



Environment and  
Natural Resource Management  
**STRATEGY**  
2019



Version: Final – Date: 16/09/2019

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## Introduction

This Environment and NRM Strategy provides the long term framework of strategic level priorities in Break O’Day and is the foundation for a more detailed shorter term action planning. It has been prepared by Council’s NRM Committee and is informed by past and present NRM activity by Council and others in Break O’Day.

The associated *Environment and Natural Resource Management Action Plan 2018-2023* focusses on the most urgent and important actions with outcomes making a positive change to the strategic priorities in this NRM Strategy.

There are roles and contributions the whole community must make to accomplish this NRM Strategy and achieve the priorities in the associated NRM Action Plan.

## Our Environment and Natural Resources

The Break O’Day municipality contains a diverse range of land and water environments over an area of 3,500 square kilometres. This includes almost 200 kilometres of coastline, several major estuarine systems, inland valleys, and highlands including alpine areas. Around two thirds of the municipality is forested.

### Climate

The municipality experiences a cool temperate climate with temperatures ranging from about 13– 0 °C in winter to 23–0 °C in summer and extremes of -9–40 °C, with variation between the milder coast, inland valleys and mountains. Annual rainfall is typically in excess of 800mm but varies again between the coast and inland dry and wet mountain aspects and valleys. Occasional flooding rain events of 100–200mm typically come from low pressure storms on the Tasman Sea.

Assessments of future climate trends for Break O’Day (Climate Futures Tasmania) suggest an increase in annual average rainfall, mainly through increased heavy rainfalls in Summer and Autumn. The rise in daily average temperature is expected to be 2.6 to 3.3°C over the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Extreme events, such as floods, droughts and fire weather are expected to increase.

### Catchments

- **Georges catchment.** Extending from Georges Bay on the east coast into the hills and mountains of the Blue Tier and Mt Victoria areas, with the whole catchment contained almost entirely within the Municipality. Key towns and settlements include St Helens, Pyengana, Goshen and Gould’s Country
- **South Esk.** This is centred on the Fingal Valley and includes the Break O’Day River, with the South Esk River flowing beyond the Municipal boundary to finish in the Tamar estuary. Key towns include St Marys, Fingal and Mathinna
- **Scamander.** Inland from Scamander and largely forested
- **Douglas.** The Douglas River flows from forested hills and mountains, much in the Douglas-Apsley National Park, north of Bicheno
- **Musselroe - Ansons catchments.** Bounded by the coast to the east and the Great Musselroe River to the west. The main settlement is Anson’s Bay
- **Small coastal catchments.** Many separate catchments of small coastal of streams and wetlands such Deep Creek in the north, Grants Lagoon and Dianas Basin, St Helens Point, Yarmouth Creek at Beaumaris, Henderson Lagoon, Four Mile Creek and Chain of Lagoons

- **Ringarooma, North Esk and Swan-Apsley catchments.** Portions of these larger river catchments occur in Break O’Day.

## Geology

The geology of the region is dominated by marine sedimentary rocks (the ‘Mathinna group’ of old mud–, silt– and sand–stones) and intruding volcanic rocks: granites, such as inland of St Helens, and dolerite that caps most of the tiers and mountains. Thin layers of Permian sandstones and limestone (that include some coal seams) also occur. In more recent geological times water erosion and deposition processes have shaped the character of the landscape in combination with tectonic movements and coastal processes to produce the mountainous peaks, valleys and coastal plains and coastlines on today.

Tin, coal and gold have all been mined extensively in the past, together with a number of lesser minerals such as tungsten. Today the main mineral extraction industry is coal mining in the Fingal Valley, involving open-cut and underground mining supplying Tasmanian industry.

## Vegetation

Approximately two-thirds of the Municipality is covered by native vegetation; this includes reserved land, multiple use State Forests, and native vegetation on private land. Over 160 different forest communities have been identified in the area.

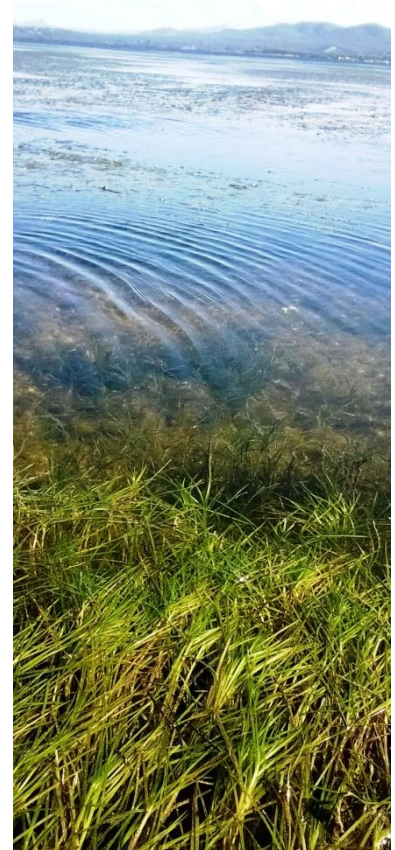
In addition there are many vegetation communities with few if any trees made up of shrubs, heaths, grasses and sedges and rushes. These ‘non-forest’ communities are typically found in poorly drained and challenging environments where weather, fire, drainage and salinity extremes naturally exclude trees. Non-forest vegetation communities, often being dense and highly diverse floristically and found around wetlands and water, are often significant fauna habitats.

## Coast

The Break O’Day coastline is one of the defining features of the area and includes extensive rocky shorelines and sweeping beaches many kilometres in length. There are many wetlands and around twenty estuaries or intermittently opening and closed coastal lagoons, including Anson’s Bay, Georges Bay, Diana’s Basin, Wrinklers Lagoon, Scamander River, Henderson’s Lagoon, and Templestowe Lagoon. One wetland, Jock’s Lagoon just to the south east of St Helens is of particular conservation significance and is listed under the international Ramsar convention.

## Marine

The marine areas adjacent to the Break O’Day coastline form a crossroads between warm temperature species common in the waters of southern New South Wales and species adapted to the colder waters of the southeast parts of Tasmania. The colder water species start to dominate at the southern end of the coastline of the municipality. This reflects the influence of the east Australian current reaching down from the mainland to northeast Tasmania. The port of St Helens has strong fishing industry, which includes aquaculture and commercial and recreational fishing.



## Water

Ground and surface water are extracted for domestic and irrigation purposes. Taswater extracts, treats and supplies potable water for town water supplies. For many people in remote locations in the municipality water is supplied by tanks and local streams. Growth in intensive irrigated agriculture has seen the number of farm dams, mostly off-stream, increase in recent years. The South Esk, Ringarooma and Ansons rivers have statutory Water Management Plans to manage water quantities.

The relatively large cover of native vegetation in the area helps maintain good water quality in most streams. There have been concerns in the past for water quality and pollution, in the George catchment for example. The South Esk is part of the greater Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) program which is focussed on water quality issues.

## Background

### Context

This Strategy expands on the strategies for important environmental and natural resource management (NRM) issues in the *Break O’Day Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027* and is informed by the earlier *Break O’Day NRM Strategy 2012* and a review of its progress.

### Vision

A naturally beautiful environment that speaks to our heart. A diverse and thriving community; a place of opportunity. A place where everyone feels safe, welcome and connected.

[Break O’Day Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027]

### Goal

To balance our use of the natural environment to ensure that it is available for future generations to enjoy as we do.

The Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027 was developed through a series of conversations with Break O’Day communities and Council elected members and staff, to seek out and distil their views and aspirations for the future. In those conversations ‘Environment’ emerged as one of the key themes for the values and concerns for many in Break O’Day. The complexity of this theme is shown in the image opposite of key-words used by the community in that process. That complexity is also captured in the Break O’Day NRM Strategy 2012.



## Strategy

	The Community will...	Council will...
Leadership and Ownership	<p>...consider the bigger picture and be open-minded in our views and actions.</p> <p>...lead by example in the use and development of the natural environment.</p> <p>...advocate for things that are important to us.</p>	<p>...be visionary and accountable in sustainable management of our land and natural resources.</p> <p>...represent the views of our community and make decisions for the greater good of Break O’Day.</p>
Communication	<p>...get involved in issues and speak up.</p> <p>...seek and share information.</p>	<p>...listen to, consult and engage with the community and organisations.</p> <p>...keep people informed and be open, honest and proactive.</p>
Natural resources, services and the environment	<p>...practice sound and sustainable management of land and water.</p> <p>...care for our common natural heritage in partnership with other land managers and Council.</p>	<p>...plan, manage and maintain quality natural environment and resources.</p> <p>...strive to deliver excellent community service.</p>
Cooperation	<p>...be an active participant and collaborative contributor.</p> <p>...support community groups, Council and other organisations.</p>	<p>...build and maintain strong relationships and partnerships.</p> <p>...support and facilitate our community and other land managers.</p>
Stewardship/ Custodian	<p>... through our actions, nurture a sense of community responsibility and effectiveness.</p> <p>...respect and value our environment and act with the future in mind.</p>	<p>...make responsible plans and decisions for Break ODay’s natural environment and resources.</p> <p>...balance competing needs while keeping a sustainable future in mind.</p>
Management Resources	<p>...seek the funds and time required to manage our natural environment and resources.</p> <p>...be mindful that Council and others must make difficult decisions on priorities.</p>	<p>...operate with financial sustainability focusing on securing outside funding, spending wisely and being fair to all.</p> <p>...recognise the limitations of resources and the community’s capacity to pay.</p>

## Structure and Operation

The Break O’Day Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027 is structured around three key Goals or themes: Environment, Community and Economy with two others underpinning them (Infrastructure and Services). This NRM Strategy focuses on the Environment goal, but is also mindful of the other Council Strategic Plan goals as they are founded on our environment and natural resources.

This Strategy should be reviewed every five years.

The Environment theme of the Break O’Day Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027.

### Goal

To balance our use of the natural environment to ensure that it is available for future generations to enjoy as we do.

### Strategies

1. Ensure the necessary regulations and information is in place to enable appropriate use and address inappropriate actions.
2. Increase the community’s awareness of the natural environment; the pressures it faces; and actions we can take to sustain it and what it provides.
3. Undertake and support activities which restore, protect and access the natural environment which enables us to care for, celebrate and enjoy it.
4. Recognise and alleviate the issues and risks to the environment from our use, and the risk to us from a changing environment. (For example flood and fire.)

### Key Focus Areas

#### Land Management

Develop the financial and human resources to undertake projects and activities which address environmental issues such as weeds and land degradation.

#### Water

Develop and implement strategies and activities to improve water quality and health within our rivers, estuaries and coastal areas and reduce the risks from flooding, inundation and erosion.

#### Appropriate Development

Encourage sensible and sustainable development through sound land use planning, building and design.

#### Enjoying our Environment

Provide opportunities to access and learn more about our environment and the ways it can be enjoyed in a sustainable manner.



## Strategic Issues

This Strategy adopts the high level strategies and 'key focus areas' for the Environment goal: Land, Water (including coastal and marine), Appropriate Development and Enjoying our Environment. Appropriate Development and Enjoying our Environment are incorporated as 'Our Use'. These high level focus areas of Land, Water and Our Use are then expanded into several broad strategic issues (below).

Land	Water	Our Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land and Soil</li><li>• Biosecurity</li><li>• Flora and Fauna</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Catchment Management</li><li>• Water Quality</li><li>• Wetlands and Waterways</li><li>• Marine Environment and Aquatic Resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Natural Hazards and Risks</li><li>• Access—using &amp; enjoying the Environment</li><li>• Awareness—using &amp; enjoying the Environment</li></ul>

## Environment and NRM Strategic Priorities

- Elaborates the Break O'Day Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027
- Overarching framework of long term strategic priorities
- The issues and activities for balancing our use of the natural environment so it is available for future generations to enjoy as we do
- Aspirational and pragmatic, focussed and responsive
- Shared opportunities, roles and responsibilities

### Strategic principles

The Environment and NRM priorities are responses to the broad strategies identified in the Council Strategic Plan 2017-2027 for achieving its goal for the Environment, and for natural resource management goals informed by the NRM Strategy 2012.

1. Recognise the natural assets we value and the issues and risks our natural environment faces in providing them, and the risks to us from a changing environment.
2. Have the knowledge and skills, plans and controls needed to ensure appropriate use and protection of natural resources and to address inappropriate actions.
3. Undertake and support activities which restore and protect the natural environment and ensure its natural resources are utilised sustainably, enabling us to care for and enjoy it and live in it safely.
4. Increase awareness of the natural environment, the pressures it faces, and actions we can take to sustain it and what it provides.
5. Take opportunities to team-up and cooperate, progressing priorities with the resources we and partners can apply.

Prioritising of the strategies has been on the basis of how important and urgent actions to achieve positive change to the strategic issues are.

# 1 LAND

Develop the financial and human resources to undertake projects and activities which address environmental issues such as land productivity and degradation, invasive weeds and pests and the integrity of our biodiversity.

## 1.1 Land and Soil

Degradation of land and soil is addressed to maintain productivity and healthy catchment systems and water quality.

### 1.1.1 Aim

Reduced soil loss and degradation and pollution of waterways, protecting habitats and land resources.

#### Priority

Medium & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- **Rehabilitation of key erosion sites:** eg. old mining sites, tip sites (incl. groundwater pollution by leachate), quarries, Parkside coastal erosion, Parnella ('yellow') cliffs, other significant sites.
- Monitor **salinity and acid sulphate soil** risks and management needs.
- Promote best practice **soil and water management** in the design and implementation of construction projects (particularly coastal, rivers and waterways—linked to Water Quality strategies).

### 1.1.2 Aim

Adoption of best practice land and soil use maintains sustainable production of farming sector.

#### Priority

Low & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- Promote innovation and development of grazing and cropping practices to improve management of **agricultural soil health**, nutrients, water, biota and carbon and ground cover.
- Encourage integrated **management of browsing wildlife** to reduce impacts on grazing and cropping productivity and wildlife loss.



## 1.2 Biosecurity

Reducing the impacts of weeds, pests and diseases and guard against the threats.

### 1.2.1 Aim

Manage weeds and their spread, containing and reducing their impact on the environment, economy and people.

#### Priority

High

#### Strategic Activities

- Refine specific outcomes and milestones for weed management work plan. Implement the **Weed Action Plan** and control priority weed threats through on ground works and public education
- Maintain priority **weed control** on Council properties and leverage other land managers. (See box)
- Facilitate Inter-agency and landholder support and **cooperation** for cross-tenure weed control, increasing prevention and control coverage and effectiveness.

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### 1.2.2 Aim

Minimise risks of introducing and spreading of weeds, pests and diseases.

#### Priority

High

#### Strategic Activities

- Information, training and encouragement of good **weed, pest and disease hygiene** practices, on a risk management basis (incl. *Phytophthora cinnanommi*). Including weed & disease hygiene best practice in contracts
- **Guard** against new weed, pest and disease incursions and outbreaks (including marine pests), promoting detection and reporting, educating the community and supporting coordinated responses.

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### 1.2.3 Aim

Domestic cats are cared for responsibly; enabling management of stray and feral cats at priority locations.

#### Priority

Medium-Low & monitor

#### Strategic Activities

- Promote domestic cat welfare and **responsible cat management** and reduce roaming and stray cat populations.
  - Targeted **feral cat control** where benefits justify a continuous control program to suppress local populations.
-

Important invasive weed species

- Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
- Willow (*Salix fragilis*)
- Pampas (*Cortaderia* species)
- Brooms (*Genista monspessulana*, *Cytisus multiflorus*, *C. scoparius*)
- Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*)
- Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)
- Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*)
- Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*)
- ‘environmental weeds’—where valuable native habitats are threatened.

*For detail see Break O’Day Council Weed Action Plan.*



## 1.3 Flora and Fauna

Native habitat health and integrity is maintained and the threat of extinction for species and communities is reduced.

### 1.3.1 Aim

Healthy and connected native habitats support biodiversity and ecological integrity at a landscape scale.

#### Priority

High & monitor

#### Strategic Activities

- Strategic landscape management of habitat through the **Planning Scheme**.
- Landscape scale **habitat integrity and linkage** projects – planning, policy, support for land managers, management & restoration works, monitoring biodiversity.

### 1.3.2 Aim

Native flora and fauna and condition and extents of their habitats are maintained and species and communities threatened at national or state level are protected from harm.

#### Priority

Medium-Low & monitor

#### Strategic Activities

- Provide information and knowledge to support native **flora and fauna conservation** management activities and practices by Council, landholders, land managers and the community. Support and participate in biodiversity monitoring and research activities.
- Practical habitat works achieving conservation outcomes for significant and **threatened biodiversity** and habitats (see box).
- Support landholders contributing to local and state outcomes for biodiversity conservation by volunteering to reserve native habitat on their land (**Conservation Covenant rate relief**).

### 1.3.3 Aim

Nature in built environments provides quality-of-life for people and habitat value for wildlife.

#### Priority

Medium

#### Strategic Activities

- Manage tree cover and habitat quality in **urban and peri-urban areas** to benefit people and biodiversity.

### 1.3.4 Aim

Avoid and reduce impacts on biodiversity and their habitats from Climate Change risks.

#### Priority

Medium-Low & monitor

#### Strategic Activities

- Develop strategies to manage threats from **Climate Change** for vulnerable local habitats, species and communities, identifying priorities for adaptation interventions and seeking opportunities for action (such as land use planning, landholder support and habitat and population works).

## Strategy

National and Tasmanian threatened species and communities of local interest, potentially for local conservation works.

- *Eucalyptus brookeriana* forest, *E. ovata* forest, *E. globulus* forest, *E. viminalis* forest, saltmarsh, angasi oyster beds
- swift parrot, masked owls
- New Holland mouse, eastern barred bandicoot, quolls(2), Tasmanian Devil
- Hooded plover – shorebirds & migratory birds
- penguins, yellow tailed cockatoo
- Australian grayling, other native fish, whales
- Davies wax flower, smoke bush, other threatened plants
- Pressures & threats: roadkill, loss of tree hollows.

*Many more threatened and significant species occur in Break O'Day. Consult [www.environment.gov.au/epbc/protected-matters-search-tool](http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/protected-matters-search-tool) and [www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/](http://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/) to explore these.*



## 2 WATER

Healthy rivers, estuaries and coastal areas; water quality and productive aquatic resources.

### 2.1 Catchment Management

Impacting water issues on a watershed scale.

#### 2.1.1 Aim

Coordinate and integrate management priorities of catchments.

#### Priority

Medium-Low

#### Strategic Activities

- Investigate known issues and management in the large catchment systems progressively, including the George, South Esk rivers and others, to review priorities and identify future **integrated catchment management actions** (water quality, waterway fitness, flood and other strategies).
- Investigate the state of our small **coastal water catchments** and their resources to identify priority issues and strategies to manage the health of their aquatic systems.

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#### 2.1.2 Aim

Threats to ground water resources anticipated and managed.

#### Priority

Low & monitor

#### Strategic Activities

- Investigate the state of **groundwater** resources and identify priority issues and strategies for improvement.



## 2.2 Water Quality

Aquatic biodiversity, people and productivity benefit from clean and healthy fresh and marine waters.

### 2.2.1 Aim

Reduced impact on aquatic habitats and water resources from contaminants in surface and ground waters — litter, nutrients, sediments, diseases, toxic pollutants.

#### Priority

High–Medium & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- A focus on **George River catchment and Bay** to address water quality, health, productivity and issues with community and identify water quality improvement priorities, plan and support actions.
- Develop solutions for **action on water quality** priorities identified in other catchments, using integrated and cooperative approaches to monitoring, support and works.
- **Water quality monitoring**: use existing monitoring programs/data, water sampling and testing and sharing information to identify and understand water quality problems.

### 2.2.2 Aim

Minimise the risk of pollutants in stormwater runoff reaching streams, estuaries, lagoons and wetlands.

#### Priority

High–Medium, & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- **Stormwater** runoff treatment systems to remove dissolved, suspended and gross pollutants before reaching receiving waterways, according to priorities for stormwater system management and retrofitted where possible (linked to Healthy Soil and Land).





## 2.3 Wetlands and Waterways

Naturally stable stream channels and estuaries, lagoons and wetlands, protected by riparian buffers to maintain healthy aquatic systems and clean water.

### 2.3.1 Aim

Increase riparian buffer protection along streams and rivers and reduce stream bed and bank instability for natural to provide healthy river systems.

#### Priority

High-Medium & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- Advocate best practice in **river management** with landholders and land managers—riverworks, vegetated banks and riparian buffers.
- Monitor past **riparian and riverworks**, assess state of riparian buffering; and plan future works and protection priorities. (Linked to Natural Hazards)
- Riverworks and riparian protection projects: design, support and implementation

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### 2.3.2 Aim

Maintain the health of our estuaries, coastal lagoons and wetlands.

#### Priority

Medium-Low & monitor

### Strategic Activities

- Strategic management of **estuaries, coastal lagoons and wetlands**—priorities guided by 2009 Break O’Day 'health check' assessment report and other information.

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## 2.4 Marine Environment and Aquatic Resources

Healthy and productive marine systems.

### 2.4.1 Aim

Marine habitats and resources are managed sustainably.

#### Priority

Medium-Low

### Strategic Activities

- Facilitate community discussion of **marine protected areas** costs/benefits, priorities.
- Support **invasive marine pest** response (as a Biosecurity activity) and monitoring of migration.

### 3 OUR USE

Achieving sensible and sustainable development.

#### 3.1 Natural Hazards and Risks

Reduce the risks from water, fire, storms, climate change, waste.

##### 3.1.1 Aim

Flood resilient communities minimising their flood risks and the impacts of flooding.

##### Priority

High

*(Note: In the NRM Action Plan this Aim is in the Water focus area.)*

##### Strategic Activities

- **St Marys Flood Risk Management Plan** and mitigation actions to protect the community and recognising the environmental and public amenity value of St Marys Rivulet.
- Work with Lower George Riverworks Trust on **Lower George River and floodplain** stability for reduced flood risk: support for funding, people, floodplain risk management planning, works design and implementation (linked to Catchment Management and Wetlands and Waterways)

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##### 3.1.2 Aim

Bushfire resilient communities minimising their bushfire risks and impacts.

##### Priority

Medium-Low & monitor

##### Strategic Activities

- Promote state programs engaging landholders and communities to coordinate sustainable bushfire management, preparedness and recovery.
- Support research on **bushfire** management and ecological values and reducing impacts on biodiversity.

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##### 3.1.3 Aim

Coordinated management of river and lagoon barways to maintain natural systems, while protecting people and property.

##### Priority

Medium & monitor

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##### Strategic Activities

- **Barways** — support cooperative management of barway-opening issues to protect natural systems while safeguarding people and property.

## 3.2 Access—using & enjoying the Environment

Using natural resources in a sustainable manner with strong stewardship for lasting opportunities and productivity.

### 3.2.1 Aim

The Break O Day area is recognised as a leader in achieving environmentally responsible and sustainable recreational use with its conservation land management practices.

### Strategic Activities

- Facilitate **cooperative management of recreational use issues** to protect ecologically sensitive areas and sustain the capacity of the natural environment; investigate solutions and develop best practice strategies for planning and management of recreational activities—coastal camping, off-road vehicles, mountain bike trails.

### Priority

High-Medium

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### 3.2.2 Aim

Firewood harvesting and supply managed to avoid significant impact on native habitats and values.

### Strategic Activities

- Support and promote **sustainable management of firewood resources**, harvesting and use with land managers, industry, and consumers.

### Priority

Medium

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### 3.2.3 Aim

Fisheries management that sustains fish stocks and healthy aquatic ecosystems.

### Strategic Activities

- Work with local commercial and recreational fishers to support sustainability of **fisheries** through Tasmania's fisheries management system.

### Priority

Monitor

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### 3.3 Awareness—using & enjoying the Environment

The natural environment is understood, appreciated and cared for well.

#### 3.3.1 Aim

Increase awareness of the natural environment, its values and the pressures it faces, and build capacity for appropriate actions and behaviours to sustain it and what it provides.

#### Strategic Activities

- **Information** resources and opportunities to appreciate and learn about the environment and to participate in developing strategies and **skills** to care for natural resources and values. (Applies to all other strategies.)

#### Priority

Constant

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#### 3.3.2 Aim

Community is an active and leading participant in action to achieve outcomes for the environment and natural resource management.

#### Strategic Activities

- Support and provide opportunities and forums for Council, the community, land managers, industry and government agencies to **work together**. (Applies to all other strategies.)

#### Priority

Constant

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#### 3.3.3 Aim

Aboriginal people and their deep cultural connection and traditions on the land and sea take a respected role in natural environment and resources management.

#### Strategic Activities

- Opportunities with **Aboriginal people** to share with the wider community connections between the land and culture, identity and respect.

#### Priority

Constant

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