



Evaluation of the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy

Summary report

November 2007

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Executive Summary

Shortly after the release of the National Biodiversity Strategy (1996), Victoria led the way by being the first Australian State Government to release a State Biodiversity Strategy (1997). The Victorian Biodiversity Strategy aimed to clarify the concepts underpinning biodiversity. The concepts it promoted included 'assets', 'bioregions', 'net gain', 'connecting biodiversity to place' and 'condition (as well as extent)'. It also had a mandate to express the intent of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988) in practical goals to enable planning and measurement of effectiveness. The environmental goals in the Strategy were:

1. "There is a reversal, across the entire landscape, of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of **native vegetation**, leading to a net gain with the first target being no net loss by the year 2001.
2. The **ecological processes** and the biodiversity dependent upon terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments are maintained and, where necessary, restored.
3. The present **diversity** of species and ecological communities and their viability is maintained or improved across each bioregion.
4. There is **no further preventable decline in the viability of any rare** species or of any rare ecological community.
5. There is an **increase in the viability of threatened** species and in the extent and quality of threatened ecological communities."

This report presents the findings of an external evaluation of this Strategy. The evaluation was conducted by Clear Horizon Consulting Pty Ltd on behalf of the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify key lessons from the development and implementation of the 1997 Victorian Biodiversity Strategy (VBS) to inform the effective development and implementation of a renewed strategy and to provide input on policy directions and outcomes sought for the White Paper on Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change. However, this evaluation was not intended to determine the current state of biodiversity in Victoria. The core methods used in this evaluation were qualitative inquiry, document content analysis and collation of secondary data concerning the environmental goals. The qualitative inquiry consisted of seven (7) group interviews and twenty seven (27) individual semi-structured interviews. A total of one hundred and eight (108) people were consulted. Fifty-seven (57) of those consulted were external to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and comprised representatives from environmental groups, Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), industry groups and Local Government, Water Authorities, Universities, consultants and other non-DSE State Government. The document analysis consisted of a literature review of 15 key strategies.

Overall, this evaluation found that while the environmental goals of the Strategy have not yet been reached, the VBS did lay the foundations for beginning to achieve them in the following ways. It clearly conveyed the degree of change required by providing maps that compared the state of the asset in 1750 with 1987. Informants described how these maps are still used today for presentations, 10 years after the Strategy was released. The VBS also defined and clarified the meaning of biodiversity and relevant concepts such as net gain. Informants felt that the 'bioregional approach' promoted by the Strategy had the highest degree of influence out of all the concepts promoted because it fed into the development of regional strategies. Victoria was leading the way in this respect, as it was the first State to use this concept. The bioregional approach allowed for more segregated analysis of biodiversity assets and resulted in a tenure-blind analysis and a shift towards a greater focus on private land. One informant suggested that around 2000 there was a 'whole shift onto an emphasis on private land rather than public land as the primary way to conserve biodiversity'.

One of the things that the VBS promoted was the development of new tools. Several informants linked the creation of new tools back to the VBS. The tools that were linked to the VBS included tools for assessing the extent and quality of native vegetation (habitat hectares and Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) mapping). It promoted tools for influencing private land holders to manage for biodiversity outcomes ('BushBroker', 'BushTender', 'PlainsTender'). It also promoted the further development of databases for cataloguing threatened species, such as the Actions for Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) database. It also precipitated the Native Vegetation Framework which is the key tool for protecting native vegetation in Victoria. The Native Vegetation Framework was a synthesis of various recommendations of the Strategy, and was seen to be directly linked to the VBS. In a sense it was the 'implementation framework' for a large part of the VBS.

In addition to laying the foundations by clarifying concepts and influencing the creation of new tools, the VBS was expected to influence the policy and practices of other stakeholders working in the biodiversity arena. While there was certainly some disappointment among some informants with the degree of influence that this strategy had, there is evidence to suggest that it exerted some influence over some of the key agencies responsible for implementing biodiversity actions. Notably, it influenced Victoria's ten Catchment Management Authorities, with many using the VBS as a basis to create the biodiversity section of their Regional Catchment Strategies – these biodiversity specific strategies had not existed before. Within State Government, it was thought to have influenced the Ecologically Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (ESAI) of the Agriculture Division, Department of Primary Industries) which was a precursor to the 'Our Rural Landscape Initiative'. VicRoads has created their own biodiversity strategy and have incorporated the concept of net gain into the way they manage land. The Country Fire Authority (CFA) also developed a biodiversity strategy which borrows directly from some of the VBS. It was also noted that the educational materials developed for schools was included in the curriculum and reached many pupils. Despite influencing these agencies and stakeholders, it was thought that the VBS had insufficient impact and acceptance across a range of industry groups, local government, other Government Departments and the general public.

The VBS promoted the creation of a system of regionally representative reserves. Over the 10 years since the Strategy was launched, several new reserves have been created, but it needs to be acknowledged that the role of VBS in their creation is somewhat indirect. An example of this is the establishment of a range of reserves in Box Ironbark woodlands, and new marine reserves. National records suggest there has been an 8.27% increase in the amount of terrestrial land under reserve between 1997 and 2004 which amounts to a total of 3,714,456 ha under reserve in 2007. There has been a 46.8% increase in amount of area within marine reserves from 1997 to 2004 (in 2004 there were 29 reserves totalling 94,629 ha). Another example is the increase in protection on private land that has been brought about by the Trust for Nature - in 1997 Trust for Nature had purchased and owned 2,000 ha, whereas now, in 2007, they have purchased and own 35,000 ha. In terms of covenants, in 1997 there were 5,000 ha under covenant in Victoria, while now there are 35,000 ha. However, the influence of the Strategy on the work of the Trust is indirect and more associated with using common language and adopting priority setting criteria (eg bioregions, EVCs, conservation status and conservation significance) and thus assessing and directing their priorities to sites of High and Very High Conservation significance.

Despite all the work undertaken by many agencies and stakeholders, there has not yet been a decline in the overall rate of loss of native vegetation. The rate of decline for woody native vegetation has slowed, while the rate is higher than previously estimated for grassy native vegetation. Some examples include the loss of native grassland on farms, particularly due to cropping and intensive pasture management, and loss of river red gum condition from water starvation. Some areas have had net gain e.g. Grassy Woodlands on the Longwood plains. Also clearance of 1,005 ha of native vegetation and approximately 1,800 scattered trees under applications to Local Government was avoided through negotiation by DSE, over a 6 month period in 2006-2007.

There are few known improvements in the status of the threatened species or rare species at a state-wide level. This has been substantially affected by a decade of drought ("nail in coffin"), which exacerbates other anthropogenic changes to the environment. An example of decline is the Mountain Pygmy possum. Localized examples of increased viability of a species include populations of Superb parrot, Grey-crowned Babbler; new populations of orchids and an increased number of Concave Pomaderis. Long-nosed potoroos have also increased due to fox control as part of the Southern Ark program.

While there is considerable evidence to suggest that the VBS did help lay the foundations for biodiversity management, there were a number of issues raised by informants suggesting that the process used to create the Strategy should have been better, implementation of the Strategy could have been strengthened, and there were some important gaps in its content. It was felt by the majority of informants that there was insufficient consultation during the creation of the Strategy. As a result, there was limited penetration and buy-in from some parts of State and Local Government, industry, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the broader community.

The key issues raised by informants about implementation of the Strategy were that, firstly, the environmental 'stretch targets' have not yet been achieved and there is insufficient data to accurately report on trends, and the Strategy lacked SMART¹ targets, indicators and ways of assessing progress (it was acknowledged, however, that the goals were essentially 'aspirational' and perhaps they needed more realistic timeframes). A key factor behind the slow progress towards the achievement of environmental goals was felt to be that no additional money was

¹ Specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and timebound

put forward at its commencement in 1997 for implementation and follow through. In addition to these issues, many informants felt that the Strategy did not give sufficient guidance on implementation such as how to address issues, or who was responsible.

Informants also felt that the Strategy gave inadequate coverage on certain issues and themes including: marine biodiversity, grasslands, appropriate fire management, climate change, peri-urban development, threat management in general, Indigenous engagement and capacity building.

In a large workshop attended by approximately 80 VBS stakeholders, participants analysed the achievements of the Strategy and the issues associated with it to synthesize the following recommendations. The participants represented a broad range of organisations including State Government, Local Government, CMAs, industry groups, environmental groups and NGOs. In this workshop, Clear Horizon consultants presented the findings, and then facilitated a workshop session in which the participants developed draft recommendations to address the key findings. Following the summit workshop, a second smaller workshop was conducted in which the draft recommendations from the summit were aggregated and synthesised into themes. The recommendations are presented as broad recommendations, followed by a series of ideas that could be used to achieve each recommendation. The recommendations are grouped under the following five themes:

1. What the revised Strategy should look like:

- ensure that the next strategy is concise and clear
- include a clearly articulated vision with state-wide targets.

2. How the revised Strategy should be created:

- ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the creation of the Land and Biodiversity White Paper and revised VBS.

3. Emerging and additional issues that the revised Strategy should include and address because they may impact on biodiversity in future:

- marine
- grasslands
- climate change
- appropriate fire management
- peri-urban development
- indigenous values
- threat management
- capacity.

4. How implementation of the revised Strategy can be improved:

- create a comprehensive implementation plan
- describe the mechanisms that will be used to gain continued funding
- adopt a whole of government approach to biodiversity management
- implement through partnerships with business and industry
- build capacity and support people to implement biodiversity outcomes
- build awareness of biodiversity in the general public
- promote 'flagship projects' to build hope and find ways of making things work
- implement appropriate tools and policy mechanisms
- employ effective priority setting processes
- invest in research, mapping and data integration.

5. Arrangements to monitor, review and report on progress:

- create an effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework for the revised Strategy.

Background - the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy

In 1997, Victoria was the first Australian State to release a Biodiversity Strategy. The Strategy was released as a three document package - it was published in three volumes, each with a different purpose and target audience:

- Sustaining Our Living Wealth. A strategic framework outlining general principles against which priorities can be determined
- Our Living Wealth. Provides a description of Victoria's biodiversity
- Directions in Management. Describes actions to be undertaken to achieve fully integrated biodiversity conservation throughout each bioregion in the State. This volume includes a vision to 2020 – 'a history of the future'.

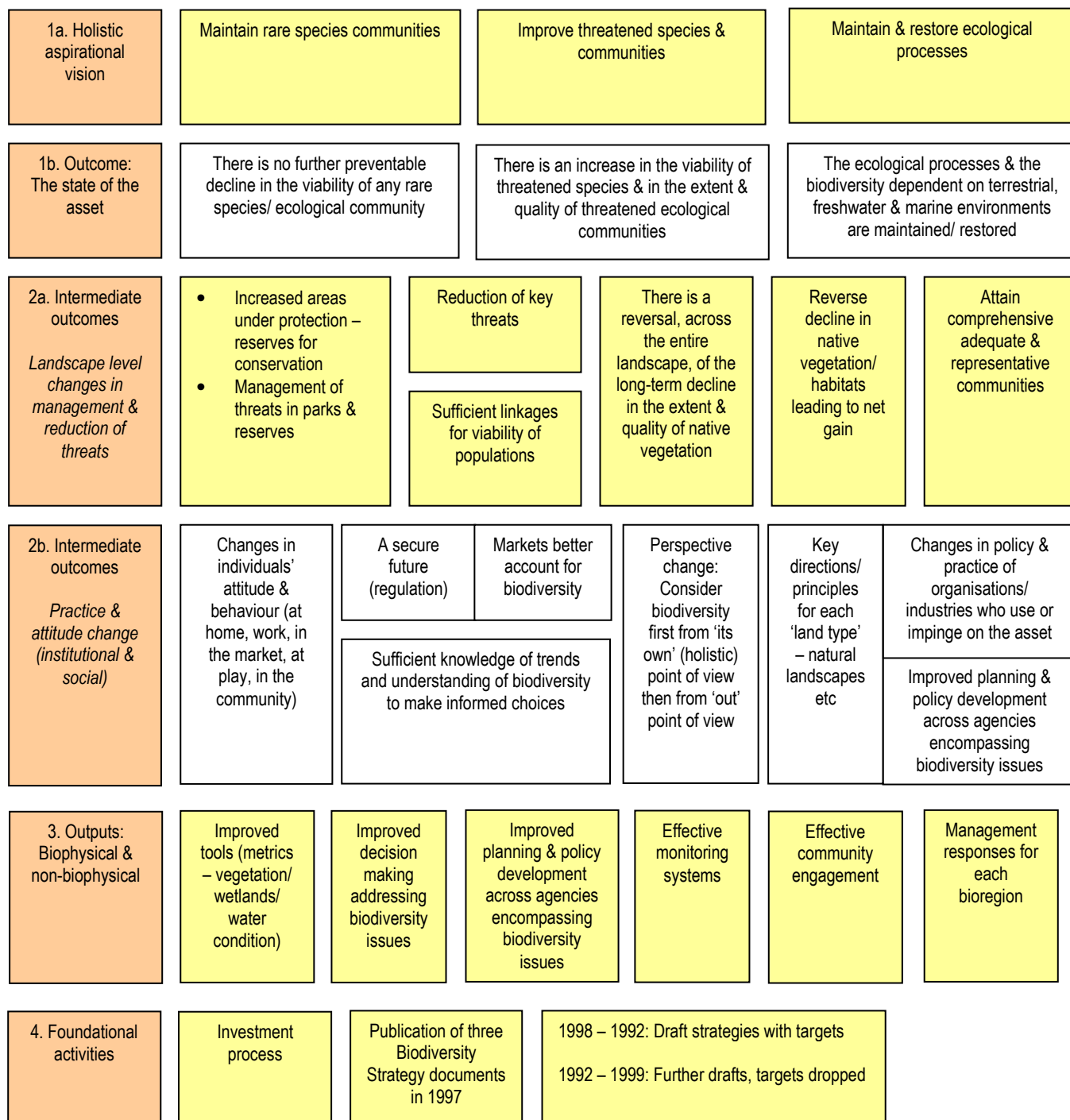
The Victorian Biodiversity Strategy (VBS) aimed to clarify understanding of biodiversity - assets, bioregions, net gain, connecting biodiversity to place, condition (as well as extent). It also had a mandate to express the intent of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* in practical goals to enable planning and measurement of effectiveness. The environmental goals in the Strategy were:

1. "There is a reversal, across the entire landscape, of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of **native vegetation**, leading to a net gain with the first target being no net loss by the year 2001.
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It should be noted that the preparation of such a strategy is a requirement under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

The 'theory of change model' in Figure 1 shows the link between the foundational activities associated with implementing the Strategy and the outputs and outcomes sought. The model was developed retrospectively in a workshop with key stakeholders on March 1st 2007.

Figure 1: Theory of Change for the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy



Socio-historical context of the development of the Strategy

From 1980 onwards, Victorian policy on biodiversity was strongly influenced by global developments. There were several significant events that marked this era including the release of the Bruntland Report 'Our Common Future' in 1987 and the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. These events were promoted by the evidence of unprecedented and accelerating species collapse (Bradsen, 1992²). The word 'biodiversity' itself, is generally linked back to the Rio convention, where for the first time, there was a major international forum to consider what the issues were and what needed to be done (see timeline in Appendix – Section 9.3).

In Australia, the awakening of this environmental consciousness was signalled by significant events including the signing of the international Ramsar Agreement in 1991, the commencement of the decade of Landcare in 1990, and an increased amount of crown land being set aside as protected estate.

In Victoria, under the Kirner Government, the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act was released in 1988. This was one of the first policies aimed at biodiversity conservation in Australia. Under the Act, Victoria was committed to introducing a biodiversity strategy. This became more pressing when Victoria became a signatory to the 1992 Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment, where all states were mandated to create their own biodiversity strategies.

Other legislation and strategies further influenced the content of the VBS. These included:

- Review of Water Act (1989)
- Wildlife Act (1975)
- Native vegetation regulations (1989) under the Planning & Environment Act
- CALP Act (1994)
- Timber industry strategy 1986

Development of a strategy was driven by increasing realisation that biodiversity assets were being lost and would continue to be lost, for example the loss of indigenous grassland communities in Victoria. A draft strategy was completed in September 1992 under a Labour Government. The 1992 draft was relatively specific in terms of implementation guidelines and concrete targets. It also had a strong focus on threatening processes, which was seen as a criticism of industry. Informants of this evaluation concluded that the Government of the time, and the general attitude toward biodiversity in the early 1990s, was not ready for such a strong position.

The 1997 VBS was released under the Kennett Government, and was substantially different in form than the draft produced in 1992. This disparity will be discussed in the findings of the evaluation. Several informants of this evaluation felt that it was the *only* sort of strategy that would have been endorsed at that time.

² Bradsen, j (1992) Biodiversity Legislation: Species, Vegetation, Habitat. Environmental and Planning Law Journal, June 1992, pp 175-180

Approach taken in the evaluation

The evaluation comprised four successive components, namely:

- Step 1: Discover (Secondary data analysis, benchmarking and other field work)
- Step 2: Synthesise (Participatory analysis of findings). A large group forum (an 'Evaluation Summit') was held in which participants analysed vignettes describing outcomes associated with the VBS as well as key issues and challenges identified in Step 1
- Step 3: Dream (Development of options for the renewal of the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy). At the same Evaluation Summit (see Step 2), participatory formulation of recommendations and actions
- Step 4: Report (Analysis, conclusions and recommendations). A second (smaller group of DSE officers) workshop was held in which the outcomes of Step 3, were worked into a series of final recommendations and a full evaluation report produced

Figure 2: Overview of methods used to address key evaluation questions in Step 1

Question	Key method	Who/what
1.1 To what extent has the Biodiversity Strategy lead to an increase in people's understanding and appreciation of the key concepts promoted in the strategy?	1. Literature review of other key strategies	10 regional catchment strategies 5 other key Govt. strategies
1.2 To what extent did key stakeholders adopt key concepts in their policies/strategies (direction)?	2. Group discussions in 5 regions	A range of regional stakeholders, DSE and external
	3. Group discussions with key informants from DSE (2)	Group discussion DSE
	4. Key informant interviews with people in key strategic/ policy positions outside DSE	Key informants External and internal to DSE
1.3 To what extent did the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy influence the key 'resource users'?	5. Individual interviews with key 'resource users'	Industry users of Biodiversity asset
2. How does the Strategy align with the Government's current priorities and the DSE outcomes framework? Are there opportunities for further alignment?	6. Secondary analysis of key Government strategies	GVT DSE framework
3. To what extent have the objectives of the Strategy been realised?	7. Collation of data for two bioregions against the program logic model	During regional group discussions
	8. A specialist group interview to make judgements as to the extent to which the environmental goals had been achieved	Specialist group
4. To what extent were the objectives adequate?	This question was addressed by methods 3, 4 and 8.	
5. What factors, positive and negative, have impacted on the implementation and relevance of this Strategy and in what ways?	This question was addressed by Methods 2, 3, 4 and 5.	
6. How did the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy compare with other biodiversity Strategies?	Review of the Draft Evaluation of National Biodiversity Strategy which compares each of the State Strategies. - also asked in semi-structured interviews	Review Evaluation of National Biodiversity Evaluation Ask during interviews
7. How could the Biodiversity Strategy be improved to be more efficient, effective and adaptive to emerging issues?	This question was also informed by Methods 2, 3, 4 and 5.	

Recommendations

In this evaluation, the recommendations were developed in a participatory manner, involving a workshop (named the Evaluation Summit) that approximately 80 people attended. The participants represented a broad range of organisations including State Government, Local Government, CMAs, industry groups and environmental groups and non-government organisations. In this workshop, Clear Horizon Consultants presented with an overview of the results, and then facilitated a workshop session in which the participants synthesized the key findings and developed draft recommendations to address these findings. Following the summit workshop, a second smaller workshop was conducted in which the draft recommendations from the summit were aggregated and synthesised into themes.

The recommendations are presented as broad statements, followed by a series of ideas that could be used to achieve each recommendation. The recommendations are grouped under five themes which are associated with:

1 What the revised Strategy should look like:

- ensure that the next strategy is concise and clear
- include a clearly articulated vision with state-wide targets.

2 How the revised Strategy should be created:

- ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the creation of the Land and Biodiversity White Paper and revised VBS.

3 Emerging and additional issues that the revised Strategy should include and address because they may impact on biodiversity in future:

- marine
- grasslands
- climate change
- appropriate fire management
- peri-urban development
- indigenous values
- threat management
- capacity.

4 The implementation of the revised Strategy:

- create a comprehensive implementation plan
- describe the mechanisms that will be used to gain continued funding
- adopt a whole of government approach to biodiversity management
- implement through partnerships with business and industry
- build capacity and support people to implement biodiversity outcomes
- build awareness of biodiversity in the general public
- promote 'flagship projects' to build hope and find ways of making things work
- implement appropriate tools and policy mechanisms
- employ effective priority setting processes
- invest in research, mapping and data integration.

5 The arrangements to monitor, review and report on progress:

- create an effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework for the revised Strategy.

1. What the revised Strategy should look like

1.1 Ensure that the next Strategy is concise and clear

Suggestions made at the Summit were that the revised strategy:

- Should be more fully aligned with other State and National strategies.
- Should be more clearly and succinctly written with the key concepts very clearly identified – for example as seen in the WA strategy.
- Needs to build on the maps that were presented in the first strategy.
- Needs to build on the concepts in the first strategy.
- Should include maps and explanation about how bioregional boundaries fit with catchment, and CMA boundaries.
- Should include a new vision statement but builds on the objectives in current strategy, for example it should retain the concept of net gain.
- Should consider alternative report structures such as those adopted by other more recent strategies (e.g. WA strategy).

1.2. Include a clearly articulated vision with state-wide targets

Suggestions made at the Summit were that the revised strategy:

- Should present a longer-term vision; for example a 100 year vision as is presented in the WA strategy.
- Should include a 2030 “Future Vision”. This could be presented as an EVC map, i.e. the third map in the sequence – “the architects’ model”.
- Should present a vision for 2030 that includes a reserve system, with biolinks across public and private land (taking climate change into account), where land use matches the land capability.
- Should present specific targets, for example, 3000 ha blocks of native grassland.
- Should present targets that are SMART (specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time bound) and have ownership”, for example, “every designated waterway will be fenced and managed”.
- Should include cascading targets – e.g. it should have local targets that feed into state targets, that feed into national targets.
- Should include ‘stretch’ targets that encourage excellence, but are nonetheless achievable in the timeframes posed.

2. How the revised Strategy should be created

Ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the creation of the Land and Biodiversity White Paper and revised VBS

Ideas to achieve adequate stakeholder involvement include:

- Industry and communities (including indigenous people) need to be included in strategy development and solutions.
- Conduct participatory landscape planning processes, where stakeholders are involved in articulating their key values and have input into land use planning decisions.
- Develop an effective communications and engagement plan for the development of the Strategy to ensure that the resulting strategy is owned by all sections of community, the whole of Government, industries and the general community.

3. Emerging and additional issues that the revised Strategy should include and address:

- marine
- grasslands
- climate change
- appropriate fire management
- peri-urban development
- indigenous values
- threat management
- capacity.

Each of these is elaborated below:

3.1 Marine:

- Set marine targets to prioritise and clarify investment in marine biodiversity.
- Set indicators to help measure our progress towards the achievement of Marine targets.
- Rectify significant omissions such as the blue whale and sea-grass in the next Strategy.
- Create an equivalent of the Native Vegetation Framework and 'net gain' legislation for marine ecosystems. This could include habitat mapping, EVCs, Biodiversity Action Plans and a suite of tools.

3.2 Grasslands

- Strengthen the focus on grassland EVCs in the next strategy.
- Recommend mechanisms to protect key remaining grasslands EVCs.

3.3 Climate Change:

- Promote a better alignment of biodiversity with various market based instruments, for example carbon trading.
- Introduce a state-wide scale Biolinks Strategy.
- Develop strategies to address risks posed to biodiversity by increased incidents of severe weather events (fires, floods, cyclones, drought). For example, consider seed banks and other seed preservation techniques.
- Investigate how various industries plan to respond to climate change and what implications this may have for biodiversity.

3.4 Appropriate Fire management:

- The revised VBS must propose mechanisms to ensure that fire management is conducted and integrated in a way that considers the impact on and conservation of biodiversity in the fragmented landscape we now have.
- The revised VBS must consider the impact of climate change on increased severity of wildfires, for example, it should suggest how we will retain sufficient unburnt habitat.

3.5 Urban/peri urban development:

- The revised strategy needs to focus on the impact of peri-urban development on biodiversity and how to plan appropriate and considered development which has a reduced 'foot print' on biodiversity.
- Build awareness of biodiversity values in peri-urban areas amongst urban consumers.
- Strengthen the emphasis on land use planning with a focus on the "suitability" of land for specific land uses.
- Provide mechanisms to ensure that assessments of 'land capability' consider biodiversity values, for example when planning high density living, consider what impact this will have on biodiversity values.

3.6 Indigenous values

- Develop and promote partnerships with indigenous people.
- Gain an understanding of the indigenous values associated with Victoria's biodiversity; not just in terms of country but also in terms of workers; indigenous people have always perceived biodiversity management from a landscape perspective. In any future biodiversity management there is the potential for indigenous people to provide services that no other stakeholder can i.e. people to undertake the work.
- Include assessment of cultural values alongside other values in land use planning processes.
- Refer to relevant existing strategies such as the DPI Indigenous Fisheries Strategy.

3.7 Threatening processes:

- Strengthen the focus on how to address threatening processes.

3.8 Capacity

- Provide clear guidance on roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategy.
- Include recommendations concerning how to build the capacity and skills of the sector to do this work.

4. Implementation of the revised Strategy

4.1. Detail a comprehensive implementation plan

Suggestions made at the Summit were that the revised strategy:

- Should provide consistent and clear guidance for the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, and for initiatives arising from it.
- Should clearly specify key tasks, roles and responsibilities for implementing the actions proposed.
- Presents implementation strategies that consider the perspective of key land users, while not compromising environmental outcomes.
- Provides a clear focus on how to manage key threatening processes.

4.2. Describe the mechanisms that will be used to gain continued funding

Suggestions made at the Summit were that the revised strategy promotes:

- Each region having a major initiative funded for each threatening process. For example, environmental weeds, feral animals, fire and control, urban development.
- A system by which a dollar from every E-Tag trip (or tag) goes to fund biodiversity and climate change (perhaps 10 cents per trip). The consumer could choose this option and get a sticker to demonstrate their commitment. There can be options for different levels of contribution. This would help city-based people to contribute.
- The creation of an environment levy to provide assured funding.
- The creation of an effective financial allocation system from the private and public spheres.
- Cost sharing arrangements between government, industry, and community for costs of investigations to proponents – perhaps through a biodiversity fund, to increase equity.
- The Fortune 100 companies to contribute as part of this triple bottom line and get credit for it. Maybe 0.01% of profits?
- Utilisation of income from markets, for example carbon trading, for biodiversity outcomes.
- A clear government initiative with ongoing funding that commits to the implementation of the draft recommendations proposed in the revised VBS.

4.3. Adopt a whole of government approach to biodiversity management

Specific proposals to consider for this recommendation include:

- Promoting whole of government mechanisms for example create a special biodiversity co-ordination unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet as per the Salinity Unit.
- Engaging Premier and Cabinet to obtain ownership.
- Requiring all agency sectors to have a biodiversity performance key result area in their business plan and to report on it.
- Positioning DSE to lead partnerships to form a critical mass.
- Promoting better integration at the local level between CMAs, local government and state government both in terms of administration and through the planning system.
- Enhance linkages between local government and regional planning.
- Having compatible systems for tracking biodiversity related activities.

4.4. Enhance partnerships with business and industry

Specific proposals to consider for this recommendation include:

- Broader and real empowerment of a range of industry stakeholders.
- Analysis of impacts and opportunities on business; use cost benefit assessment where industry is likely to be affected.
- Encourage industries and business to proactively contribute to biodiversity outcomes.
- Create opportunities and frameworks for industry to be involved and invest (eg good corporate citizenship).
- Encourage the reduction of negative externalities on biodiversity.

4.5. Build capacity and support people to implement biodiversity outcomes

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

- Develop a 'one-stop shop' (i.e. knowledge broker) for integrated support on biodiversity (or aspects of biodiversity) to provide practical support to land managers.
- Create a comprehensive accreditation and knowledge tools, for example in the restoration industry.

- Strengthen the focus on capacity and communications.
- Build community momentum and involvement (community education); for example, explain ecosystem function and how we impact on them, and engage communities to make better decisions (key to this is simple communication / building knowledge regarding how ecosystems support communities and industries).
- Build capacity and skill sets for all roles in NRM.
- Broader and real empowerment of a range of stakeholders, for example industry, social values, marine and coastal interests.

4.6. Build awareness of biodiversity in the general public

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

- Build an education/awareness raising program.
- Promote an awareness raising program based on an appeal to community values and love of nature – use appropriate language tailored to the audience – some people suggested dropping ‘biodiversity’ as popular term, instead use ‘nature’; others argue it should be kept.
- Promote an understanding of biodiversity and its role in maintaining life on earth.
- Ensure that the language used in communication documents is simpler and more widely understood.
- Create a simple version of the Strategy for the community.
- Use clear and simple language, able to be understood by everyone.

4.7. Promote ‘Flagship projects’ to build hope and find ways of making things work

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

- Choose one area (or project) and do everything required to succeed with arresting loss, and learn about what works.
- Create flagship projects that show it can be done – the lessons will be transferable! For example, pick grasslands.
- Promote industry partnerships in these flagship projects.

4.8. Implement appropriate tools and policy mechanisms

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

Market-based instruments and other incentive mechanisms:

- Promote new instruments for change for example, build on the concept of ‘duty of care’.
- Provide more incentives for the retention of remnant vegetation for climate change purposes.
- Apply natural capital and ecosystem services to private land.
- Make significant investment for Biodiversity through a market based solution.

Land purchase and covenanting:

- Promote the purchasing of endangered EVCs from private land owners.

Legislation / regulations:

- Create useable and enforceable legislation.
- Amend the Planning and Environment Act to create regional Environmental Planning Authorities that promote a landscape approach to NRM.
- Streamline the permit processes.
- Provide third party rights in biodiversity legislation (for the public).

Partnerships:

- Promote tools and processes to achieve a net gain through partnerships to share responsibility for costs and effort.
- Promote an increase in extension for conservation outcomes.
- Re-fund and enhance Land for Wildlife.
- Promote and retain the Conservation Management Networks.
- Ensure that biodiversity improvement is an attractive 'offset' for industries / providers / community that pollute.

4.9. Employ effective priority setting processes

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

- Prioritise threats and species at a bioregion or landscape level.
- Prioritise our actions and determine which are more important, for example:
 - Pests versus Fencing
 - Fencing versus Grazing
 - Captive breeding versus land acquisition.
- Promote asset Risk Analysis.
- Promote a VEAC/LCC type process for setting priorities for private land use/conservation "cumulative planning".
- Develop tools and mechanism for making choices across biodiversity.

4.10. Invest in research, mapping and data integration

Ideas to achieve this raised during the evaluation include:

- Create an effective system for generating, storing and using relevant data – data integration!
- Develop a research strategy. Identification of research and knowledge gaps. Develop a priority list of where to target information gaps.
- Develop a framework around research into biodiversity and climate change impacts.
- Map all private land in Victoria to identify priorities for regeneration/restoration and incorporate in RCSs & Local Government Association plans.
- Including EVC modelling with climate change.
- Develop spatially explicit maps to identify priorities for production, conservation and restoration, for example scattered woodlands suitable for regeneration.
- Create new display data improved monitoring of biodiversity: long-term, bench marked (not just vegetation).
- Ensure data is accessible.
- Establish a baseline to assist in monitoring trends.
- Monitoring threats.
- Create a stock-take of what is happening at the CMA and local levels in terms of service delivery.

5. Arrangements to monitor, review and report on progress

Specific proposals to consider for this recommendation include:

- Develop an evaluation framework.
- Develop means to maintain a revised strategy as a "living document" (updated → regional/sectoral sections updated as pre requisite of all new relevant subsequent strategies and plans).
- Effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement frameworks, using existing systems where possible.
- Ensure high-level transparency and accountability for implementation of the revised strategy.