



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

Lake Eyre Basin: its rivers and catchments

2025–2029 Implementation Plan



An initiative of the Lake Eyre Basin governments and community 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Lake Eyre Basin is a place of strong, continuous cultural and spiritual connection for its Traditional Owners and Custodians. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

Lake Eyre Basin:	1
its rivers and catchments	1
Contents	4
1. Summary	3
2. Introduction	3
Lake Eyre Basin implementation plan	3
3. Delivering the implementation plan	4
Enabling administrative structures	4
Lake Eyre Basin governments	4
The importance of prevailing knowledge, experience and networks	6
4. Implementation plan activities	7
Purpose and impact	7
Linking implementation plan activities to delivering on the agreement and the strategic plan	7
5. Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning	8
The importance of monitoring the delivery of activities	8
Implementation plan life cycle	8
Assessing progress against the implementation plan	8
Five-yearly reviews	8
Annual reviews	9
Scope of the reviews	9
Table 1 – Lake Eyre Basin Program strategic activities	10
Table 2 – Lake Eyre Basin Program complementary activities	25
Appendix A – Key to Lake Eyre Basin Strategic Plan goals and objectives	29

1. Summary

The 2025-2029 Lake Eyre Basin Implementation Plan has been developed to action the Lake Eyre Basin Strategic Plan 2024. It contains a suite of strategic activities aimed at monitoring, protecting, and where applicable, restoring the condition of Lake Eyre Basin waterways and related natural resources.

A high priority for this implementation plan is the Lake Eyre Basin State of the Basin 2026 Condition Assessment report. Produced every 10 years, the report provides a scientific assessment of the health of the basin, which can be compared to previous assessments¹ and used to inform future management and future implementation plan activities.

Another priority, and ongoing activity is the Lake Eyre Basin Rivers Assessment (LEBRA) program. Since 2011, LEBRA has been collecting and analysing data and observations from targeted basin waterholes. In so doing, providing critical information to support the production of the condition assessment reports.

Other priority activities include finalising the Lake Eyre Basin monitoring and evaluation framework, strengthening Aboriginal peoples' engagement in the Lake Eyre Basin program, examining the impacts of climate change on the basin's waterways, and restoring the health of waterholes of the upper Finke River.

The implementation plan has been developed by Lake Eyre Basin governments, the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee and the Lake Eyre Basin Scientific Advisory Panel.

2. Introduction

Lake Eyre Basin implementation plan

The Lake Eyre Basin (basin) implementation plan, along with the Lake Eyre Basin strategic plan (strategic plan) and the Lake Eyre Basin monitoring and evaluation framework (M&E framework) are the main delivery vehicles for the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement 2000 (agreement).

The implementation plan contains strategic activities to help better manage and protect the basin. They are informed by an evidence and risk-based understanding of regional and cross-jurisdictional interests and issues, which includes actual and emerging threats to the health of the basin. The implementation plan also aims to encourage cooperative action by basin governments and others involved in managing the basin.

The implementation plan is designed to be read alongside the strategic plan ([Lake Eyre Basin Strategic Plan - DCCEEW²](#)) and the M&E framework (publication pending). Combined, they represent the three-pronged approach to managing the basin under the agreement as shown in [Figure 1](#).

¹ Previous assessments may be accessed from the [National Library of Australia Trove archive](#) -

² Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Implementation plan activities use SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. In practice, this means activities are developed and delivered with a focus on positive, meaningful and timely outcomes for the basin and its communities.

The implementation plan is treated as a ‘living’ document and adaptive to changing circumstances and needs. It will be comprehensively reviewed every five years and the delivery status of its activities reviewed annually.

3. Delivering the implementation plan

Enabling administrative structures

Development and delivery of the implementation plan is underpinned by an enabling administrative structure. This structure, which includes a suite of governance arrangements and processes is essential to the operation of the Lake Eyre Basin Program (program)³. The structure is conceptually presented at Figure 1, along with the corresponding suite of enabling program documents.

The administrative structure and governance processes include regular, on-going activities such as the conduct of [Community Advisory Committee](#) (committee) and [Scientific Advisory Panel](#) (panel) meetings. Whilst some of these activities draw on Lake Eyre Basin Program funds, for the purpose of the implementation plan, they are considered on-going, enabling activities and not included in the suite of strategic implementation plan activities in the tables discussed below.

Enabled by the program’s administrative structure, the implementation plan is developed and delivered by:

- signatory governments to the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement 2000, principally the Senior Officers Group (SOG)⁴, and respective departments with responsibility for water management
- the panel and the committee
- other relevant organisations relating to specific implementation plan activities.

Lake Eyre Basin governments

The agreement provides the basis for cross-jurisdictional management of the basin, with authority vested in the respective ministers of the Australian, Queensland (Qld), South Australian (SA) and Northern Territory (NT) governments. The Lake Eyre Basin Program secretariat (secretariat) coordinates and administers the agreement, the strategic plan, the implementation plan, the M&E framework, and leads some implementation plan activities. It also provides secretariat support to the panel, committee and SOG.

³ The Lake Eyre Basin Program means the activities, projects, secretarial support, enabling structures, arrangements, policies, protocols and other jurisdictional input to support the objectives of the agreement.

⁴ The Senior Officers Group (SOG) consists of appointed senior officers from each of the basin governments (and responsible water department) to the agreement.

The current lead government departments are the:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Australian)
- Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (Queensland)
- Department for Environment and Water (South Australia)
- Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (Northern Territory)

Basin governments make annual financial contributions to the Lake Eyre Basin Program under the agreement via three-year budgets. The budget totals \$760,000 per year and details where funds are to be spent, which includes spending on implementation plan activities. The Senior Officers Group has been authorised by basin ministers to revise the budget as required, within the approved funding envelope. Given the relatively small budget, projects need to be realistic, economical and complement (not duplicate) work being undertaken by the various levels of government and other parties.

Basin governments work collaboratively with others involved in managing the basin, particularly on protection and restoration activities. This ongoing collaboration is important as it:

- helps promote the objectives of the agreement and the strategic plan
- supports the broad alignment of basin planning, management, protection and restoration activities to the agreement and strategic plan
- helps make best use of limited annual financial contributions to the program by ‘combining forces’ to deliver activities or leverage other, additional contributions for a bigger overall impact.

Whilst the implementation plan’s focus is on those activities funded under the agreement, an understanding and acknowledgement of the vital work of other parties is also important and helps build a more collaborative approach. The parties may include various government agencies, Aboriginal organisations, natural resource management (NRM) bodies in the basin, local governments, pastoralists, mining and exploration companies, not-for-profit and community nature conservation organisations, tourism groups and others working towards securing the future health and prosperity of the basin. A number of these parties or interest groups are represented on the committee, which provides community advice to basin ministers.

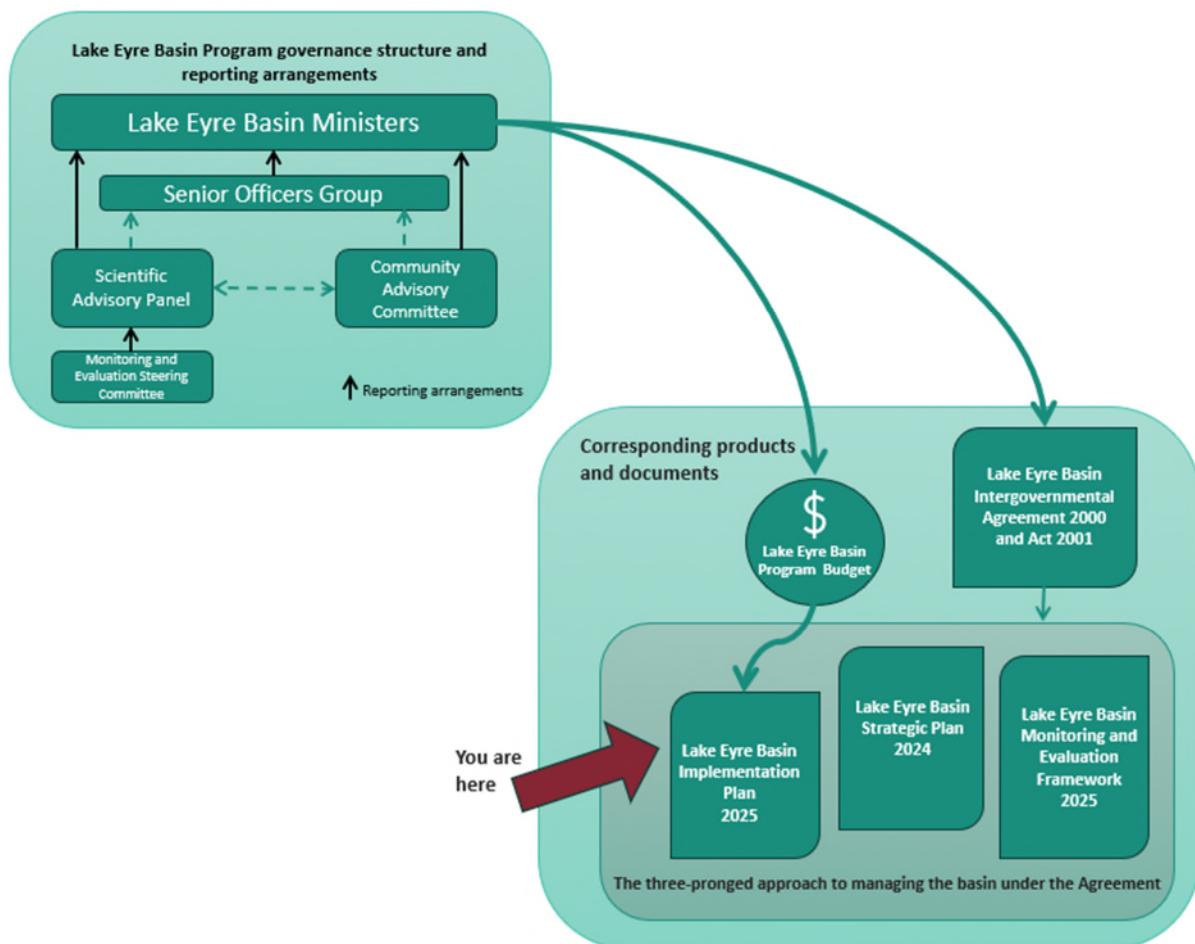


Figure 1. The administrative structure and corresponding documents of the Lake Eyre Basin Program

The importance of prevailing knowledge, experience and networks

The implementation plan recognises the long history of people managing and protecting the basin. Research, observations, experience and lessons learned have contributed to a vast and ever-growing knowledge base about the basin's waterways and natural resources, and how to manage them. This has contributed significantly to knowledge about how best to address threats to the basin and provides lessons for future work.

Successful delivery of the implementation plan means drawing on this knowledge and on the people who know the basin best.

Committee and panel members, in particular, will play a vital role in delivering the implementation plan in two ways. By:

- drawing on their knowledge, skills, expertise, experience and networks to ensure implementation plan activities are designed and delivered for the greatest benefit, in light of past and present work by other parties.
- informing and educating the community about the basin and the program to help develop understanding, appreciation and respect for the basin and its communities. In so doing, building interest in and support for protection, restoration and management activities, such as those of the implementation plan.

4. Implementation plan activities

Purpose and impact

Implementation plan activities are purposefully designed and delivered to maintain, and where possible improve the condition of the basin's waterways and related natural resources. This is achieved through two main types of activities:

- facilitating activities – for the development or building of knowledge and greater understanding, awareness and capabilities. Their impacts include more informed and inclusive decision making, better choices being made by people, businesses and organisations, and better targeted on-ground activities to prevent harm and repair damage
- on-ground activities – direct investment in physical works aimed at avoiding, minimising, restoring or offsetting harmful impacts or threatening processes. These activities are about sustaining or restoring the ecological, cultural, social and productive values of the basin's waterways and landscape.

Linking implementation plan activities to delivering on the agreement and the strategic plan

Implementation plan activities are presented in two tables.

- **Table 1** contains activities directly funded under the agreement and therefore the collective responsibility of signatory governments to the agreement.
- **Table 2** contains complementary activities being delivered by organisations, agencies, community groups or individuals separate from agreement.

The activities of Table 1 aim to give immediate effect to the agreement and the strategic plan's vision, and its goals and objectives, which are presented in **Appendix A**. Table two recognises the contribution of other organisations, agencies and the community in working to protect and manage the natural, cultural, social and economic values of the basin, ultimately contributing to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

Table 1 provides a clear line of sight from the strategic plan to the activities. Whilst an activity may contribute to many of the strategic plan's goals and objectives, the tables show the primary ones only.

Each activity of table one has been developed in collaboration with all basin governments, in consultation with the panel and committee. There are some activities presented in table one, which will likely benefit from a coordinated approach with other activities and parties, such as other government agencies, regional NRM bodies, Aboriginal organisations, not for profit organisations or community groups. Engagement with these parties is ongoing and will be important in building cooperation and exploring opportunities for jointly delivered activities.

Consistent with the [SMART goals](#), the activities listed in Table 1 have been developed considering Lake Eyre Basin Program budgetary (and other resource) conditions. Over the course of delivering the implementation plan, new or revised activities may be incorporated to:

- deliver on as many of the strategic plan's goals and objectives as possible
- meaningfully complement other activities of the implementation plan – current, planned and projected
- align or collaborate with activities being delivered by other agencies, organisations or groups operating in the basin.

5. Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning

The importance of monitoring the delivery of activities

Monitoring and reporting against table one activities in particular, is an important part of this implementation plan. It enables learning from experience, and the identification of successes and areas for improvement.

Implementation plan life cycle

The cycle consists of three phases:

- 2024-2025 – **planning and delivery** – is about progressing existing and planned priority work and developing new activities to add to the implementation plan
- 2025–2028 – **delivery** – is focused on implementing new activities identified in the planning year and delivery years, in addition to ongoing activities.
- 2029 – **delivery and planning** – whilst still delivering on activities, this phase will also involve reviewing progress made from 2025 to the end of implementation plan period (2029) and planning for the next five-year cycle – the 2030–2034 Lake Eyre Basin implementation plan. The implementation plan will also be reviewed in light of the mid-term review of the strategic plan (scheduled for 2029), and the outcomes of the 2026 state of the basin condition assessment report.

Assessing progress against the implementation plan

The implementation plan will be reviewed:

- five-yearly – a comprehensive review of the entire implementation plan
- annually – essential updates to tables one and two only.

Five-yearly reviews

A comprehensive review of the implementation plan will be undertaken every five years by a sub-committee of the SOG. The sub-committee will include SOG membership and at least one member (chair or their proxy) of the panel and the committee. The sub-committee will advise on progress and future direction for the implementation plan and its activities.

It is expected the lead for each table one activity will report regularly to SOG, the panel and the committee, and where appropriate, to the sub-committee at the time required to support the five-yearly review of the implementation plan.

The sub-committee will prepare a review report, which could include recommendations for the development of the next five-year implementation plan. A summary of the review will be published on the DCCEE Lake Eyre Basin web page.

Annual reviews

Consistent with the strategic plan, the implementation plan is based on the principle of adaptive management. This means the plan will be reviewed annually considering:

- emerging issues or challenges in the delivery of implementation plan activities
- changing circumstances, priorities and needs, based on new information or advice
- opportunities to partner with other organisations on activities.

Annual reviews will enable progress monitoring of activities and close alignment of the implementation plan to Lake Eyre Basin Program budget processes. This will enable consideration of additional or alternate funding arrangements for planned or new activities, as required.

The SOG, in consultation with the panel, and the committee, will conduct the review and if necessary, a revised implementation plan produced and published.

Scope of the reviews

Implementation plan reviews are focused on those activities directly supported and funded by the agreement (table 1), which parties to the agreement are immediately accountable for.

The five-yearly review will consider the relationship between the implementation plan and the strategic plan. It will also consider the relationship between the implementation plan and relevant programs or initiatives of other organisations with comparable interests in the management, protection and restoration of the basin (i.e. activities of table 2) – the goal being to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Reviews will also consider the conduct of activities under the M&E framework, which includes the LEBRA program. However, the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of basin condition is not part of an implementation plan review – this happens separately as part of LEBRA and state of the basin condition assessments.

Table 1 – Lake Eyre Basin Program strategic activities

Monitoring the health of the basin

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.'	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&E framework) Finalise and publish the M&E framework to the Lake Eyre Basin webpage. Scheduled to commence: 2025	Under the agreement the M&E framework underpins ongoing basin monitoring, evaluation, and reporting activities for environmental, biophysical, cultural, social and economic conditions as they relate to the water and waterways of the basin. It plays an instrumental role in identifying, assessing and reporting against recurrent, emerging and potential threats to the health of the basin. In so doing it produces critical data and information to inform adaptive management, protection, and restoration activities by basin governments and others.	All monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities under the Lake Eyre Basin Program will be conducted in accordance with a clear and transparent framework. This will enable better targeting, planning and delivery of future program activities, based on the best available information and knowledge.	MESC ⁵ , SAP ⁶ , LEB secretariat.	1B* , 3E , 3F

⁵ The Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Committee (MESC) is a sub-committee of the SAP. Membership includes nominated SAP and CAC members and technical experts from each of the basin governments. Its purpose is to oversee the development and delivery of the monitoring and evaluation framework.

⁶ Scientific Advisory Panel

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.’	LEBRA – Data collection Basin governments (Qld, SA, NT) coordinate and conduct annual surveillance monitoring of basin rivers and waterholes under the Lake Eyre Basin Rivers Assessment (LEBRA) program. Scheduled to commence: 2025 (Ongoing since 2011)	Consistent and regular site sampling of key biophysical indicators provides critical data to understand changes and trends in the condition (health) of basin waterholes and rivers.	Consistent, regular collection of biological and physical data from 50-plus site across the agreement area. The observations made and data collected are essential to support adaptive, informed management of the basin.	Responsible departments of Qld, SA and NT governments.	2A , 3F , 4C
	LEBRA - water data loggers Purchase and installation of new water data loggers at targeted LEBRA monitoring sites Scheduled to commence: 2025	Many of the existing water data loggers at LEBRA monitoring sites are redundant or failing due to age and exposure to extreme weather events. Replacement of these loggers is vital to ensure continuity, accuracy and reliability of hydrological data collection.	Reliable and consistent ambient abiotic data collection is vital for comparison with the biotic data collected as part of LEBRA monitoring site visits. The information is critical to understanding the conditions impacting the ecological functioning of aquatic systems over time.	Qld, SA and NT governments.	3E , 3F

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.’	LEBRA - Data consolidation and analysis Deliver a project to consolidate and analyse LEBRA data (2011–2024) and recommend options for future sampling and analysis activities. Scheduled to commence: 2025	Necessary to provide critical input into the 2026 state of the basin condition assessment project and report. The activity will also provide guidance to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and reliability of the LEBRA program.	A findings report on the consolidated and analysed data with recommendations for future data collection, storage and analysis. This will provide an assessment of trends or changes in the condition of the basin and highlight possible areas for more intensive monitoring or on-ground activities.	MESC, LEB secretariat, expert consultancy.	1B, 2C, 3F
	LEBRA – eDNA trialling A project to trial and assess the efficacy of eDNA technology for biological monitoring of the basin’s waterways. Scheduled to commence: 2025	A trial of the efficacy of eDNA for the monitoring of basin waterways is required to determine whether it could be incorporated into regular LEBRA monitoring activities. This project complements earlier and ongoing activities of the Northern Territory and Queensland Government.	An analysis and feasibility report to support decision making on future regular use of eDNA technology in the LEBRA program. The trial is important to demonstrate the LEBRA program’s openness to incorporating new ways and means to better monitor the condition of the basin’s waterways.	NT and Qld governments.	2C, 3F

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.’	Coongie Lakes waterbird survey An aerial survey of waterbirds (species, abundance, breeding) and wetlands in the Coongie Lakes wetland system and Ramsar sites to identify long-term capability to collect data on waterbird communities. Scheduled to commence: 2024	The survey will support a current assessment of the Coongie Lakes area to supplement data previously collected in 2008 and is required to update results to inform the 2026 state of the basin assessment.	The activity will provide invaluable information on the current ecosystem health of wetlands and rivers. The data provided will contribute to essential baseline information to assess changes and impacts on the environment, particularly wetlands and rivers. It will also provide objective data on the importance of these wetlands to waterbird populations in Australia.	SA Government	2C, 3E,
	Fish condition model validation Re-run, refine and validate the fish Biological Condition Gradient (BCG) model using latest datasets and additional hydrological scenarios. Scheduled to commence: 2025	The model has been run previously with data up to 2016. A re-run of the model is required drawing on latest data with the model outputs compared. Subject matter expert advice is required to assess and ‘tune’ the model for the most reliable and accurate model outputs.	Project will provide important competencies for the Lake Eyre Basin State of the Basin 2026 Condition Assessment by providing BCG condition scores for all catchments from 2010 to present. This will enable changes in conditions to be more confidently assessed and therefore identify possible need for intervention to address harmful changes.	SA Government in collaboration with other basin governments.	2A, 3F

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.’	Lake Eyre Basin – Hydrological catchment modelling A bespoke river systems model for the Lake Eyre Basin will be developed. Scheduled to commence: 2025	To support better understanding of water management requirements and ecological drivers in Lake Eyre Basin rivers.	A more effective and competent river systems model for the main rivers of the Lake Eyre Basin will be produced. This will be important to support decision making based on a better understanding of the functionality of the river systems.	SA Government in collaboration with other basin governments.	2A , 2C , 3F
	State of the Basin 2026 condition assessment (and report) Deliver the third, ten-year assessment of the condition (health) of the basin. Scheduled to commence: 2025	This assessment, a requirement of the agreement, is needed to inform on the health status of the basin and to examine any trends or changes in its condition over time, specifically since the last report in 2016. The assessment report is used by all basin governments and others with an interest in the protection and management of the basin.	The project will produce the 2026 condition assessment report. A review of the project will also be conducted to ensure lessons learned from the project’s conduct are captured and recorded. The assessment and report provide an evidence-based account of key threatening processes, which can inform basin policy, programs and future implementation plans.	SAP, MESC, LEB secretariat, expert consultancy.	2C , 3A , 3F

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Deficient or inadequate monitoring (hydrological and ecological) and limited long-term data are indirect threats to the sustained health of the basin.’	Data and knowledge gap improvement Undertake a comprehensive data coverage assessment and review to identify and make recommendations for gaps in ecological data coverage, particularly to inform condition assessments, hydrological models and climate change models and predictions. Scheduled to commence: 2026 (following the production of the 2026 condition assessment report)	There is a need to understand the extent and significance of any gaps in the available data – data which is used to model the hydrology of the basin and to assess its condition or health. The activity is about ensuring the most accurate account or picture of the basin is produced through the use of available data.	A report identifying current spatial data gaps, value adding opportunities and data expansion opportunities will be produced. Data required to inform condition of the basin, particularly current long-term data sets, are improved to provide more robust reporting on the condition of the basin’s rivers.	SA Government in collaboration with other basin governments.	3E

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘The basin community, including everyone living and working therein and others with an interest or connection to it, is diverse.’	Cultural, social and economic conditions of the basin Develop a framework for reporting on: - the cultural, social and economic conditions of the basin as they relate to its waters and water ways - the cultural, social and economic goals of the strategic plan. Scheduled to commence: 2025	Alongside biophysical monitoring, evaluation and reporting, there is a need to understand the cultural, social and economic circumstances of the basin as they relate to its waters, waterways and related natural resources. This understanding will help clarify links between the biophysical condition of the basin and community wellbeing.	A report and framework will be produced to guide future assessments. Findings of these assessments will be important to inform future policy and initiatives to benefit both the ecological health of the basin and the wellbeing of people living in or dependent on its waters and waterways.	SAP, CAC ⁷ , Aboriginal CAC members, LEB secretariat, expert consultancy.	3F , 4B , 5C

⁷Community Advisory Committee

Protecting and restoring the basin's rivers and wetlands

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'The Lake Eyre Basin river system supports many endemic species that are now under threat. It is important to put recovery plans and related measures in place to protect and conserve these species and wider ecological communities from threatening activities or processes.'	Actioning the Finke River Water Holes – Running Waters – Recovery Plan Priority activities of the recovery plan will be developed and actioned to help restore the condition of identified waterholes. Scheduled to commence: 2025	The Lake Eyre Basin Program funded the development of the recovery plan in 2023-24, in light of the need for targeted action to prevent further degradation of the water holes and to restore their ecological health. The recovery plan identified a list of required activities to restore and protect upper Finke River waterholes. The water holes and immediate catchments require on-ground work to prevent further degradation due to erosion and the presence of domestic and feral herbivores.	Action plans will be developed for priority on-ground activities and the activities conducted. The activities will restore the ecological functionality of the waterholes and protect endangered species.	NT Government.	2C , 3A , 3G

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'The basin's unique free-flowing rivers and significant environmental and cultural values attract many visitors. However, promoting the basin as a tourism destination must be conducted alongside consideration of the environmental and cultural values on which the sector depends'	Tourism and visitation impacts on basin waterways and their natural and cultural features Deliver a project to: · assess the impacts of tourism and visitation on basin water resources and waterways and associated culturally important features and values · produce recommendations to prevent or minimise the negative impacts from tourism and visitation · explore opportunities for responsible tourism and visitation of basin waterways. Scheduled to commence: 2026	Inappropriate activities by visitors to basin waterways can lead to: · long-term damage to the ecological functioning of waterways and to dependent endangered species · irreversible damage to sites or features of cultural and spiritual significance · spreading of weeds and livestock disturbance, impacting on pastoral enterprises. There is a need to understand the extent and circumstances of this impact, spatially and temporally. This will inform options for better managing visitations and exploring opportunities for more ecologically, culturally and economically responsible tourism and visitation.	A report will be prepared, which will include an assessment of the impacts and opportunities to better manage Lake Eyre Basin rivers' tourism and visitation. The report would also include: · options and guidelines to minimise the negative impacts of visitation · opportunities for responsible tourism and visitation, and to improve visitor experience and education. · opportunities to develop linkages with existing initiatives such as Aboriginal ranger programs Actioning the guidelines and related activities will serve to reduce the negative impacts of tourism and visitation and develop and promote the positive impacts.	LEB secretariat, SAP, CAC, Aboriginal members of CAC, local government, government and regional tourism bodies, Regional Development Australia.	2A, 3D, 5C

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'Protective and preventative measures should include spatial recognition of the 'sensitive' areas within the basin'	Occurrence and status of areas of high ecological value within the basin Conduct a study to identify areas of high ecological value based on the new International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Ecosystem Typology classification framework. The identified areas would be assessed against their conservation or protection status and land tenure arrangements Scheduled to commence: 2026	In consultation with Aboriginal CAC members, a thorough assessment is required to understand the conservation and protection status of areas of high ecological values.	A study report will be produced informing on the conservation status of identified areas. The report will be important for policy and planning purposes by basin governments. It will also inform future LEBRA monitoring activities, engagement and communication activities and possible protection and restoration activities.	MESC, SAP, CAC, Aboriginal CAC members, LEB secretariat, SOG, basin governments.	2A , 2B , 2C

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
‘Effectively safeguarding the basin’s free-flowing rivers and the life systems they support requires knowledge of their hydrology, ecology, the impacts of threatening processes and the effectiveness of management actions’	Justin Costelloe research program Deliver a Justin Costelloe research project. Scheduled to commence: 2025	The program recognises the need for targeted research into the basin’s hydro-ecological features and processes, as well as its community structures and processes as they relate to the water resources and rivers of the basin.	Reported research findings will contribute to the body of knowledge and evidence to support policies, programs and activities to help manage and protect basin water resources and waterways.	LEB secretariat, project researcher.	2C, 3F, 5A
‘Climate change will likely result in higher rates of evaporation and increasing rainfall variability across the basin into the future. This will likely exacerbate existing threats to the persistence, extent, composition, health and habitat values of waterholes, wetlands and springs.’	Climate change impacts on Lake Eyre Basin aquatic ecosystems Collate a knowledge base to inform and develop the most appropriate predictive models to assess the likely impacts of climate change on the basin’s aquatic ecosystems. Scheduled to commence: 2025	A consolidated model for assessing climate change impacts on all the basin’s main waterways is required. To effectively manage the basin's river systems as a whole, it is necessary to review established models and define catchment and basin-wide climate outlooks using the best available climate models to accurately project climate conditions over the next 20 years.	The models will produce a greater understanding about how basin aquatic ecosystems respond to climate change stressors. This understanding will be important for informing future management, protection and restoration activities of basin waterways.	SA Government in collaboration with other basin governments.	2C, 3E, 3F

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'Information sharing and engagement will be important in ensuring the basin community continues to build resilience and adaptability to social, economic and environmental change and threats'	Lake Eyre Basin website Develop the website into an authoritative, 'go to' place for information about the water resources, rivers, aquatic ecosystems, and communities of the basin. Scheduled to commence: 2026	A contemporary, comprehensive web presence is required to help inform and raise community awareness about the ecological, cultural and community significance of the basin, its precious waterways, and how they are being cared for through the Lake Eyre Basin Program.	A better web presence will help build knowledge and understanding about the basin, threats to its health, how it is being monitored and managed, and its condition over time. It will make available relevant basin information to help decision making and to inform the community. Greater understanding about the basin by more people will help maintain and enhance its ecological, cultural, social and economic values.	LEB secretariat, DCCEEW web team, SOG, CAC, SAP	3F , 5A , 5B

Bringing people and organisations together to help manage and protect the basin

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
Developing and strengthening relationships across governments, Traditional Owners, communities, industries, research groups and natural resource management (NRM) organisations will be key to realising the plan's vision and goals.	Engagement - NRM and other regional bodies Actively engage with the three regional NRM bodies, which deliver vital NRM services in the basin. Collaborative engagement will complement the ongoing working relationships the basin governments have with the respective NRM bodies. Scheduled to commence: 2025	NRM bodies conduct vital conservation, protection, monitoring, coordination, engagement and education activities in the basin. There is a need to ensure activities of the implementation plan, and the goals and objectives of the strategic plan are delivered in a cooperative way with the three NRM bodies operating in the basin.	Better engagement with NRM bodies will enable greater awareness and closer coordination of respective initiatives and activities. This could lead to co-design and delivery of activities consistent with the strategic plan. 'Combining forces' to address matters of threats or harm to basin waterways at a regional and landscape level will enhance the overall impact and facilitate a stronger cross-border approach.	NRM executive officers, basin state and NT governments, CAC chair, SOG, LEB secretariat.	2C , 3A , 3G

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
'Aboriginal people maintain strong spiritual, cultural and economic connections to the basin's landscapes, plants, animals and river systems, and knowledge of how to care for them. Aboriginal people also maintain an inherent interest and role in planning, management, and decision-making'	Engagement - Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Peoples – Action plan Co-develop with Aboriginal members of CAC an engagement action plan and engagement protocols to: · undertake culturally appropriate engagement with Aboriginal People of the basin · underpin future co-developed activities with the Lake Eyre Basin Program to support, encourage and strengthen Aboriginal Peoples' meaningful participation in the program. Scheduled to commence: 2025	Stronger engagement and participation of Aboriginal People is of primary importance to the work of the Lake Eyre Basin program. It will contribute to: · greater sharing of knowledge and understanding for basin management, protection, and restoration activities of the implementation plan · maintaining and strengthening connection to Country for the Aboriginal People of the basin. Acknowledging and drawing upon past experiences and lessons learned with other engagement initiatives will be a critical component of the activity.	An action plan to support Aboriginal Peoples' engagement in the Lake Eyre Basin Program is produced. It would aim to: · develop the interest, awareness, capabilities and participation of Aboriginal People in Lake Eyre Basin Program activities · support and facilitate practical linkages with existing initiatives, such as Aboriginal ranger programs. Outcome performance measures will be developed and enable: · an assessment of the plan's achievements and impacts over time · a revision of the actions to ensure best possible outcomes are targeted and achieved.	LEB secretariat, Aboriginal CAC members, CAC, SOG, and basin governments.	4A, 5B, 2C

Key messages from the strategic plan	Activity	Need for activity	Outcome and impact	Primary responsibility for activity	Primary goals and objectives
Aboriginal people maintain strong spiritual, cultural and economic connections to the basin's landscapes, plants, animals and river systems, and knowledge of how to care for them. Aboriginal people also maintain an inherent interest and role in planning, management, and decision-making'	Engagement – River Values – First Nations Engagement Conduct a project with the Aboriginal People of the basin to identify and record key cultural values associated with the water and waterways of the basin. Scheduled to commence: 2025	A clearer understanding of Aboriginal People's cultural values is required to support future monitoring, reporting, planning and management of basin waterways. The project will also provide important input into the development of the 2026 state of the basin condition assessment report.	A better understanding of Aboriginal cultural values as they relate to the basin's waterways will help to ensure those values are maintained and protected, and where possible, access to places of cultural significance is maintained and enhanced. The outcomes of this activity will also provide valuable input into the development of the Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Peoples' action plan.	SA, NT and Qld governments, Aboriginal CAC members, Aboriginal ranger groups, Aboriginal organisations.	2A , 2B , 3F

*To return to the activity in the tables press 'Alt key' plus 'left arrow'.

Table 2 – Lake Eyre Basin Program complementary activities

Subject	Activity	Organisation	Relevant organisation's plan or strategy	Activity status	Relevant goals and objectives
Water resources	Management actions to maintain the good health of the region's water resources and aquatic ecosystems for the benefit of the whole community.	Desert Channels Queensland	Desert Channels Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025	Current.	2C , 3A , 5A
Georgina Diamantina Water Plan	Regulates the management of water and relevant associated infrastructure, to balance economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes within the Queensland section of the Georgina and Diamantina catchment areas.	Queensland Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers	Georgina and Diamantina water plan area Business Queensland	Review of current Water Plan in progress; new Water Plan due 2027.	1A , 1B , 3F , 4A , 4B
Cooper Creek Water Plan	Regulates the management of water and relevant associated infrastructure, to balance economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes within the Queensland section of the Cooper Creek catchment area.	QDLGWV	Cooper Creek water plan area Business Queensland	Current Water Plan in place until 2031.	1A , 1B , 3F , 4A , 4B
Great Artesian Basin and other regional aquifers Water Plan	Regulates the strategic management of groundwater within the Queensland portion of the Great Artesian Basin.	QDLGWV	Great Artesian Basin and other regional aquifers water plan Business Queensland	Review of current Water Plan in progress; new Water Plan due 2027.	1A , 1B , 3F , 4A , 4B

Subject	Activity	Organisation	Relevant organisation's plan or strategy	Activity status	Relevant goals and objectives
Education and conservation for Cooper Creek catfish	Increase community awareness of the endangered Cooper Creek catfish and encourage its conservation. This will be actioned via a suite of communicative initiatives (brochures, signage, events) in collaboration with Lake Eyre Basin Ranger groups. The Cooper Creek catfish is listed as Endangered by the IUCN, however, many people are unaware of its existence or plight. The spread of the invasive Sleepy cod, increasing recreational fishing and climate change may be impacting the species population viability. The impact of this project will contribute to practical recovery plans and conservation measures, to improve the outlook of the species.	QLD government, Lake Eyre Basin Land and Sea ranger groups, Aboriginal organisations	Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers	Ongoing.	1A , 2C , 3D , 4A , 5A

Subject	Activity	Organisation	Relevant organisation's plan or strategy	Activity status	Relevant goals and objectives
Pest fish surveillance monitoring	Undertake annual eDNA sampling and visual inspections for pest fish species in strategic locations throughout the Queensland Lake Eyre Basin. Sleepy cod, in particular, is an invasive native fish that has spread beyond its natural range and recently colonised the Cooper Creek catchment. It represents a threat to native fish within the basin. The analysis and reporting of results will establish a robust baseline of information on pest species distribution throughout the basin for improved risk-based decision-making. In addition, the distribution and display of communicative materials, and visibility at community events, will increase awareness, encourage community stewardship and reduce the spread of pest fish throughout the basin.	Queensland Government, Lake Eyre Basin land and sea ranger groups, Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal organisations	Stop the Spread of Invasive Species in our Rivers	Ongoing	2C , 3B , 3F , 4A , 5A
Water Affecting Activities Control Policy	A review of the policy is underway. The policy seeks to manage the impacts of new infrastructure diversions and other activities on all water resources in the Landscape Board region, including those in the LEB.	South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board	SA Arid Lands Regional Landscape Plan 2021-2026	In progress with completion expected in 2026	1A , 2A , 3G

Subject	Activity	Organisation	Relevant organisation's plan or strategy	Activity status	Relevant goals and objectives
Coongie Lakes	Wetland Wonders protection and monitoring	South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board	SA Arid Lands Regional Landscape Plan 2021-2026	In progress	2C , 3B
Arid Lands Region	Program 5: Water resources and soil management	Territory Natural Resource Management	Northern Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025	Current	3E , 3F , 5A

Appendix A – Key to Lake Eyre Basin Strategic Plan goals and objectives

Goal	Goal description	Objective	
1	Collaborative governance for holistic management of the basin's river systems and related natural resources in partnership with community, scientists and industry	A*	New and revised basin-related legislation, plans and policies are aligned with the vision, goals and objectives of the strategic plan
		B	Follow good practice principles and management of the basin's large free-flowing river system
2	Protection and restoration of the ecological values of the basin's river systems and related natural resources	A	To protect sensitive areas of the LEB's river systems from developments that lead to adverse hydrological or ecological alteration
		B	To expand the protection and restoration of natural areas within the basin, including by designation as protected areas under the national reserve system (NRS) and through other effective area-based conservation measures
		C	To protect, conserve, and restore water-dependent biodiversity, including threatened species and ecological communities
3	Sustainable management of the basin's river systems and related natural resources	A	To reduce land and water degradation by minimising the effects of total grazing pressure around waterholes, wetlands, and springs
		B	To prevent and reduce the effects of invasive species through integrated measures
		C	To minimise the local and cumulative adverse impacts of mining and petroleum activities on basin river systems and related natural resources
		D	To develop guidelines for the conduct of responsible tourism across the basin

		E	To incorporate climate change into water, biodiversity and natural resource planning and management
		F	To support effective management and policy decisions with adequate data, monitoring and evaluation
		G	To apply a catchment and landscape focus to all relevant natural resources management and policy
4	Aboriginal culture, knowledge and continuous connection to Country are always recognised, appreciated, and supported	A	To recognise, appreciate and integrate Aboriginal knowledge and practices (including cultural and spiritual connections to land and water) into planning, management and decision-making
		B	To support Aboriginal peoples' access to Country and water for cultural and economic purposes
		C	To support Aboriginal peoples in maintaining their languages and connections to the basin to keep identity strong for future generations
		D	To protect and restore Aboriginal peoples' cultural sites in the river systems and enhance their connections
		E	To improve two-way understanding of the impact of climate change on cultural sites
5	An informed, engaged, and economically resilient com+munity	A	To support communities to be active stewards for the protection of the basin's unique natural and cultural features
		B	To enhance communities' understanding of and respect for Aboriginal rights and connections to water, land and biodiversity
		C	To promote the basin as an environmentally sustainable and culturally rich tourism destination

*To return to the activity in the tables press 'Alt key' plus 'left arrow'.