



MURRAY **FUTURES**

Lower Lakes & Coorong Recovery

Community Consultation (Stage 2) Report
The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth:
Managing for a Healthy Future

October 2009



Government of
South Australia

WATER  GOOD

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Executive Summary

The South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) is developing a Long Term Plan for the Coorong, Murray Mouth and Lower Lakes (CLLMM) region in partnership with the community, scientists and industry. This is part of the South Australian Government's \$610 million Murray Futures program, funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future program.

The purpose of the Long Term Plan is to support post-drought recovery and develop a sustainable future for the region within the context of increased climate variability. The Long Term Plan will encompass the environmental, social, cultural and economic values that are important to the region. It is being developed over three stages over the course of 2009. The final plan will be completed by the end of the year.

The CLLMM Community Liaison Team within the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) released a report on the first stage of the community consultation process in June 2009. The first stage invited the community to comment on any areas of importance to them. The second stage of community consultation sought more concrete feedback on specific proposals developed following the first stage of consultation.

This *Community Consultation Report* provides an overview of the second stage of the community consultation process regarding the Long Term Plan. During this stage, the community was invited to respond to a document entitled the *Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*. This document provides a range of options for how the CLLMM region might best be managed in the future as part of a whole of river system management program.

The second stage of community consultation was conducted by the CLLMM Community Liaison Team between July and September 2009. During this time, the community and organisations had a variety of opportunities to respond directly to the *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)* document. This document proposed concrete goals for the Long Term Plan and 38 Management Actions. These Actions were designed to respond to four possible future climatic scenarios – wet, median, dry and extreme dry. During this stage of consultation, community members were encouraged to focus their comments on these specific areas.

The community input received during the consultation process will be integral to the development of the Long Term Plan, a final draft of which will be released for public comment in November 2009. It is expected that the final Long-Term Plan will be available by the end of the year. The Long Term Plan will be submitted to the Australian Government for consideration and to access funding of up to \$200 million through South Australia's Murray Futures program.

The objectives of this report are to:

Meet funding agreement requirements with the Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for the *Feasibility Study for Long Term Management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth*.

- Provide evidence that a diligent, transparent and effective process of consultation and processing of comments has occurred.
- Describe how the *Community Consultation Operational Plan for the Long Term Plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth* (14 July 2009) was put into action.
- Document written comments from consultation meetings and community submissions relevant to *Managing for a Healthy Future* (August 2009).
- Provide a summary of all comments received during the period of public consultation.
- Describe how ideas and comments received from the public relevant to the August 2009 document were processed.
- Describe how community input on the August 2009 document is being used during the transition to the Long Term Plan.

The CLLMM Community Liaison Team was guided through the overall consultation process by *A Community Engagement Strategy for Development of a Long Term Plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth* (July 2009). The goal of this strategy is to optimise community engagement with both the development and implementation of the Long Term Plan. A more refined process was developed for this second stage of the process, in response to community feedback.

The CLLMM Community Liaison Team received ideas and comments in response to the *Managing for a Healthy Future* (August 2009) from many interested community stakeholders through a variety of consultation mechanisms. A total of 136 responses were received via the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study, Online Feedback Form and written comments. These, together with the other consultation mechanisms, are detailed in the table below:

<p>Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 community members and organisations participated 	<p>The <i>Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study</i> was conducted in the CLLMM region. Community comment regarding the socio-economic impacts of the Long Term Plan was obtained via meetings, workshops, one-on-one interviews, field trips, phone conversation and written submissions.</p>
<p>On-line Feedback Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 individual community members contributed 	<p>The <i>On-line Feedback Form</i> was available on the DEH website during the consultation period. The form allowed members of the public to indicate their level of support for any or all of the Management Actions. It also provided scope to comment on any other aspect of the Long Term Plan and its impacts.</p>
<p>Written Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 individual community members contributed • 19 organisation or groups contributed • A total of 58 comments received 	<p>The DEH website also invited community members to make more detailed <i>Written Comments</i>.</p>
<p>Focus Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 focus groups held 	<p><i>Focus Groups</i> were conducted with selected individuals and community, environmental and industry stakeholder groups with a view to</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 11 participants representing 10 organisations • 2-3 DEH representatives attended each group 	<p>obtaining their comments regarding the Long Term Plan.</p>
<p>Internal Focus Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 focus groups held • A total of 81 participants 	<p>An <i>Internal Focus Group</i> was conducted with DEH staff members with a view to utilising their specialist knowledge of the CLLMM region.</p>
<p>Targeted Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 meetings held • 7 groups and organisations hosted meetings • A total of 149 Participants • A total of 75 DEH and other Government representatives attended these meetings 	<p><i>Targeted Meetings</i> were conducted by organisations with interests and expertise which significantly relate to the <i>Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)</i> document. Senior CLLMM Community Liaison Team members gave a presentation and contributed to each of these meetings. Comments arising from meeting discussions were documented and processed.</p>
<p>Community Initiated Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 meetings held • A total of approximately 62 participants • A total of approximately 22 DEH and other Government representatives attended these meetings 	<p><i>Community Initiated Meetings</i> were meetings initiated by community groups in order to discuss specific issues with members of the CLLMM Project Team.</p>
<p>Phone Poll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 252 residents from CLLMM region participated • 153 residents from Adelaide metropolitan region participated 	<p>A <i>Phone Poll</i> was undertaken by UniSA's Ehrenberg-Bass Marketing Institute to gain an understanding of how the broader South Australian community feels about the key CLLMM issues and the Long Term Plan.</p>

Throughout the consultation process, community members could download the *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)* document and other relevant factual information from the Murray Futures¹ and DEH websites².

All community input obtained by these varied means was then assessed. Responses relating to a particular aspect of the Long Term Plan and/or its impacts were grouped together. Organising the information in this way allowed the CLLMM Community Liaison Team to develop a detailed understanding of the nature and breadth of issues relevant to key stakeholders. These included residents of the CLLMM region, specific interest groups and the broader community.

¹ www.murrayfutures.sa.gov.au

² www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm

Information will continue to be processed, assessed and integrated as the Long Term Plan is being written.

This report provides a detailed overview of comments which directly related to *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*. These are presented in relation to any or all of the following:

- The goal in managing the CLLMM region.
- The proposed Management Actions.
- The impact of those Management Actions on the environmental, social, economic and cultural values of the CLLMM region.
- The management approach, which identifies the need to adopt a different approach to management in the future that will include opportunities for the community and government to work cooperatively.
- Any other aspect of the Long Term Plan.

Comments were received which addressed a range of other issues. In particular, some proposed eco-tourism projects for the CLLMM region, while others detailed major infrastructure and engineering ventures designed to alleviate the water shortage crisis. These are noted, but not covered in detail, in this report.

Findings

Stakeholder support for the goals of the Long Term Plan and the proposed freshwater solution was generally very high across all consultation fora.

Some key themes emerged in relation to the Management Actions, a full analysis of which appears in section 5.7. In the first instance, comments revealed virtually an equal amount of support for, and opposition to, the regulators (Management Action D4). Support for the bioremediation and revegetation Management Actions was generally high, reflecting concern about the health and environmental impacts of acid sulfate soils. On the other hand, Management Actions A5: *Dredging – increase channel dimensions* and A6: *Dredging with sand fluidisation*, were unsupported by a majority of respondents, as was C10: *Introduction of minimal amounts of seawater to avert acidification of Lake Alexandrina*.

Other key findings include:

- Concern regarding the social and economic impacts of low water levels on local industries.
- Concern regarding the social and economic impacts of low water levels on the morale of local communities.
- Concern regarding the health impacts of low water levels on local communities.
- A general desire for local communities to be actively involved in decision making that contributes to the development of the Long Term Plan.
- A general desire that the Ngarrindjeri people be actively engaged during the development of the Long Term Plan.
- A general desire for the Murray River to be managed as a whole.
- A general desire to ensure that water allocations are well managed into the future.
- In some instances a desire to clarify or reframe the climatic scenarios.
- Both opposition to, and support for, engineering solutions (including several innovative proposals).

Glossary

CLLMM	Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth
CLLMM Community Liaison Team	CLLMM Community Liaison Team, Department for Environment and Heritage
DEH	Department for Environment and Heritage (South Australian Government)
DEWHA	Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (Australian Government)
DWLBC	Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (South Australian Government)
Directions for a Healthy Future or the May 2009 document	<i>Murray Futures, Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery. The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Directions for a Healthy Future (May 2009).</i> The first round of consultations was based on this document.
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority (South Australia)
Managing for a Healthy Future or the August 2009 document	<i>Murray Futures, Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery. The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009).</i> The second round of consultations was based on this document.
Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan (Listening to Ngarrindjeri People Talking Agreement)	An Agreement between the Ngarrindjeri People and the State Ministers for Environment and Conservation; Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation; the River Murray; and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The Agreement provides the basis for negotiation and consultation between the Ngarrindjeri People and the Ministers.
Long Term Plan	The plan being developed as part of the <i>Feasibility Study for Long Term Management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth</i> . The document offered for community comment in August 2009 is titled <i>Managing for a Healthy Future</i> .
Murray Futures	The Murray Futures program is funded by the Australian Government's \$12.9 billion Water for the Future program to secure future water supplies, renew irrigation industries and support nearby communities.
PIRSA	Department of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia
Ramsar or Ramsar Convention	The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is an intergovernmental treaty. It embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the "wise", or sustainable, use of all of the wetlands in their territories.

1. Introduction

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) region is an ecological asset of state, national and international importance. The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar site is a designated Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. This recognises its essential habitat function for migratory birds, including threatened and endangered species.

The region is of immeasurable cultural significance to its traditional owners, the Ngarrindjeri People.

The health of the CLLMM is of vital social and economic importance to the generations of farmers, fishing families and others who have established homes and livelihoods in the region.

Reduced River Murray inflows combined with heavy extraction demands and drought have taken a grave toll on Lakes Albert and Alexandrina and the Coorong in respect of increasing salinity and the exposure of acid sulfate soils.

DEH, as part of the Murray Futures project funded by the Australian Government, is working to develop a Long Term Plan for the CLLMM region. The Long Term Plan will detail remediation strategies to restore ecological integrity and function to the system. It will also include strategies to develop resilience in the face of climate change, predicted inflows and other variable environmental factors.

2. Background to the Community Consultation

Community input regarding the Long Term Plan will take place during three rounds of community consultation. The first phase took place between May and June 2009. The second, to which this *Community Consultation Report* relates, took place between August and September 2009. A final stage will be conducted between October and November 2009.

During the first round of consultation, the community was invited to respond to a document entitled *The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth – Directions for a Healthy Future (May 2009)*.

Throughout this first stage, notes were kept of community contributions through Community Information Sessions, Targeted Meetings and Listening Posts. In addition, written comment was invited throughout the consultation period. The processes used during the first stage, and an overview of data gathered, are detailed in *Community Consultation Report: The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Directions for a Healthy Future (June 2009)*.

This *Community Consultation Report* relates to the second round of consultation, conducted between August and September 2009. The stimulus for this second stage

was a document entitled *Murray Futures, Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery. The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*. This document outlined the proposed method for the future management of the CLLMM region as part of the total Murray Darling river system.

The community had various opportunities to respond to the August 2009 document. Notes were taken during Targeted Meetings, Focus Groups and other community meetings. Members of the general public were also invited to provide feedback through written comment or an online feedback form on the DEH and Murray Futures websites. A *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study* of the CLLMM region also formed an important part of this second round of consultation.

This *Community Consultation Report* describes the consultation process for stage two and how the resulting data was managed. This information was processed in a way which allowed it to be considered by the CLLMM Planning Team, which is responsible for developing and refining the Long Term Plan. More specifically, the Planning Team read and extracted key ideas from the processed data, assessing their feasibility for inclusion in the LTP. All comments (including those submitted using the online feedback form) were acknowledged in writing.

This *Community Consultation Report* will provide the basis for moving toward finalising the Long Term Plan. The objectives of this report are to:

- Meet funding agreement requirements with the Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for the *Feasibility Study for Long Term Management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth*.
- Provide evidence that a diligent, transparent and effective process of consultation and processing of comments has occurred.
- Describe how the *Community Consultation Operational Plan for the Long Term Plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth* (14 July 2009) was put into action.
- Document written comments from consultation meetings and community submissions relevant to *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*.
- Provide a summary of all comments received during the period of public consultation.
- Describe how ideas and comments received from the public relevant to the August 2009 document were processed.
- Describe how community input on the August 2009 document is being used during the transition to the Long Term Plan.

3. Consultation Methodology

3.1 Demographic

The primary focus for public consultation was community members and organisations in the CLLMM region, and South Australian environmental and community organisations. The secondary focus enabled contributions from other individuals and organisations with an interest in the future of the CLLMM.

3.2 Focus

This second round of community consultation sought feedback regarding the proposed management options for the CLLMM and their impact on the social, economic, cultural and environmental values of the region. These options, outlined in *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*, comprised the goals for the Long Term Plan and 38 specific "Management Actions". These Actions were framed in the context of four different climatic scenarios – wet, median, dry and extreme dry. The community was also invited to comment on any other aspect of the August 2009 document.

3.3 Overall Consultation Process

The following overview of the consultation process was developed by the CLLMM Community Liaison Team:

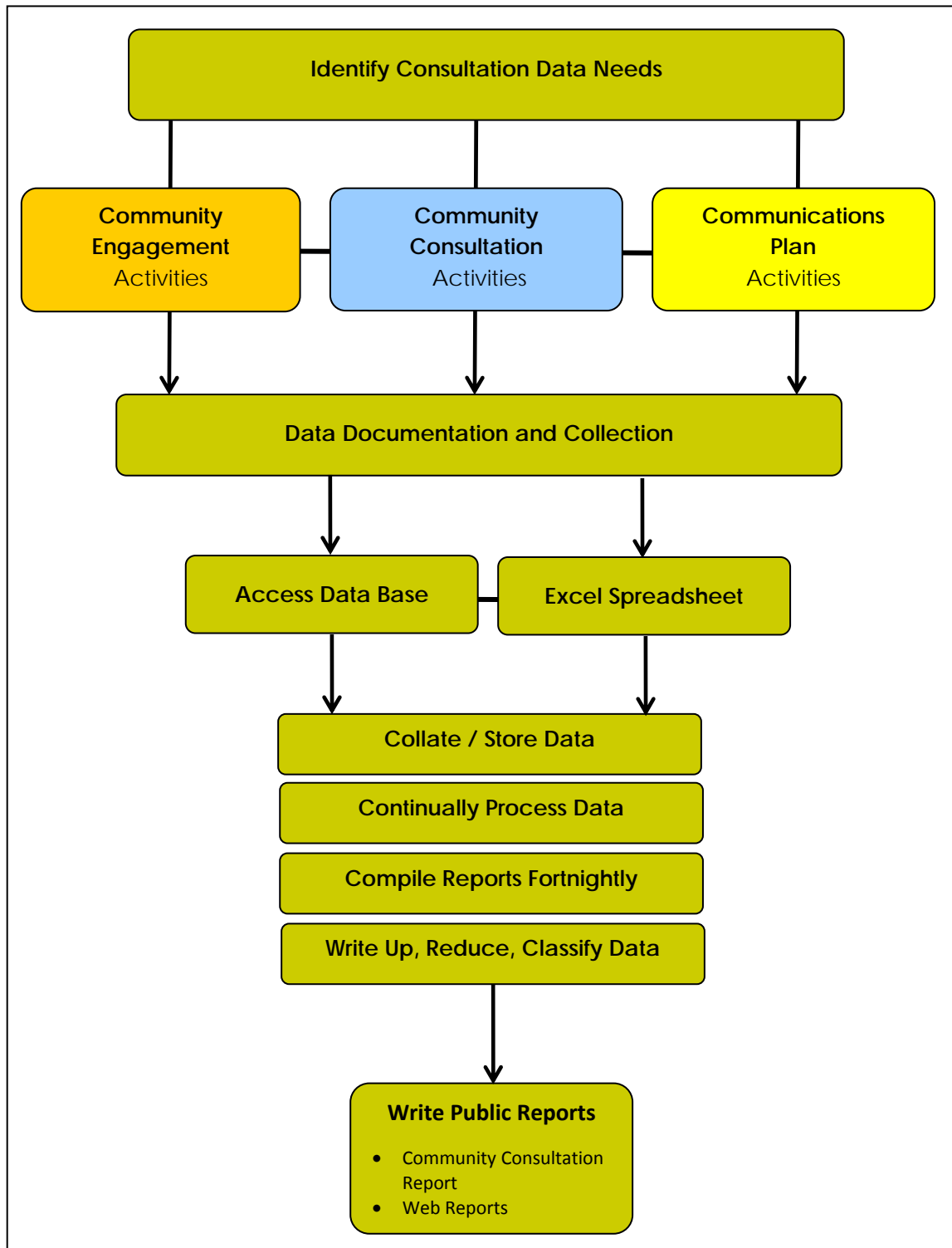


Figure 1: Overview of the CLLMM Community Liaison Team Consultation Process

3.4 Consultation Strategy Stage Two

A document entitled *A Community Engagement Strategy for Development of a Long Term Plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (July 2009)* was developed to guide the CLLMM Community Liaison Team through the overall community consultation process. The goal of this strategy was to effectively engage the community in the development and implementation of the Long Term Plan. It aimed to ensure that affected communities and individuals had a good understanding of relevant science and management options. The Strategy recognises that local communities have knowledge and expertise that can assist with the development of a viable plan for the CLLMM.

The first stage of community consultation (May to June 2009) generated feedback about the consultation approach adopted by the CLLMM Community Liaison Team. As a result, and following a period of internal reflection, a *Community Consultation and Communications Operational Plan (July 2009)* was developed to guide the team through the next phase of consultation. The Consultation Strategy Stage 2 (Figure 2 overleaf) summarises this refined approach.

Engagement methods for this second stage were influenced by awareness that local communities were experiencing "consultation fatigue" following six months of formal consultation for a range of projects, including:

- Extensive consultation for the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed temporary weir near Pomanda Island.
- Local meetings for the *Directions for a Healthy Future (May 2009)* document.
- A series of other water-related consultations carried out within the region by various government departments.

This process therefore focused on providing communities with the opportunity to access information at their own pace. To that end, a greater emphasis was placed on:

- Placing documents with local organisations.
- Making information available via a widely distributed CD.
- Providing regular email updates to individuals and organisations which registered interest in receiving these.
- Enabling web-based access to information and feedback opportunities.

Interpretive materials were specifically developed to help participants to focus on the proposed Long Term Plan goals and 38 Management Actions. These materials included:

- An 8 page summary of *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*.
- The option of contributing through an online form.
- A template to assist with writing more detailed feedback.
- "Flash Cards" (corresponding to each of the Management Actions) to stimulate responses in group settings.

Each of these was designed to assist individuals and organisations to focus their comments on matters pertinent to this round of consultation and stage of Long Term Plan development. A copy of each of these is included in the following appendices:

Appendix 17: Template/Online Feedback Form; Appendix 18: Examples – Management Action Flash Cards.

Ultimately, a variety of activities were designed to achieve CLLMM community consultation goals and objectives:

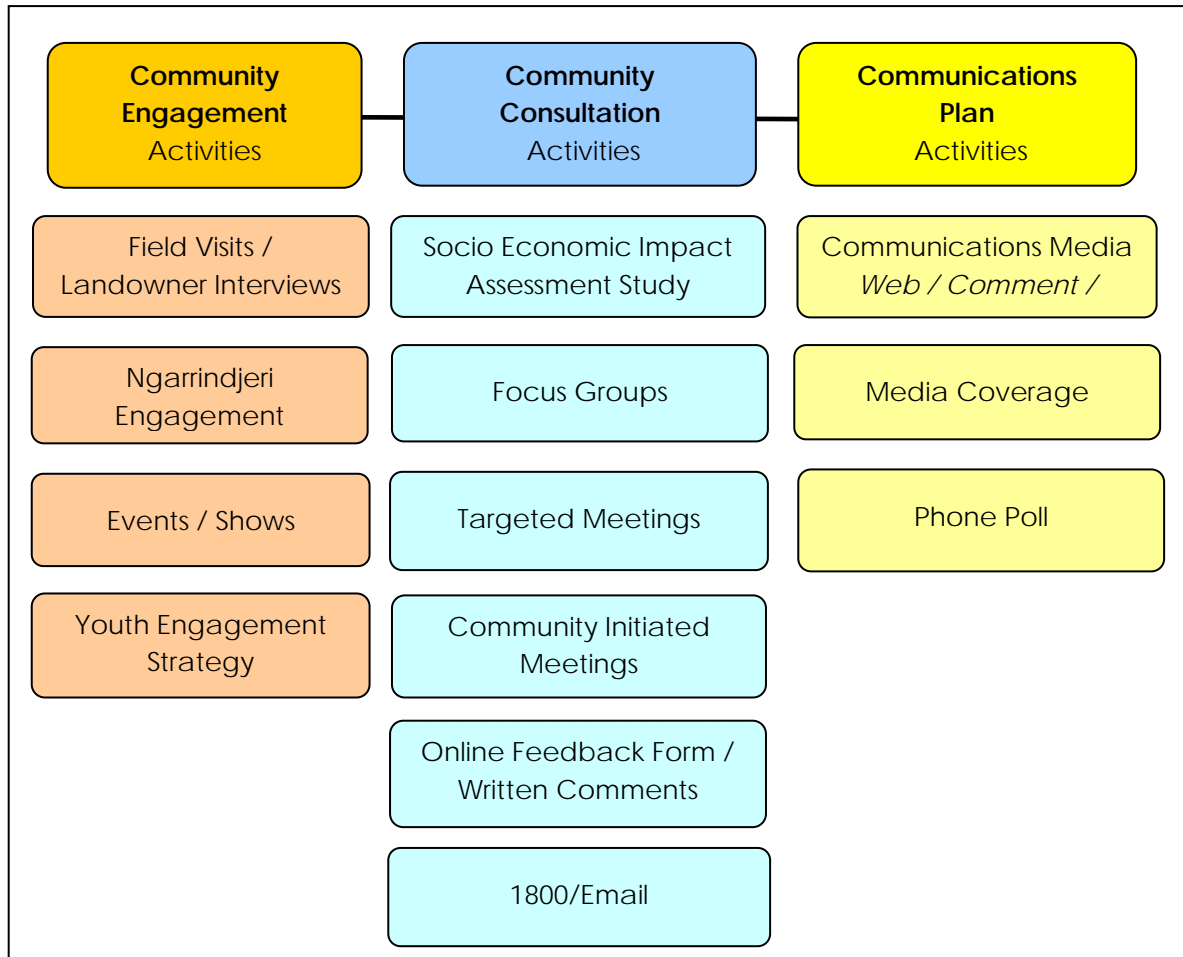


Figure 2: Consultation Activities for Stage 2

Detailed descriptions of consultation activities undertaken are included below - *Community Engagement Activities* (Section 3.5), *Community Consultation Activities* (Section 3.6) and *Communications Plan Activities* (Section 3.7).

A summary of the findings in each area are included in Section 5. The themes that emerged from these findings are summarised in Section 5.9.

3.5 Community Engagement Activities

Field Visits and Landowner Interviews

Field visits and landowner interviews were conducted by CLLMM team members as part of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study. Primary stakeholders within the

region were selected with a view to benefiting from their direct input and experience. CLLMM team members also responded to stakeholders' enquiries or requests to discuss specific issues by organising face to face or telephone interviews.

Further details about Field Visits and Landowner Interviews are included in Appendix 9: *Field Visits and Landowner Interviews*.

Ngarrindjeri Engagement

The CLLMM Policy and Planning Team met with Ngarrindjeri representatives on a weekly basis throughout September and October. These meetings, which are continuing, are designed to facilitate Ngarrindjeri input into the Long Term Plan. Please refer to Section 4 for further information regarding the Ngarrindjeri engagement process.

Events and Shows

CLLMM team members disseminated information regarding the second stage of consultation and more generally information regarding the Long Term Plan at the Adelaide Boat Show, which was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre from 16 - 19 July. Further details about Events and Shows are included in Appendix 16: *Events and Shows (Boat Show)*.

Youth Engagement Strategy

The purpose of the Youth Engagement Strategy was to engage young people and school communities in environment projects and the development of the long term management plan for the CLLMM region. CLLMM project officers liaised directly with regional and Adelaide schools, giving presentations and disseminating information regarding the Long Term Plan and management of the CLLMM region.

Educational resources were also made available on the DEH website at <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm/educational-resources.html>.

3.6 Community Consultation Activities

Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study

A *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study* was carried out in the CLLMM region between June and August 2009. The purpose of the Study was twofold:

- To identify the social and economic impacts of the proposed goals of the Long Term Plan and each of the 38 proposed Management Actions.
- To gauge levels of community support for these goals and Actions.

A consultation package including information about the Management Actions and a feedback form was distributed amongst individuals, industry groups, government representatives, local businesses and regional community organisations and groups.

CLLMM Community Liaison Team members consulted industry groups, community organisations and targeted businesses by attending and documenting meetings, facilitating workshops and carrying out field trips and in-depth interviews. Notes made in relation to all consultation activities and written comments lodged were searched for information regarding the future social and economic impacts of all Management Actions. A total of 48 community members and organisations participated in this study.

Findings from the *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study* are in Section 5.1. This section includes a summary the information collected from the full range of community consultation activities, and a brief discussion focussing on key themes.

Further details regarding the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study are included in Appendix 10: *Socio Economic Impact Assessments*.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups for this round of consultation comprised meetings with selected individuals, peak environmental organisations, Local Action Planning Groups and other water and land management groups. These Focus Groups were purposefully facilitated to allow participants to respond to specific questions regarding the proposed Management Actions.

Focus groups were held between 31 July and 4 August 2009. There were three groups in all, including a total of 11 participants representing eight organisations. The details of these groups are summarised below:

Peak Environmental Organisations

DEH Office, Pirie Street Adelaide

Friday 31 July

Attended by representatives from:

- Greening Australia
- Conservation Council of SA
- Water Action Coalition

Water and Land Organisations

Old Council Chambers, Strathalbyn

Tuesday 4 August

Attended by representatives from:

- Angas Bremer Water Management Group
- Wetland Habitat Trust
- Bremer Barker Catchment Group
- Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Group

Mixed

Wellington Hotel, Wellington

Tuesday 4 August

Attended by representatives from:

- Goolwa to Wellington Local Area Planning Group
- Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigator Association

A fourth focus group, cancelled due to lack of interest, was organised for Wednesday, 9 September. The following Peak Environmental Organisations were invited:

- Nature Conservation Society of SA
- The Wilderness Society of SA
- Trees for Life
- Soil Association of SA
- Marine Life Society of SA (Inc)
- Native Fish Australia
- Nature Foundation
- Nature Conservation Council of SA
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Coastal Ecology Protection Group
- Fishers for Conservation Inc

Findings from these groups are in Section 5.2. Further details about the Focus Groups are included in Appendix 8: *Focus Groups*.

Internal Focus Groups

DEH is staffed by dedicated individuals with a range of expertise relevant to the CLLMM region. Two internal focus groups were held with staff members to discuss the Long Term Plan and community engagement process. The details of this group are summarised below:

DEH Internal Focus Group

Wine Centre, Adelaide
Monday 7 September
25 participants

DEH Internal Focus Group

Mount Gambier
Tuesday 8 September
56 participants

Findings from these meetings are in Section 5.3. Further details about the Internal Focus Groups are included in Appendix 8: *Focus Groups*.

Targeted Meetings

Targeted Meetings are defined as consultation with existing organisations who meet for purposes related to the CLLMM recovery. CLLMM Community Liaison Team members negotiated with officers from these organisations to provide an opportunity to:

- Distribute the document *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)*.
- Provide an overview presentation of the August 2009 document.
- Allow time for discussion about the Long Term Plan during a scheduled meeting of the organisation.
- Invite written comment from the organisation as a whole, and individual members.

Targeted Meetings were attended by a range of DEH officials. The CLLMM Director, Assistant Director, and the Manager Policy and Planning provided presentations. Notes were taken at all CLLMM Targeted Meetings. These notes were processed and

summary data related to *Managing for a Healthy Future* was entered into the data base.

Targeted meetings were held between 26 June and 26 August 2009. There were 12 meetings in all with seven groups and organisations attended by 149 members of the community. The details of these meetings are:

Long Term Plan Reference Group (five meetings)

The Monastery, Glen Osmond

Friday 26 June

Attended by –

18 community representatives

5 DEH and other State Government representatives

Mt Lofty House, Crafers

Wednesday 22 July

Attended by –

17 community representatives

6 DEH and other State Government representatives

The Monastery, Glen Osmond

Wednesday 5 August

Attended by –

16 community Representatives

7 DEH and other State Government representatives

The Monastery, Glen Osmond

Wed 2 September

Attended by -

15 community representatives

5 DEH and other State Government representatives

DEH, 100 Pirie Street, Adelaide

Tuesday 8 September

Attended by –

10 community representatives

4 DEH and other State Government representatives

Science Advisory Group

NEPC Board Room, Adelaide

Tuesday 30 June

Attended by –

5 community representatives

7 DEH and other State Government representatives

Icon Site Community Reference Committee

Langhorne Creek Bowling Club

Monday 20 July

Attended by –

7 community representatives

6 DEH and other State Government representatives

Lower River Murray Drought Reference Group (2 meetings)

Murray Bridge Local Government Centre

Thursday 23 July

Attended by –

28 community representatives
4 DEH and other State Government representatives

Thursday 20 August
Attended by –
15 community representatives
10 DEH and other State Government representatives

Boat Owners' Association

Hindmarsh Island
Monday 27 July
Attended by –
6 community representative
4 DEH representatives

Socio-Economic Workshop – Coorong District Council

Coorong District Council
Tuesday 18 August
Attended by –
9 community representatives
2 DEH representatives

Murray Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board

Mt Barker
Thursday 20 August
Attended by –
3 community representatives
15 DEH and other State Government representatives

Findings from these meetings are in Section 5.4. Further details about the Targeted Meetings are included in Appendix 5: *Targeted Meetings - Notes* and Appendix 6: *Targeted Meetings – (Example) PowerPoint Presentation*.

Community Meetings by Request

Community groups and individuals within the CLLMM region were given the opportunity to initiate meetings with the CLLMM Project Team. The purpose of these meetings was to provide these groups and individuals with the opportunity to ask specific questions and/or offer feedback regarding the goals and Management Actions of the Long Term Plan.

DEH was invited to attend two meetings, attended by approximately 85 people in total. The details of these meetings are as follows:

Angus Bremer Water Catchment Management Group

Annual General Meeting
Langhorne Creek
Monday 24 August
Attended by –
Approximately 60 meeting participants
3 DEH representatives

Business Development Managers Conference

Victor Harbour
Friday 4 September

Attended by –
Approximately 25 conference participants
1 DEH representative

3 community initiated meetings regarding specific aspects of the Long Term Plan were also carried out. The meeting structure and agendas were tailored to suit each group and their particular interests.

Approximately 60 members of the community attended these meetings, the details of which are as follows:

**Meeting with Meningie Community Representatives
Regarding Future of Lake Albert**

Meningie Bowling Club
Wednesday 8 July
Convened by local residents
Attended by –
20 Community representatives
8 DEH and other State Government representatives

Community Information Session – Propagation and Nursery Works (Eco-Action Project)

Wyndate, Hindmarsh Island
Thursday 6 August
Attended by –
22 Community representatives
6 DEH and other State Government representatives

**Meeting with Meningie Community Representatives
Regarding Future of Lake Albert**

Meningie Bowling Club
Tuesday 25 August
Attended by –
Approximately 20 community representatives
Approximately 8 DEH and other State Government representatives

Findings from these meetings are in Section 5.5. Findings from these meetings are in Section 5.4. Further details about Community Meetings by Request are in Appendix 7: *Community Meetings by Request*.

Online Feedback Form

An Online Feedback Form was available on the DEH and Murray Futures websites. (Please note that this form is no longer online).

This form was structured to allow participants to offer feedback regarding each specific Management Action. General comment could also be offered. As with all written comments, the deadline was Friday 11 September 2009.

30 responses were received via the Online Feedback Form.

Findings from this feedback form are in Section 5.6. A list of people who submitted comments, including those who did so via the Online Feedback Form, are in Appendix 13: Comments (Written, Online Feedback Form, Template) - List

A summary of all comments received, including those made using the Online Feedback Form, are in Appendix 14: *Comments (Written, Online Feedback Form, Template) – Summaries*.

Written Comments

Participants who wished to send additional or more detailed comment could submit these in any form. The deadline for submissions was also 11 September 2009.

Written comment was invited:

- Through the regular Community Update emailed to the CLLMM stakeholder distribution list.
- Through the Murray Futures website www.murrayfutures.sa.gov.au, where a template using *Opinio* was available to assist contributors to structure their response. Responses could be structured around goals, proposed Management Actions and the management approach taken to managing the region.
- Through the DEH website www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm.
- When responding to 1800 phone enquiries.
- At all Focus Groups, Targeted Meetings and Community Initiated Meetings.

A total of 58 written comment responses were received. Of these, 39 were from individual community members and 19 were from organisations or groups. Each comment was allocated a unique identifier and a receipt was sent to the individual author or the organisation. Comments were then entered into a database. Where necessary, these were summarised and key ideas identified. As part of this process, like comments were clustered together in an effort to identify trends.

A list of individuals and organisations that submitted written comments is included in Appendix 13: *Comments (Written, Online Feedback Form, Template) – List*.

A summary of written comments received is in Section 5.7. These are further detailed in Appendix 14: *Comments (Written, Online Feedback Form, Template) – Summaries*.

1800 and Email

Community members and organisations could connect with CLLMM Project staff through dedicated enquiry contact points - an 1800 phone number and a dedicated email address cllmm@deh.sa.gov.au.

Emails were sent to approximately 1300 stakeholders listed on the CLLMM database inviting written comment.

Further details about these contact points are included in Appendix 12: *Summary Table (1800, Emails, Web)*.

3.7 Communications Plan Activities

Communications Media

Web

Both the DEH Website www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm/murray-futures.html and Murray Futures websites www.murrayfutures.sa.gov.au directed site visitors via web links to:

- The full 34 page *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)* document.
- An 8 page summary of the August 2009 document entitled *Shaping the Future of the Coorong and Lower Lakes (August 2009)*.
- Fact Sheets.
- Community events.
- Contact details.
- A range of other relevant documents.

Community Comment

Community members and organisations were encouraged to make written comment to the CLLMM Community Liaison Team through:

- a comprehensive Online Feedback Form available on the DEH website
- email - cllmm@deh.sa.gov.au, using templates distributed on CD
- hard copy comments sent to:

Free post
Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Projects Team
Department for Environment and Heritage
Reply Paid 1047
Adelaide SA 5001

Other Promotional and Information Dissemination Activities

In addition, opportunities to comment were invited through:

- Five email updates (Community Updates) distributed to approximately 1300 people.
- CD's containing relevant information and a response template distributed widely throughout the CLLMM region.
- CLLMM displays at community events, expos and shows: Adelaide Boat Show, Adelaide Convention Centre, 16 – 19 July.
- Placing documents with local organisations.

Further details about email updates can be found in Appendix 3: *Promotion – Media Coverage*. Further details about promotional materials, including the CD's, are in Appendix 4: *Promotion – Printed Materials and Web Copy*. Further details about documents placed with local organisations are included in Appendix 2: *Promotion - Distribution Points*.

Media Coverage

Radio, television and print media covered issues and activities related to *Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)* and the community consultation process. Wherever possible, mass media was used to stimulate community interest in participating in consultation activities and/or providing written comment. To that end, DEH issued two media statements inviting community comment, which were released on Sunday 16 August and Friday 4 September.

A list of all radio, television and print media which included the key words “Long Term Plan” was reviewed. Those pertinent to the consultation process are provided in Appendix 3: *Promotion - Media Coverage*.

Phone Poll

A Phone Poll was undertaken by UniSA’s Ehrenberg-Bass Marketing Institute between stages one and two of consultation to gain an understanding of how the broader South Australian community feels about the key CLLMM issues and the Long Term Plan.

252 residents from the CLLMM region and 153 residents from the broader Adelaide metropolitan region participated in the Phone Poll. A summary of poll findings is in Section 5.8. These are further detailed in Appendix 11: *Results of Phone Poll*.

3.8 Data Management

Community consultation activities created a considerable range and volume of written information. Data included notes made during Focus Groups, Targeted Meetings, Community Initiated Meetings, field-trips and one to one interviews. It also included hard copy and email written comments, as well as feedback received using the Online Feedback Form.

The data was collated and then summarised to allow for flexible management. Key ideas and key information were abstracted, recorded and assessed by a range of CLLMM Community Liaison Team members. In some instances assessors external to the CLLMM Community Liaison Team were utilised. Like information was clustered together under specific headings in an effort to identify trends, relevant issues and levels of support for, or opposition to, the Long Term Plan. Headings included (but were not limited to):

- Support for/opposition to each of the Management Actions
- Support for/opposition to the “freshwater solution”
- Impacts on mental health
- Other health impacts
- Impacts on the dairy industry
- Impacts on the viticulture industry
- Impacts on the tourism industry
- Impacts on the fishing industry
- Future ideas
- Engineering solutions
- Potable pipelines
- Whole of system approach
- South east drains
- Buy back schemes
- Climate scenarios
- Bioremediation
- Engaging traditional owners
- Definitional queries/suggestions.

A full analysis of the data is included in Section 5 of this report, with overall trends across each of the consultation activities presented in Section 5.8.

3.9 Data Processing

The CLLMM Community Liaison Team used the following flowchart to process data arising from the consultation:

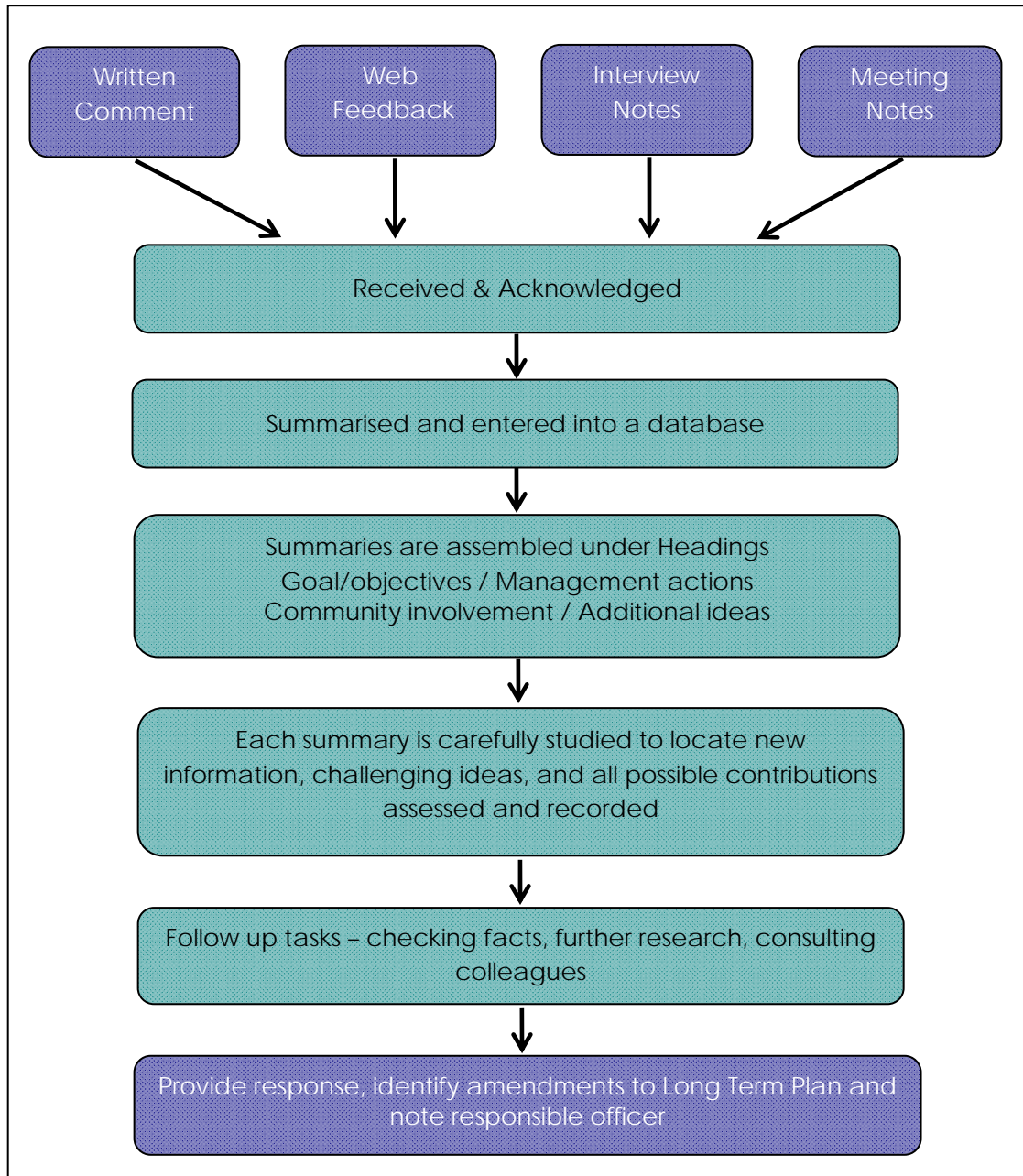


Figure 3: CLLMM Community Liaison Team Data Processing Flowchart

4. Participation of the Ngarrindjeri People

The *Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement* (Listening to Ngarrindjeri People Talking Agreement) between the Ngarrindjeri People and four South Australian Government Ministers (The Minister for Environment and Conservation, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, the Minister for the River Murray and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) was executed on 6 June 2009. This Agreement was negotiated during the period of community consultation on the *Directions for a Healthy Future (May 2009)* document. A copy of the agreement is included as Appendix 1: *Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement*.

The *Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement* establishes the means whereby the Ngarrindjeri People, through the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority are able to coordinate "activities and resources of the Ngarrindjeri community and high level interactions with the State Government of South Australia". The Agreement indicates the Ministers' desire for a new relationship "based upon mutual respect and trust acknowledging that Ngarrindjeri consider protection and maintenance of culture and cultural sites upon its land and waters central in every respect to Ngarrindjeri community well being and existence".

The Ministers wish to provide support and resources and enter into negotiations and consultations. The Ngarrindjeri people and the Ministers seek to negotiate and consult to make Ngarrindjeri cultural values integral to planning and future management of the Land, including the Lands of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth.

The *Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement* provides relationships and participation opportunities with a range of agencies and projects. The activities of the CLLMM Project Team and the development of the Long Term Plan are cited as one such avenue of relationship and participation.

Discussions between the Parties began in July 2009. These discussions have focussed on developing protocols for ongoing discussions, the background to the development of *Managing for a Healthy Future* and the possibilities for participation in developing the Long Term Plan and Bioremediation activities. At the time of writing this report, Ngarrindjeri representatives are working with the CLLMM Team to ensure their values and aspirations are incorporated in the Long Term Plan and associated projects.

The CLLMM Team is committed to being a part of "the new relationship" and recognises the critical importance of engaging Ngarrindjeri as partners in the development and implementation of the Long term Plan.

5. Consultation Findings

136 submissions were received in response to the *Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth: Managing for a Healthy Future (August 2009)* document. These comprised:

- 48 comments made as part of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study
- 30 responses made using the Online Feedback Form located on the DEH and Murray Futures websites
- 58 written responses.

A list of the 38 Management Actions proposed in the August 2009 document is included as Appendix 15: *Management Actions Table*.

5.1 Socio-Economic Impact Analysis Study

Consultation for the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study was conducted in the CLLMM region between 20 July and 14 August. Field trips and landowner visits, telephone conversations, community meetings and written comments provided the CLLMM Team with an abundance of raw data regarding the social and economic impacts of both the current water crisis and the proposed Management Actions and Long Term Plan.

Residents were given the opportunity to respond directly to the proposed Management Actions. Only 1 Management Action – D4: *Installation of regulators to achieve soil saturation in creeks to address Acid Sulfate Soils* – attracted more than a handful of responses. 10 residents supported this Management Action, while 8 opposed it. Furthermore, of the 48 residents that formed part of the study, 25 explicitly supported the “freshwater solution”, while 5 favoured the use of seawater in the Lakes. A further 5 noted a preference for the use of seawater if insufficient freshwater is available. The remainder did not explicitly comment on this issue.

Following is a summary of the themes that emerged within the context of 8 key areas.

Fishing

- Fishing is rendered impossible when water falls below a certain level, halving incomes and resulting in job losses. Economic loss will be offset in the short term, however, by the income generated through the Fish Down proposal.
- The industry is advocating for the introduction of a compensation initiative, which they would be involved in developing.
- The industry supports a Long Term Plan that delivers a healthy and productive wetland, which in turn supports local economies and communities.
- Commercial fishers are concerned about the impacts on the ecology and health of the Coorong if water is exchanged between the Coorong and Lake Albert.

Agriculture

- Dairy farmers and graziers have had to reduce their genetic breeding livestock, are feed lotting cattle, or have bought and carted water with no government subsidy. There is now less employment on farms, which negatively impacts town businesses and essential services.
- Land managers are feeling a sense of loss and anger. Some have sold up while others have undergone major changes to adapt to decreased production.

- A freshwater solution for the lakes is favoured although some in the community are unsure about the ability to deliver this outcome, particularly for Lake Albert.
- Landholders advocate for ongoing community involvement in the implementation of the Long Term Plan, including using local business and local people to carry out the work.

Viticulture

- Local growers and irrigators have experienced significant emotional, physical and financial strain as a result of ongoing water management issues. There is a fear of further job losses in the industry if no action is taken. In addition to impacts of low water levels, growers are also impacted by an oversupply of grapes and industry retraction.
- Local growers are also concerned about the management and regulation of the catchments and tributaries that feed into the Lower Lakes, including monitoring of private storages.
- Most local growers are supportive of a freshwater future, whereas the Industry Council is concerned that the freshwater will be sourced at the expense of upstream irrigators. The Industry Council is also concerned about the potential impacts (salinity, water table) on South-East growers of diverting water from the South East drainage system.
- The pipelines have provided a secure source of water independent of the Lakes and Tributaries. It is noted, however, that not all growers are able to afford this investment. Furthermore, the increased cost of water has increased production costs.

Business

- Small businesses are reporting a downturn in profits, which has in turned resulted in job losses across the region. This is particularly evident in businesses directly associated with water activities and tourism. These findings are consistent with the impacts of low water levels on primary industries.
- Low water levels, decreasing population and employment loss have resulted in a decline in property values and volume of property sales.
- Support for the Long Term Plan was divided. While many preferred the restoration of a freshwater system, some expressed a preference for seawater incursion, thereby resulting in a more immediate revival of tourism, recreation and subsequently economic activity.
- Management Action D4 (regulators) has likewise divided the community. While the regulators were strongly supported by Goolwa businesses (who considered them essential for the restoration of tourism and recreation), other businesses strongly opposed their construction.

Boating

- The boating, tourism and recreation industries have been severely impacted by low water levels. In some cases this has resulted in an 80% downturn in profits, subsequent business closure and loss of employment.
- While the Long Term Plan is generally supported, some residents are concerned that insufficient freshwater will be available to fill the Lakes. They are also concerned that the Plan does not directly address the impacts on tourism, boating and recreation on the River Murray below Lock 1.
- The Goolwa Channel regulators are generally supported as a temporary measure.
- Maintaining an open Murray Mouth is seen as a priority. Many in the industry would prefer to see investment directed toward a permanent breakwater, rather than an ongoing dredging scheme.

Health

- Residents have noted an increase in mental health issues flowing from the economic impacts of low water levels. They have also noticed an increase in physical health complaints (in particular skin and eye irritation) due to contact with lake water and toxic dust.
- Residents are concerned that stagnant water will result in an increase in mosquito-borne diseases.
- Medical practitioners have noted an increase in alcohol abuse and violence within the Indigenous community. This has been attributed to loss of employment and income, as well as the degradation of the natural environment.
- It is generally considered that maintaining water levels within the Lakes – with either freshwater or seawater – is the best way to minimise health impacts.

Education

- Low water levels have resulted in a loss of jobs and families moving out of the Meningie and Raukkan region. This has in turn resulted in a decline in both school enrolment and teaching numbers.
- Schools are supportive of students taking an interest in environmental issues. Several have been actively involved in a number of community programs and bioremediation activities.
- The community views the maintenance of strong education opportunities as essential. Residents are concerned about losing families from the district, which in turn results in declining enrolment numbers.
- School employment pathway programs have been very successful in transitioning students into the workforce. Opportunities to develop new pathways with involvement in the Long Term Plan would be welcomed.

Community

- It was noted that low water levels impacted on overall wellbeing. These impacts included: health issues; increasing demand on community services; tensions and conflicts between community groups with competing interests; and changing demographics.
- Support for the Long Term Plan varied. Some strongly supporting a freshwater future, while others were strongly opposed to it. However all supported a connected system and open Murray Mouth.
- The community has responded robustly to Management Action D4 (regulators). The general perception is that the regulators have been constructed to appease the tourism, recreation and boating lobby groups at the expense of the overall health of the Lower Lakes.
- All community groups advocate the development of strong partnerships between community and government. It is hoped that this will enable such groups to maintain an active role in decision making about, and leadership of, community engagement activities.

Future Ideas

- Several respondents outlined innovative ecotourism proposals designed to stimulate local economies.
- Several respondents outlined innovative engineering solutions designed to mitigate the water shortage crisis. For example, a proposal was made for a complex system designed to circulate saltwater throughout the CLLMM area, thereby reducing the possibility of hypersalinity.
- Several respondents suggested that an epidemiological study be undertaken to determine the health impacts associated with dust, contaminated water and stagnant pools.

- Several respondents suggested that social enterprises be provided with grants to undertake bioremediation, seed gathering, planting and acid sulfate soil monitoring.

5.2 Focus Groups

As noted in Section 3.5, a total of three Focus Groups were held with a range of environmental organisations and groups. A variety of issues and questions regarding the Long Term Plan were discussed. Key themes that emerged include:

- Overall support for the structure and facilitation of the Focus Groups.
- Overall support for a holistic, all-of-river management system.
- Overall support for flexible, adaptive management of both the CLLMM region and Murray River as a whole.
- The minimum amount of water required to maintain a healthy system.
- The impacts of seawater incursion on the Lakes and further upstream.
- Whether the Lakes were historically estuarine or freshwater.
- The most appropriate management scheme for acid sulfate soils.
- The most appropriate water allocation scheme.
- Concerns regarding the existence and impacts of the regulators.
- Concerns regarding the impacts of dredging the Murray Mouth.
- Concerns regarding the lack of transparency within Government.
- Anecdotal observations regarding: the appearance of new species of vegetation around the Lakes; the increasing narrowness of the Narrung Narrows; and the unprecedented shallowness of both Lakes.

5.3 Internal Focus Groups

Two Internal Focus Groups were held with DEH staff members. Facilitated by members of the CLLMM Team, these groups provided staff with the opportunity to discuss specific aspects of the Long Term Plan and/or Management Actions, as well as the community consultation process. Participants were encouraged to ask one another questions, thereby clarifying important CLLMM issues beyond their immediate scope of expertise.

For example, the second Internal Focus Group yielded much discussion regarding Management Action A1: *Increase diversion of the water from the South East drainage system*. Certain participants expressed concern that A1 simply “shifts” the underlying problem to another location. By way of response, staff ecologists outlined the benefits of this Action, which include: restoring natural flow paths into the Coorong; stabilising seagrass colonies disrupted by present flow paths; and a range of other benefits for the South East wetlands. Following this explanation, participants openly expressed their satisfaction with the ‘knowledge sharing’ taking place within the group.

5.4 Targeted Meetings

13 Targeted Meetings were held with eight organisations and groups. Findings from these meetings are grouped by organisation/group and include:

Long Term Plan Reference Group

Five meetings were held with the Long Term Plan Reference Group during the second phase of consultation. Presentations were given by DEH representatives regarding key aspects of the Long Term Plan and Management Actions. Comments and feedback were actively sought in order to benefit from local expertise. In particular, the impact and management of acid sulfate soils were discussed with a view to providing attendees with information regarding the latest scientific developments. Other key issues canvassed during these meetings included the framing of the climatic scenarios in the *Managing for a Healthy Future* document, managing the entire system during extreme dry years, the role and impact of the regulators and the possible implications of introducing seawater into the Lakes. Members of the group were also given the opportunity to discuss the social and economic impacts of the current water crisis on local industries and communities.

Lower River Murray Drought Reference Group

Two meetings were held with the Lower River Murray Drought Reference Group during the second phase of consultation. As with the Long Term Plan Reference Group, presentations were given by DEH representatives regarding the Long Term Plan and Management Actions. In addition to canvassing issues such as acid sulfate soils, bioremediation and climatic scenarios, the group was presented with the latest scientific findings regarding the use of salt and/or freshwater in the Lakes.

Attendees were also given the opportunity to discuss the impact of the water crisis and specific Management Actions on their local industries and communities. It was noted that: many members of the community were feeling neglected and depressed; water shortages below Lock 1 were more severe than above the Lock; and the dairy industry was particularly affected by water shortages.

On a more positive note, plans to stimulate the local economy by encouraging innovative tourism ventures (including ecotourism) were discussed.

DEH and other Government staff also responded to specific requests for information. For example, in response to a query regarding the downstream impacts of increased extraction in the Great Artesian Basin, it was agreed that: a copy of the Water Resources Report would be circulated among members of the group; and a representative from DWLBC would conduct the necessary research and provide a formal response as soon as possible.

Scientific Advisory Group Meeting

Information regarding the Long Term Plan, climatic scenarios and acid sulfate soils was presented by DEH staff. A discussion regarding the role of the Science Advisory Group within the context of the development of the Long Term Plan ensued, with a decision made to continue convening as necessary.

Icon Site Meeting

A range of issues were discussed at this meeting, in particular fish monitoring at the Icon Site and the impacts and management of fish kill. DEH talked about the overall objective of the Long Term Plan, thereby stimulating a discussion regarding governance of the Site and the importance of Government, community and Ngarrindjeri people working together.

The community were also given the opportunity to discuss the social, health and economic impacts of the water crisis and Long Term Plan on Meningie. The impacts of the regulators were also canvassed. It was noted, for example, that the regulators were causing tension between those who supported and those who opposed their construction. One attendee suggested that they be seeded to improve their appearance.

Boat Owners Association Meeting

Managing the Murray Mouth with a breakwater was one of the key issues that emerged from this meeting. The Association also presented a list of 13 "boating projects" that they would like to be considered under Murray Futures. Finally, they expressed their support for the core elements of the Long Term Plan, as well as the construction of a permanent weir.

Coorong Council Socio-Economic Meeting

The Meningie Foreshore Concept Proposal was presented by Coorong Council, the design of which is based on the use of freshwater in the Lakes. The socio-economic impacts of the Management Actions and Long Term Plan were also discussed, as were concerns regarding: dust; disease; mosquitoes; and the impacts and management of fish kill. It was noted that revegetation of the lake beds should commence as soon as possible in order to minimise summer dust.

SA MDB NRM Board Meeting

Information regarding the Long Term Plan, including acid sulfate soils, climate scenarios, bioremediation and the future management of Lake Albert (including salinity levels) was presented by a DEH representative. Attendees sought clarification regarding Ngarrindjeri engagement for the development of the Long Term Plan, highlighting the importance of their involvement. Information was also sought concerning ground water seepage into Lake Albert and its impact upon bore water in the Lake Albert region. A DEH representative explained that the entire Lake Albert region is now supplied with water via pipelines.

5.5 Community Meetings by Request

Two requests were made to discuss the Long Term Plan, the first of these by the **Angus Bremer Water Catchment Group**, the second by the organisers of the **Business Development Managers Conference**. A presentation regarding the key aspects of the Long Term Plan was made at each of these meetings, with emphasis placed on the

management of acid sulfate soils and the climatic scenarios detailed in the *Managing for Healthy Future* document. Boating in the Goolwa channel was also discussed at the Business Mangers Conference. Participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with both presentations.

In addition to the two aforementioned meetings, three community initiated meetings regarding specific aspects of the Long Term Plan took place. The meeting structure and agendas were tailored to suit each group and their particular interests. Given the unique nature of each meeting, findings will be presented separately.

Meeting with Meningie Community Representatives Regarding the Future of Lake Albert

This meeting was convened at the request of local residents who were concerned about the future management of Lake Albert and the impact of management decisions on the local community. This meeting provided the foundation for establishing ongoing dialogue between DEH and the Meningie Community about the long term outlook and management options for Lake Albert.

A round-table discussion provided residents with the opportunity to discuss a range of issues. These included;

- Management and facilitation of community input into the CLLMM decision making process. For example, community members requested regular meetings with DEH.
- Comments and questions regarding the impacts of no water in Lake Albert on: health, local industry, employment, investment and local services.
- A desire for the aforementioned impacts to be managed in consultation with the local community.
- A preference for the use of seawater in the Lakes.
- A desire for DEH and PIRSA to work with the local fishing industry to mitigate the impacts of fish kill.

Attendees expressed a high level of satisfaction with the way in which the meeting was conducted, noting that they "felt heard". They were enthusiastic about the possibility of engaging in further talks with DEH.

Community Information Session – Propagation and Nursery Works (Eco-Action Project)

This information session was held at the request of the local community. The Eco-Action project is co-ordinated by DEH in conjunction with local nurseries, environmental and Landcare groups. Its purpose is to involve local communities in the bioremediation and revegetation process of the CLLMM region, provide employment and stimulates local economies.

Options and specifications regarding seed collection and propagation were discussed, as were the particulars of community involvement.

Meeting with Meningie Community Representatives Regarding the Future of Lake Albert

This meeting was convened by Mayor Roger Strother and Coorong Council with a view to discussing the management of Lake Albert and the impacts of the Long Term Plan upon the local community.

This meeting was attended by Minister Maywald and Council, DEH, EPA, PIRSA and local community representatives. The following is a summary of the key issues discussed:

- Revegetation and bioremediation of Lake Albert.
- The impact of seawater on the Lakes and Coorong. It was noted that further research is required to answer this question. Minister Maywald further noted that Federal approval would be required to pump seawater into Lake Albert, despite this Management Action being classified as an "emergency measure".
- Alternative tourism options, including ecotourism initiatives.
- Measures to mitigate fish kill.
- Minister Maywald highlighted the fact that decision making regarding all Management Actions would be guided by scientific research, trials and engineering options.

5.6 Online Feedback Form

A total of 30 submissions were made using the Online Feedback Form. Participants were guided through each of the Management Actions, in response to which they could tick "Supported", "Not Supported", "Neutral" or "Undecided". Some participants elected to respond to a select number of Management Actions, while others provided comments in addition to specifying their level of support for the Action in question.

Generally speaking, however, most people responded to all of the Management Actions without offering additional feedback.

Of the 30 people who completed the Online Feedback Form, the vast majority supported the Long Term Plan and all of the Management Actions, with the exception of C10: *Introduction of minimal amounts of seawater to avert acid in Lake Alexandrina*.

It is also worth noting that while the majority of participants supported Management Actions B7: *Prevention of acidification* and B9: *Bioremediation basin*, almost as many were opposed to, neutral or undecided regarding these Actions. In summary:

B7 – 8 Supported; 3 Not Supported; 8 Neutral; 9 Undecided.

B9 – 8 Supported; 6 Not Supported; 6 Neutral; 7 Undecided.

5.7 Written Comments

A total of 58 written responses were received, 39 from individual members of the community and 19 from organisations or groups.

Comments were generally supportive of the goals of the Long Term Plan, with 31 expressing support for the freshwater solution. 10 participants, however, preferred that the Lakes be filled with saltwater. Of these, several presented information regarding the Lakes' estuarine history. A further four comments expressed qualified support for the freshwater solution, preferring that the Lakes be filled with seawater should sufficient freshwater be unavailable.

Management Actions

Of the 58 people who submitted written comments, the majority supported, or conversely did not support, the following Management Actions:

Supported	Not Supported
<p>Increased freshwater</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 - Increase diversion of water from SE drainage system • A2, B1, C1, D1 – Increased water provided from upstream in the MDB • A10 – Pumping out of the South Lagoon 	<p>Dredging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A5 – Dredging – increase channel dimensions • A6 – Dredging with sand fluidisation
<p>Reduction of extraction from Lakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B4, C3, D2 – Reduce reliance on Lakes for extractive use 	<p>Prevention of acidification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B7 – Prevention of acidification (installing sub-surface barriers) • C8 – Prevention of acidification (installing sub-surface barriers)
<p>Revegetation/Bioremediation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A12 – Transplanting of Ruppia • B8, C9, D8 – Hot spot acid sulfate soil mitigation • B9 – Bioremediation basin • B10 – Revegetation for Acid Sulfate Soil remediation around Lake edges • B11, C5, D8 – Planting of annual crop on exposed areas to contain wind erosion • C4 – Revegetation (native) for ecosystem rehabilitation around Lake edges • C7 – Bioremediation for wetland areas disconnected from Lake Alexandrina • D5 – Native revegetation for ecosystem rehabilitation around tributaries 	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B2 – Pumping from Lake Alexandrina • B6 – Alternative to Narrung Narrows remedial works (dry scenarios only) • C10 – Introduction of minimal amounts of seawater to avert acid in Lake Alex

<p>Fish Passages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3 – Installation of fish passages into regulators • A9 – Fish passages through to the Coorong at Goolwa 	
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A8 – Sand bypassing with River Mouth training walls • B3, C2 – Develop a framework to manage water most effectively within the site • B5 – Narrung Narrows remedial works • B12, C6, D7 – NRM activities (weed control, fencing, rabbit control) 	
<p>Note: While the majority supported these Actions, almost as many were opposed to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4 – Dredging – existing strategy. • D4 – Installation of regulators (tributaries). 	<p>Note: While the majority did not support these Actions, almost as many did support them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A3 – Connect Lake Albert to the North Lagoon of the Coorong • A11 - A11 – Clearing of sills near Parnka Point

Additional Comments – Key Themes

In addition to responding to specific Management Actions, people were able to make comments regarding any aspect of the Long Term Plan. A number of trends emerged.

Water Allocations/Buy Backs

Numerous comments discussed water over-allocation, noting its role in the current water crisis and overall decline of the CLLMM region. Frustration concerning over allocation upstream formed an important part of these comments, as did a general desire to remedy this problem. Several people also expressed the view that water should be allocated to the environment, rather than irrigators.

While several respondents explicitly acknowledged the importance of the Federal Government's scheme to "buy back" permanent water licences from irrigators, some expressed frustration that: the scheme did not include water permits; buyback tenders would be offered after farmers had sold up; and it was a short term solution.

Climate Scenarios

Numerous comments were made regarding the 4 climatic scenarios ("Wet", "Median", "Dry", "Extreme Dry") underpinning the Long Term Plan. While some applauded the use of the climate modelling detailed in the CSIRO Sustainable Yields

Report, others questioned the validity of the CSIRO's climate model. For example, one respondent expressed the view that the CSIRO report was flawed as it excluded data from 2007/8 on the basis that these two years fell into the "Extreme Dry" category and were therefore unrepresentative of likely future trends. The respondent questioned this reasoning, suggesting that future modelling take into account "Extreme Dry" conditions.

Others thought that the characteristics of each climate scenario should be described more comprehensively, or defined differently.

Whole of System Approach/Other Environmental Considerations

Numerous respondents expressed a desire to see the Murray River managed as a whole, with some emphasising the importance of inter-governmental and community co-operation if this goal is to be realised. Restoration of natural flows into the Murray Mouth was also a recurring theme.

Ngarrindjeri Engagement/Community Governance

Several comments discussed the importance of engaging the traditional owners of the CLLMM region in the decision making process for the Long Term Plan. Others noted the sorrow and loss experienced by the local Indigenous community as a result of declining water levels and overall environmental degradation.

More generally, community governance and education were flagged as important issues, with respondents expressing a desire to see the Murray River managed adaptively and in cooperation with local communities.

Disillusionment

Numerous respondents expressed anger and frustration at the "politicisation" of this environmental, social and economic crisis, resulting in procrastination and further damage.

Engineering Solutions

Several respondents were opposed to, or expressed a preference for, minimal engineering interference. By way of contrast, others submitted proposals for engineering or technological solutions designed to mitigate the water shortage crisis. Many of these proposals were extremely detailed, thoroughly researched and well presented. They included:

- A circulating system designed to allow seawater incursions yet avoid hypersalinity.
- The construction of a channel from Fat Cattle Point to Younghusband Peninsula into the Coorong. The channel would allow oxygenated seawater to enter the system in accordance with tides and wind.
- The construction of a dam (designed to ensure Adelaide's water supply) across the low line of hills where Bremer River passes towards Langhorne Creek.

5.8 Phone Poll

A Phone Poll was undertaken by UniSA's Ehrenberg-Bass Marketing Institute between stages one and two of consultation to gain an understanding of how the broader South Australian community feels about the key CLLMM issues and the Long Term Plan.

252 residents from the CLLMM region and 153 residents from the broader Adelaide metropolitan region (a total of 405 people) participated in the Phone Poll, which was conducted between Wednesday 5 September and Sunday 9 September. The findings from this Poll are summarised below:

- Approximately 6 in 10 respondents indicated that they were aware of the Long Term Plan being developed for the CLLMM by the South Australian Government.
- Approximately 9 in 10 respondents agreed that a Long Term Plan for the region is needed.
- Approximately 9 in 10 respondents supported the goal of the Long Term Plan.
- Approximately 9 in 10 respondents agreed that the primary focus of the Long Term Plan should be ensuring a healthy environment in the region.
- Approximately 9 in 10 respondents agreed that the primary focus of the Long Term Plan should be environmental.
- Approximately 8 in 10 respondents agreed that 6 identified issues (reduced freshwater, acid sulfate soils, salinity, biodiversity loss, sea-level rise and socio-economic impacts) are the most important issues to address in the Long Term Plan.
- Respondents were generally quite supportive of the "core elements" approach that is of having 6 key objectives to guide future action. 9 in 10 agreed with this approach, giving scores of between 6 and 10 on a scale where 10 denoted "strong agreement", 0 indicated "strong disagreement" and 5 was neutral.
- Awareness of engagement activities was higher amongst regional respondents than amongst respondents from the greater Adelaide metropolitan area. 4 in 10 respondents from the CLLMM region indicated that they were aware of "opportunities for the public to have input into the Long Term Plan", whilst only a quarter of metro respondents claimed to be aware of such opportunities.

As noted in the Ehrenberg-Bass Report (Appendix 11), "... (the) results also indicate that the DEH has quite a strong profile in this [the CLLMM] area. Almost 3 in 10 respondents mentioned the Department when asked to name any government departments they were aware of as being responsible for managing the Coorong and Lower Lakes ... the highest proportion of mentions for any single agency ...".

5.9 Thematic Review of Findings

The key themes that emerged across all consultation fora are as follows:

- Overall support for the goals of the Long Term Plan.
- Overall support for a freshwater future for the Lakes.
- Virtually an equal amount of support for, and opposition to, the regulators.
- Concern regarding the social and economic impacts of low water levels on local industries.
- Concern regarding the social and economic impacts of low water levels on the morale of local communities.
- Concern regarding the health impacts of low water levels on local communities.

- A general desire for local communities to be actively involved in decision making that contributes to the development of the Long Term Plan.
- A general desire that the Ngarrindjeri people be actively engaged during the development of the Long Term Plan.
- A general desire for the Murray River to be managed as a whole.
- A general desire to ensure that water allocations are well managed into the future.
- Clarification and in some instances, reframing, of the climatic scenarios.
- Both opposition to, and support for, engineering solutions (including several innovative proposals).

6. Conclusion: Stakeholder Support

This second phase of consultation has revealed a high level of stakeholder support for the goals of the Long Term Plan, including a freshwater future for the Lakes. Certain Management Actions proved to be more controversial than others, in particular D4: *Installation of regulators to achieve soil saturation in creeks to address acid sulfate soils*. On the other hand, the community expressed overwhelming support for the bioremediation and revegetation Management Actions, reflecting overall concern about the environmental and health impacts of acid sulfate soils. While some of stakeholders did express a preference for allowing seawater into the Lakes, Management Action C10: *Introduction of minimal amounts of seawater to avert acidification of Lake Alexandrina* was generally unsupported.

Overall, the community expressed a strong desire to contribute to the development of the Long Term Plan and to see the CLLMM region managed in accordance with a whole-of-system approach.

7. Appendices

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