performance of Namoi CMA to enable modification to future engagement activities.”

These outcomes are still important and progress towards them will be used to monitor the strategy as it is implemented.

Implementation of this strategy by the CMA will involve the following initial steps

1. Review the current investment planning process to ensure that engagement is integrated into project plans and develop detailed plans for engagement during the roll out of each program and initiative.
2. Review all the socio economic data available, which may be held currently by the CMA or by other organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics to build a better picture of the community.
3. Analyse Namoi CMA’s capacity to deliver the strategy based on existing skills, resources and organisational arrangements as well as gaps or deficiencies that need to be addressed.
4. By May 2012 establish three community reference panels which represent the tablelands, slopes and plains subregions of the Catchment.

Conclusion

The Namoi CMA is at the forefront of natural resource management in New South Wales and Australia. It has recognised that there are always opportunities to improve and build on its achievements. This engagement and communications framework takes an adaptive management approach to working with stakeholders. NCMA wants to build on the successes of the past and achieve more in partnership with the community in the future.

The Namoi CMA wants to work with the catchment community to establish “a vibrant community in a future landscape”. The CAP defines specific targets for each of the four themes.

The purpose of this engagement framework is to ensure the catchment community understands the importance of the CAP targets, adopts the targets as their own and works cooperatively with the CMA to make progress towards them.

We will build the capacity of the community to understand and work towards the CAP targets by engaging with them through communicating key messages using the full range of media and social media and a full range of techniques such as education, extension and partnerships.
Glossary

Given the previous policy and guideline development in this area it is appropriate to clarify the definitions that apply to each of the terms.

Strategies and guidelines have been developed for activities including; capacity building, communications, community engagement, education, media, partnership, and, recently, social media. The following definitions have been used in this document.

**Capacity building:**

“Capacity building processes are designed to help people understand and manage their changing circumstances thereby improving stocks of human, social, financial and natural capital.”

Extension provides the tools and processes to build capacity. There are five extension models which have been defined in the literature.

1. **Group facilitation/empowerment** techniques are based on providing people with a facilitative framework that allows them to define their own problems and reach their own conclusion as to the best way to address issues facing them.
2. **Programmed learning** operates in the belief that workshops and courses, using an adult learning philosophy will equip people with the skills to resolve issues and problems.
3. The **Technology Development model** assumes that specific technological (including managerial, landscape and environmental) change requires a focussed effort and should involve all stakeholders.
4. The **Information Access** model recognises that people require different information at different stages of decision making processes in a form that suits their individual needs.
5. The **Consultant** model uses an external agent of change to demonstrate or facilitate a process of building capacity.

**Communications:**

“Communications describes the process by which the sender of a message sends the message to a receiver. It includes all the many methods by which a “message” may be transmitted to the receiver and the whole variety of ways in which the message may be prepared.”

**Community engagement:**

This definition is taken from the Victorian Government’s Department of Sustainability and Environment handbook on community engagement. It was included in previous versions of the engagement strategy prepared by Namoi CMA.

**Engagement** “The broad range of interactions between people. It can include a variety of approaches, such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.”

**Community** “Groups of people; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups, citizen groups, etc. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as industry or sporting club”).

Consequently, **community engagement** is “…a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest or affiliation, to address issues affecting their well-being. Linking the term ‘community’ to ‘engagement’ serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from individual to the collective, with associated
implications for inclusiveness, to ensure consideration is given to the diversity that exists within any community.”

Education:

Education is the formal process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, customs and values from one generation to another, e.g. instruction in schools, TAFE or university.

Media and social media:

Media are the tools used to store and transmit information and data, including traditional media such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines and new social media such as twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Partnership

A partnership is an agreement between two or more parties, who might be individuals or groups of individuals, to work towards a common goal.
## Appendix 1 Namoi CMA Clients, Partners and Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY / Partners / Stakeholders/ Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Industry– Individuals, Groups and Industry Bodies e.g. NSW Farmers Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private landholders – individuals and groups e.g. Landcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non - Rural Industry e.g. mining, transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public land managers e.g. National Parks &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Federal Government Agencies, Statutory Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Organisations e.g. CSIRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government and Regional Administrators e.g. Namoi Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community e.g. service clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal community e.g. Lands Councils, NAAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions e.g. schools, TAFE and universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 Source documents

Namoi CMA documents:

- Education Strategy 2006
- Engagement Strategy 2007
- Communication Strategy 2009
- Partnership policy 2009
- Capacity Building Guideline with updates of engagement, communications and education 2010
- Catchment Action Plan 2010-2020

Commissioned documents:

Molino Stewart Pty Ltd “Partnerships in the Namoi Catchment: Baseline Research and Scoping Future Opportunities” October 2008
Roberts Evaluation Pty Ltd “Using Partnerships” July 2009
Ipsos-Eureka “2007 Social Survey of Namoi CMA Stakeholders”
Ipsos-Eureka “2010 Social Survey of Namoi CMA Stakeholders”
Appendix 3 The spectrum of public participation and engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCREASING LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION</th>
<th>INFORM</th>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
<th>EMPOWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>To provide balanced and objective information to assist the community in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions</td>
<td>To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions</td>
<td>To work directly with the community to ensure their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered</td>
<td>To partner in each aspect of decision making, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</td>
<td>To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOLS</td>
<td>Mass media, Fact sheets, Websites, Forums</td>
<td>Focus groups, Public meetings, Surveys, Call for comments</td>
<td>Workshops, Deliberate polling, Advisory groups</td>
<td>Projects, Partnerships</td>
<td>Devolved grants, Delegated decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY SECTOR</td>
<td>General community who are not directly involved in NRM management</td>
<td>“NRM community” who have an interest and may become involved further along the spectrum</td>
<td>When the CMA acts as a conduit to policy and decision makers to ensure local opinion is heard and considered, such as groups and individuals affected by policy, strategy or legislation</td>
<td>Groups and individuals able to deliver or support delivery of the CAP targets</td>
<td>Generally the role of CMA – representing the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMOI/CMA</td>
<td>e.g. TV advertising awareness campaign</td>
<td>e.g. CAP consultation, Macro Water Sharing Plan consultation</td>
<td>e.g. Groundwater compensation package, NAAC</td>
<td>e.g. Landholder contracts, Partnerships</td>
<td>e.g. Devolved grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NAMOI/CMA