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# COORONG DISTRICT Local Action Plan

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**Strategic Management Plan  
2017 - 2022**

# Executive Summary

This plan provides a framework for the management and promotion of the work conducted by the Coorong District Local Action Plan (CDLAP) committee and staff.

The Coorong community has a long history of working together to address local environmental and land management issues. This is evidenced by the extensive scope of works carried out under the Coorong District Soil Conservation Plan and later the Coorong District Local Action Plan (LAP).

Ongoing implementation of the LAP by the Coorong District Council and the CDLAP committee will help to improve the sustainability and profitability of the region's largest industry – agriculture.

CDLAP's vision recognises the important role the organisation plays in the region:

*A sustainable and prosperous future for our community through balanced management of the environment.*



Revegetation Project

The plan is divided into six (6) key result areas, each with a set of goals, strategies and actions:

1. Project Management and Service Delivery
2. Leadership and Planning
3. Partnerships, Networks and Collaboration
4. Resourcing the Local Action Plan
5. Good Governance
6. Awareness & Promotion

Looking to the future, the availability of funding for 'on ground' project projects will be a key factor for the successful implementation of the LAP.

# Background

The Coorong District Local Action Plan (CDLAP) Committee was formed in 1995, following the completion of the Coorong District Soil Conservation Board's District Plan.

Auspiced by the Coorong District Council (CDC) the initial focus of the CDLAP was to address the environmental and land management issues articulated in the Soil Board's District Plan.

In 1997 the CDLAP produced its own "Local Action Plan", written and managed by local community members.

Implementation of the plan aimed to address land management and environmental issues by:

- Controlling groundwater recharge through the broad scale planting of deep rooted perennial plants;
- Conserving and enhancing biodiversity through the protection of remnant native vegetation and wetlands and extensive re-vegetation using local native species;
- Supporting and promoting sustainable agricultural productivity which maintains and enhances the long-term productive capacity and environmental health of the land;
- Improving groundwater management;
- Empowering the community through education and awareness about natural resource management issues; and

- Provision of professional support to community NRM groups and individuals.

The Coorong District Local Action Plan was reviewed and updated in 2000, and again in 2012. Revised plans reflected local and national resource management trends as well as legislative and machinery of government changes with respect to NRM.

CDLAP staff and Committee have an excellent reputation for project management, technical expertise and local knowledge. These attributes, coupled with a commitment to community engagement, have helped the group attract extensive Government funding to implement the Coorong District Local Action Plan.

A willingness to collaborate with like-minded organisations is another key success factor for the CDLAP. Widespread cooperation has enabled the organisation to attract high levels of funding and deliver benefits to the greater Coorong and Upper South East regions.

To this end, in 2010 the CDLAP (through the CDC) formed a strategic partnership with the Tatiara District Council to establish the Coorong and Tatiara District Local Action Plan (CTDLAP). In the same year the Tatiara produced its first local action plan titled: *Natural Resources of the Tatiara A Plan for Local Action 2013-2018*.

# The CDLAP Region

The CDLAP region is aligned to the CDC Local Government area which covers approximately 883,500 hectares of land, 46,800 hectares of lakes and features over 100 kilometres of coastline.

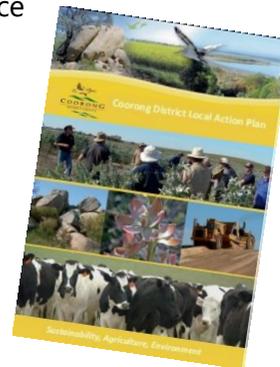
The region is ecologically diverse and supports multiple industries including: fishing, tourism, dryland cropping, livestock production, irrigated broadacre farming, horticulture and viticulture.

Significant natural features of the region include:

- Remnant native vegetation;
- Conservation parks and reserves including Ngarkat and the Coorong;
- Lower section of the Murray River;
- Freshwater lakes;
- The Coorong (estuarine-marine);
- Ramsar Wetlands of International Significance (Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert); and
- The Ngarrindjeri native title claim area.

Comprehensive information on the Coorong region including: topography, landscapes, land use, soils, water supply, vegetation and biodiversity can be found in the Coorong Local Action Plan located at:

<http://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/ctlaphome>



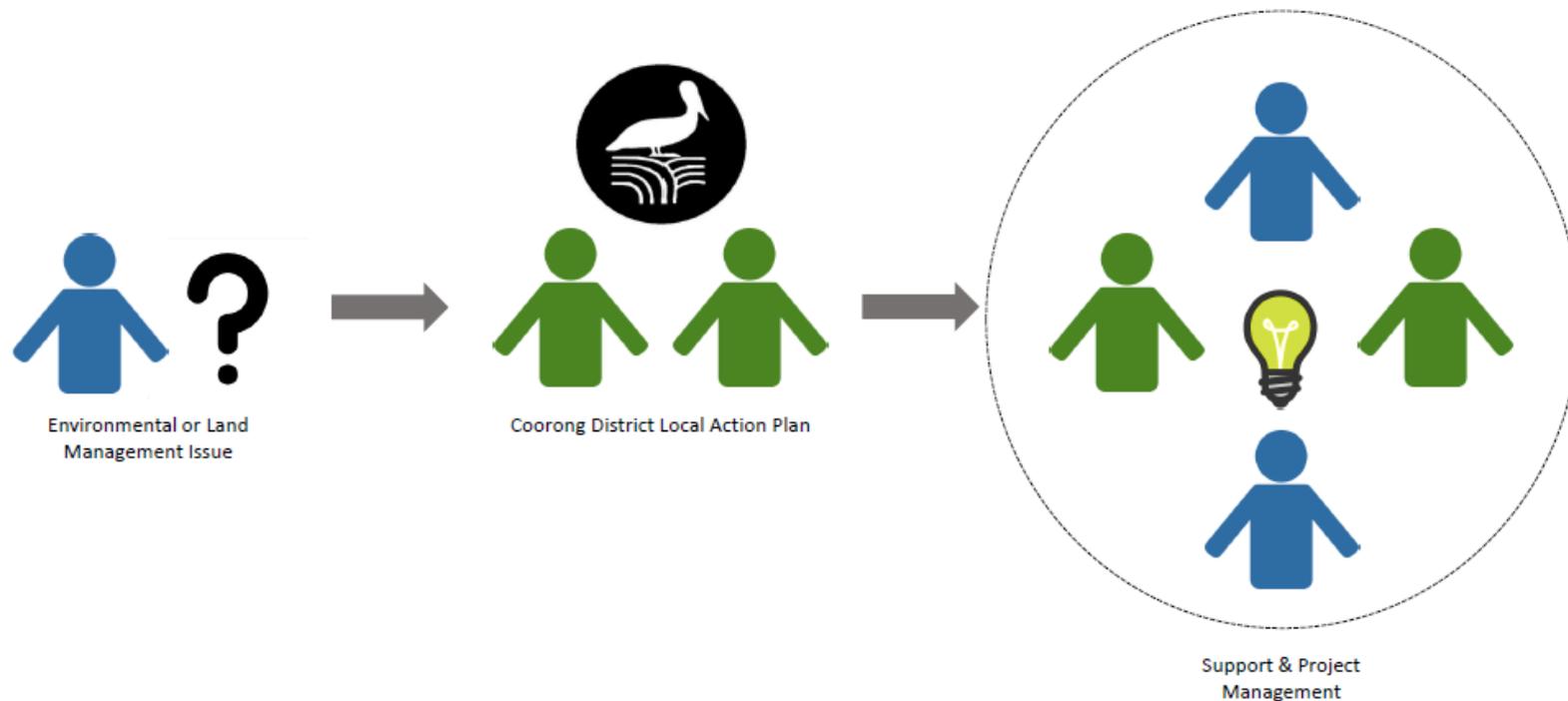
# CDLAP Purpose

The core purpose of Local Action Planning is to align the practice of environmental management with agricultural production.

Local Action Planning acknowledges that management of the local environment starts with the individual.

Community members have the potential to enhance their land management practices, influencing management of surrounding lands and maintaining the health of the environment. They also need to sustain an income for themselves which helps to maintain the district's economy.

Some issues are too large or complicated for individuals to tackle alone. The purpose of the Local Action Plan is to provide support and to build the capacity of individuals and groups to address these larger issues in an effective and timely fashion.



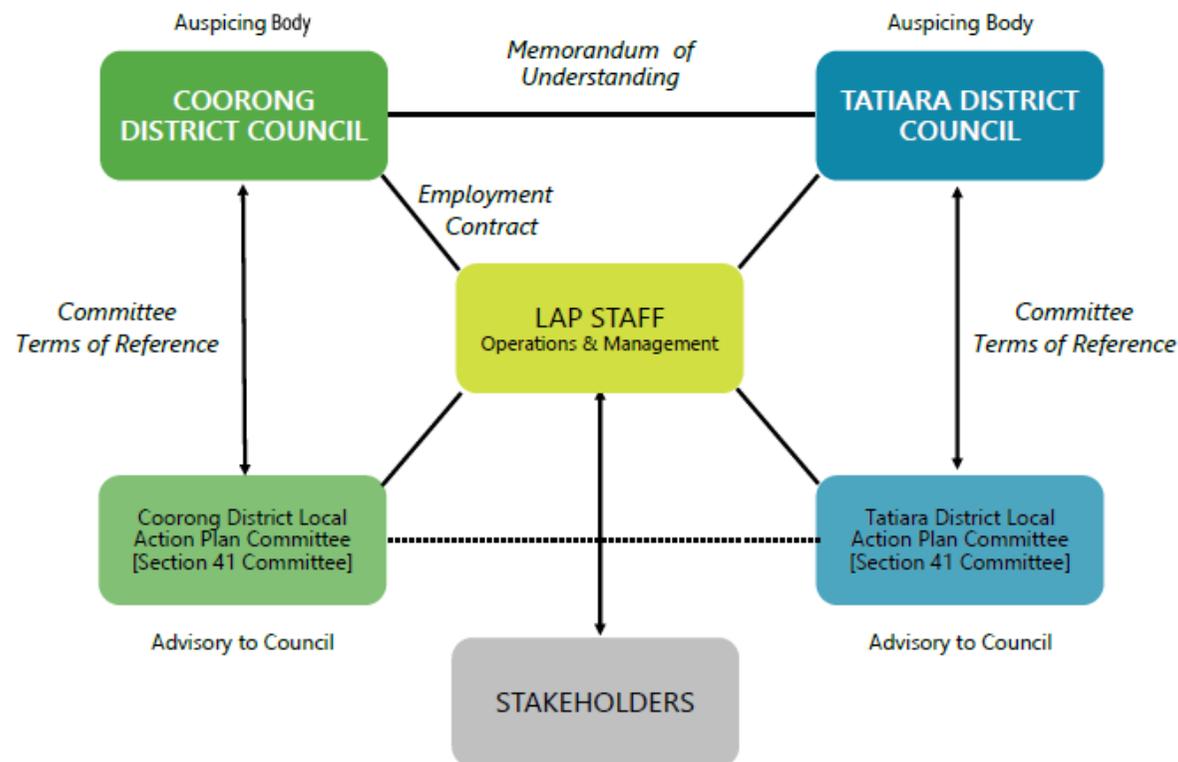
# CDLAP Structure & Governance

The Coorong District Council (CDC) has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the neighbouring Tatiara District Council (TDC) to implement the Coorong and Tatiara Local Action Plans.

Each Council has a Committee established under Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1999. These committees provide advice to their respective Council on environmental and land management issues.

CDLAP staff are employed under contract with the CDC and other resources are contracted as required. Office accommodation, equipment and administration support is provided by the CDC. Financial support is provided by TDC under the MoU.

The relationship between the two Councils, LAP Committees, staff and other stakeholders is represented in the following diagram:



# CDLAP Activity Timeline

**1990**

Coorong District Soil Conservation Board in operation.

**1995**

Formation of Coorong District Local Action Plan Committee (CDLAP).  
Completion of Coorong District Soil Conservation Board Plan.

**1997**

Release & Implementation of Coorong District Local Action Plan.  
Natural Heritage Trust National Action Plan Funding.  
State Landcare Local Government Awards.

**1999**

First review and update of Local Coorong District Local Action Plan.  
State Landcare Catchment Group Award.

**2004**

Introduction of Natural Resources Management Act (NRM Act) 2004, NRM Levy & NRM Boards.  
Winding up Coorong District Soil Conservation Board.  
National Local Government Landcare Award.

**2003**

State Landcare Local Government Awards.  
River Murray Catchment Local Government Award.  
State Landcare Research Award  
Australian Water Industries Award.

**2001**

State Landcare Local Government Awards.  
National Local Government Innovation Award.

**2000**

National Landcare Catchment group Award.  
The Prime Minister's Environment Award.

**2010**

Formation of the Tatiara Local Action Plan Committee and Coorong Tatiara Local Action Plan.  
\$2.158 M Commonwealth Caring for Our Country program funding for sustainable agriculture and biodiversity projects.

**2012**

Second review and update of Coorong District Local Action Plan.  
Commonwealth Strengthening Basin Communities Funding.

**2013**

Development and release of the first TLAP Plan.  
Commonwealth Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund Rounds 1 and 2 to June 2017. \$3.168M.

**Early 2017**

Funding from South Australian Murray Darling Basin NRM Board from the Community Engagement Grants Program and the NRM Connecting Communities Grants (ongoing).

# CDLAP Strengths & Challenges

*The following strengths and challenges relate to the management of the CDLAP, the implementation of the LAP, delivery of projects and engagement with stakeholders.*

## Strengths

- A large management area with diverse ecosystems;
- Excellent track record of attracting funding and satisfying grant reporting requirements;
- Recognised ability to deliver successful projects;
- Experienced and qualified staff who have a strong understanding of local issues;
- A passionate committee;
- Sound governance and accountability provided by Council;
- Established relationships with landholders and other stakeholders;
- An agile organisation that can respond to issues in a timely manner;
- Capacity to add value to Council operations;
- Ability to assist landholders in a practical manner; and
- A recognised source of information and networks.

## Challenges

- Large-scale region and long travelling distances;
- Wide variety of environmental and land management issues;
- Funding uncertainty and lack of continuity of funding;
- Lack of funding for on-ground works;
- Lack of funding to address all regional issues identified in the LAP;
- Local Action Planning is a discretionary function of Council, legislated and core functions take precedent in resource allocation;
- Uncertainty regarding staff tenure i.e. staff are contracted not permanent;
- High turnover of corporate land-managers on corporate farms which affects CDLAP-stakeholder communication; and
- Shift in farm business and community dynamics – larger farms, less staff, smaller communities and less volunteers.

# Priority Issues

The CDLAP is focused on the following issues:

- Wind erosion;
- Soil health (including acidity, salinity and water repellency);
- Groundwater resource management;
- Weeds and feral animals;
- Dryland salinity;
- Water Security;
- Climate variability, weather and markets;
- Native vegetation and wetland decline - loss of biodiversity;
- Decline in the health of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth.
- Community infrastructure; and
- Energy efficiency (Local Government).

The CDLAP continues to address these issues through the following activities:

- Providing technical support for on-ground works;
- Educating and assisting landholders to employ sustainable agricultural practices;
- Providing support to the CDC (where possible) on ecotourism, environmental sensitive development, public health and energy efficiency projects;
- Partnering with and providing support to: agriculture groups, community conservation groups, Indigenous Communities, schools and individuals;
- Employing a flexible and adaptive approach to projects and responding to emerging issues;
- Collecting local intelligence through extensive community engagement; and
- Building the capacity of the community through the sharing of knowledge and skills.

*Note: Issues are not in order of priority and the CDLAP's capacity to address these issues is subject to funding.*

# VISION

*Our vision is for a sustainable and prosperous future for our community through balanced management of the environment.*

# TAGLINE

*Sustainability, Agriculture, Environment*



# Strategic Plan

*The following strategic plan relates to the management of the CDLAP. A strategy to address environmental and land management is contained in the Coorong Local Action Plan. This strategic plan is divided up into six Key Result Areas (KRAs).*

## KRA (1) Project Management & Service Delivery

**Goal:** Our goal is to achieve demonstrable outcomes for the community through the delivery of projects that address the region's core environmental and land management issues.

**Strategy:** We will achieve this through the implementation of the Coorong Local Action Plan (subject to funding that will support project management and service delivery).

### Actions

Please refer to the Coorong Local Action Plan for more information on environmental/land management issues and methods to address these issues.



Wetland Monitoring

## KRA (2) Leadership and Planning

Goal: Our goal is to be leaders in the practice of sustainable land management.

Strategy: We will achieve this by providing leadership to the community, developing and promoting solutions to environmental and land management issues and maintaining a comprehensive set of resources and tools to aid in project delivery.

Actions	Whom	Timeframe
2.1 Ensure engagement with relevant state-wide, regional and local committees.	Committee Staff	Ongoing. Monitor opportunities.
2.2 Provide a 'one stop shop' for landholders who wish to address environmental issues.	Staff	Ongoing.
2.3 Review and update the Local Action Plan	Committee Staff Community	At lease every six (6) years.
2.4 Provide feedback on sustainable land management issues and practices where requested by government agencies and key stakeholders.	Staff Committee	Annual review of priority issues project delivery methods.

### KRA (3) Partnerships, Networks and Collaboration

**Goal:** Our goal is to create a collaborative network of stakeholders centred on the implementation of the Coorong Local Action Plan.

**Strategy:** We will achieve this by developing and maintaining networks across the Coorong region. This will enable us to disseminate information and deliver projects.

Actions	Whom	Timeframe
3.2 Connect and collaborate with likeminded organisations and individuals through a variety of communication and engagement methods. For example: workshops and digital media (eg: facebook and e-newsletters).	Staff	As required to deliver projects.



Water Watch at Lake Indawarra

## KRA (4) Resourcing the Local Action Plan

**Goal:** Our goal is to effectively resource the implementation of the Coorong Local Action Plan.

**Strategy:** We will achieve this by developing first-class funding submissions, developing and maintaining resource sharing arrangements and developing a network of experts and volunteers.

Actions	Whom	Timeframe
4.1 Pursue regional resource sharing arrangements with other organisations (per the MoU with Tatiara District Council) and establish criteria for these arrangements.	Staff	As required.
4.2 Seek and formalise community partnerships as required by grant programs	Staff	As required.
4.3 Seek mentoring assistance for CDLAP in grant writing.	Staff	2017/2018
4.4 Build and maintain relationships with Government funding providers.	Staff Presiding Member/Chair	As required.
4.5 Prioritise funding requests in-line with key focus areas	Staff	Ongoing.



CDLAP Staff Member Samantha Blight with Coorong District 'Green Army' Volunteers

## KRA (5) Good Governance

**Goal:** Our goal is to maintain high professional standards (as required by Section 41 of the Local Government Act) and manage the business of LAP in an efficient manner so staff and committees can concentrate on the implementation of the Coorong and Tatiara Local Action Plans.

**Strategy:** We will do this through establishing and maintaining professional standards, administration systems, monitoring and review.

Actions	Whom	Timeframe
<i>The following actions are excerpted from the CDLAP Future Directions Discussion Paper prepared in August 2017.</i>		
5.1 Review and update CDLAP Terms of Reference.	Council.	In line with Council elections (except for 2018 whereby the process was undertaken in 2017).
5.2 Coorong District Council to provide CDLAP Committee with training on relevant policies, procedures and codes of conduct.	Council.	In-line with Council elections and new appointments.
5.3 Staff to update Elected Members on project activities via Council's Monthly Information Report. A copy of this report shall also be sent to CDLAP Committee Members.	Staff	Monthly.

## KRA (6) Awareness & Promotion

**Goal:** Our goal is to build awareness CDLAP's role within the Coorong community.

**Strategy:** We will do this by utilising existing networks and identifying new opportunities to promote the work of CDLAP.

Actions	Whom	Timeframe
6.1 Review communications, identify gaps and implement new methods (eg: social media)	Staff.	Annually.
6.2 Ensure communication materials use appropriate branding, logos and acknowledgments.	Staff	Ongoing.
6.3 Prepare and promote annual 'report card' to describe CDLAP achievements.	Staff	Annually.
6.4 Update stakeholder database	Staff	Ongoing.
6.5 Using information and materials provided by CDLAP Staff promote the work of the organisation to the wider public.	CDLAP Committee.	Ongoing.



CDLAP Promotional Display at Meningie Food Fun Family Fair

# Contact

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The Coorong. Photo courtesy of Steve Parish: [natureconnect.com.au](http://natureconnect.com.au)