Identifying the stakeholders

The objective of cooperative management for our vision of a healthy, resilient and productive landscape with diverse, interconnected ecosystems and communities is to negotiate collaborative relationships that contribute to a strategy that connects public and private lands and improves the sustainability of rural landscapes. Spatial analysis is required to align the vision with stakeholder objectives for the delivery of multi-jurisdictional on-ground projects. Mapping the role of social and ecological landscape aspects will help the Group to identify opportunities for strategic stakeholder partnerships. Collaborative partnerships with SE Local Land Services and local government regional councils are particularly useful in connecting public and private lands across the Southern Tablelands.

The Group's strategic approach specifies that:

> *We work with rural and urban landholders and the wider community to care for natural resources, in the interests of our members*

Members will benefit from the flow-on effects of stakeholder partnerships linking neighbouring regions for extended landscape-scale outcomes associated with increased biodiversity and productivity values. Members will also benefit from the sharing of resources and knowledge that evolves with extended regional networks for the enhancement of strategic biodiversity corridors and stepping-stones for connectivity of habitats and species.

Rural landholders

About 15% of the ACT is taken up with agriculture (Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Environment 2018) and agriculture or land for farming represents approximately 35% of the Molonglo catchment's land-use pattern. Traditional rural industry of sheep and cattle grazing is the predominate enterprise in regional agricultural areas. The Agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors made up approximately 24% of registered businesses of the entire Canberra region in 2018 (https://economy.id.com.au/cbrjo/number-of-businesses-by-industry). Land values are high in the catchment, being influenced by the proximity to urban centres and the national capital. The additional value attached by the market to land located close to major population centres impacts on the ability of farming businesses to expand through land purchase and may tend to intensify any agricultural expansion towards the south-east of the catchment and beyond.

In a complementary reaction to the increasing land values and tendency to smaller property sizes, agricultural viability becomes increasingly dependent on high value, often more intensive, enterprises. In 2017 the Canberra region Agribusiness employment was 12% in comparison to 2.2% across NSW (https://www.canberraregion.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CBR-Region-Industry-Profile-Agribusiness.pdf). Establishment and viability of cottage industries such as vineyards (e.g. Pialligo, Mount Majura, Lake George and Murrumbateman), olives, alpacas and truffles varies with market fluctuations, product demand, and seasonal impacts. Expanded access to international markets following the recent availability of flights to Singapore and New Zealand from Canberra Airport and the recent catastrophic fire season are relevant examples of impact variability.

Migration to currently rural areas tends to change the character of communities, bringing in people who often have little experience of managing rural land, but with high expectations of their rural lifestyle. Growth of smaller lots will make biodiversity and waterway protection more complex and present a new challenge to Landcare and other local environmental groups. Land-use planning decisions by local government such as rural development and intensification may pose significant challenges for catchment health. Increased residential and visitor populations in the catchment has the potential to increase the rate of environmental

damage. One observation from Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council is that there is a relatively high turnover rate of properties, with landholders remaining in the shire for an average of around seven years. This presents challenges in maintaining a satisfactory awareness of environmental issues. On the other hand, rural residential landholders have undertaken substantial tree planting, weeding and erosion control work so that some areas have seen an improvement in environmental management under rural residential subdivision.

Urban landholders

The Lower Queanbeyan River and the Molonglo River at Fyshwick to Lake Burley Griffin, Sullivans Creek and increasingly, the Lower Molonglo sub-catchments (including Weston and Woden) are heavily urbanised with almost an 80-85% built environment. This urbanisation imposes high impacts on the riverine and lake environments, especially from stormwater, debris and pollution inputs. However, these environments are also highly valued as a recreational and aesthetic resource, with many people choosing to walk and cycle on the lake fringe, undertake boating on the lake and river, and with increasing development (e.g. Kingston Foreshore) on the lake's edge.

Employment of urban landholders is dominated by the Public Administration and Safety sector, which reflects employment in the urban centres, Canberra and Queanbeyan. There is also a healthy small business sector at least partly associated with Government and Defence. The profile is similar in the regional NSW part of the catchment except for a significantly higher proportion of people being employed in Construction and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in rural areas, than in the catchment as a whole.

People from the city continue to move to rural sub-catchments for permanent 'life stylers', weekenders and retirement. The attraction of the catchment will rise as Canberra and Queanbeyan land values increase and as services improve. At the growth rates experienced between 1997 and 2002, the population could increase by over 25,000 people within the next 20 years, significantly changing current population densities in the catchment. Already over the last 40 years, there has been substantial extension of residential developments into the Tuggeranong and Gungahlin areas, as well as cross-border commuters who reside in NSW but work and use public facilities (schools, shopping centres) in the ACT.

Over the period 2017 to 2022, natural population increase is predicted to contribute approximately 50% of the ACT's population growth, with the remaining demographic components being made up of overseas migration 47% and interstate migration 3%.The total population projected for the ACT between 2018 and 2058 is 703,422 people (https://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/snapshot/demography/act).

An added complexity is that, despite the decentralisation of Canberra city services planning, an uneven distribution of residential areas eventuated compared to office and industrial areas, which results in a high level of worker commuting across the territory and border.

Not all places in the Canberra region will increase or change at the same rate. While the Snowy Monaro Region will decrease by 2,950 people from 20,550 in 2016 to 17,600 in 2041 - a fall of 0.62%, the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area is projected to increase by 7,550 people from 57,800 in 2016 to 63,350 in 2041 - a rise of 0.49%. The Yass Valley region will increase by 550 from 16,550 in 2016 to 17,100 in 2041 - a rise of 0.13% and Goulburn Mulwaree will also increase by 3,250 people from 30,250 in 2016 to 33,500 in 2041 (https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections/Projections-Explorer). This will have a significant effect on the availability of land for agriculture and other issues such as water security, biodiversity impacts, and natural resource availability in the Canberra region.

Wider community

Opportunities exist and are yet to be realized for urban, peri-urban and rural landholders to be engaged in the maintenance of important habitats for wildlife, linking Parks and Reserves by privately owned gardens and rural properties. By connecting isolated areas of habitat, wildlife corridors are created and enhanced. These are vital connections for many species of birds and animals to move from one area to another across the built environment and between large areas of publicly owned national parks and reserves.

Our programs aim to engage the community in exploring and developing innovative technologies for climate adaptation. For example: urban planning, building design and codes, rural infrastructure and farming practice, and water management. There is likely to be increasing emphasis on climate adaptation as impacts of climate change are recognised and extreme events of fire, flood, hail, and the like are experienced along with consequent effects on health, and the security of power, water and other utility services.

Members and volunteers

Our members steer the direction we take and the services we offer. We aim to facilitate stewardship through community engagement projects in collaboration with our member groups to attract volunteers from the wider community. Joining one of our member groups is the best way to get involved with us. The groups can provide information, advice and updates on activities and projects in their respective focus areas. Our members primarily fit into three categories:

- Landcare groups—working on their own private properties or public reserves in rural and peri-urban areas
- Parkcare groups—working in public parks and reserves across the region
- Community—individuals and organisations with a concern for the health of the catchment and its component environments, ecosystems and species.