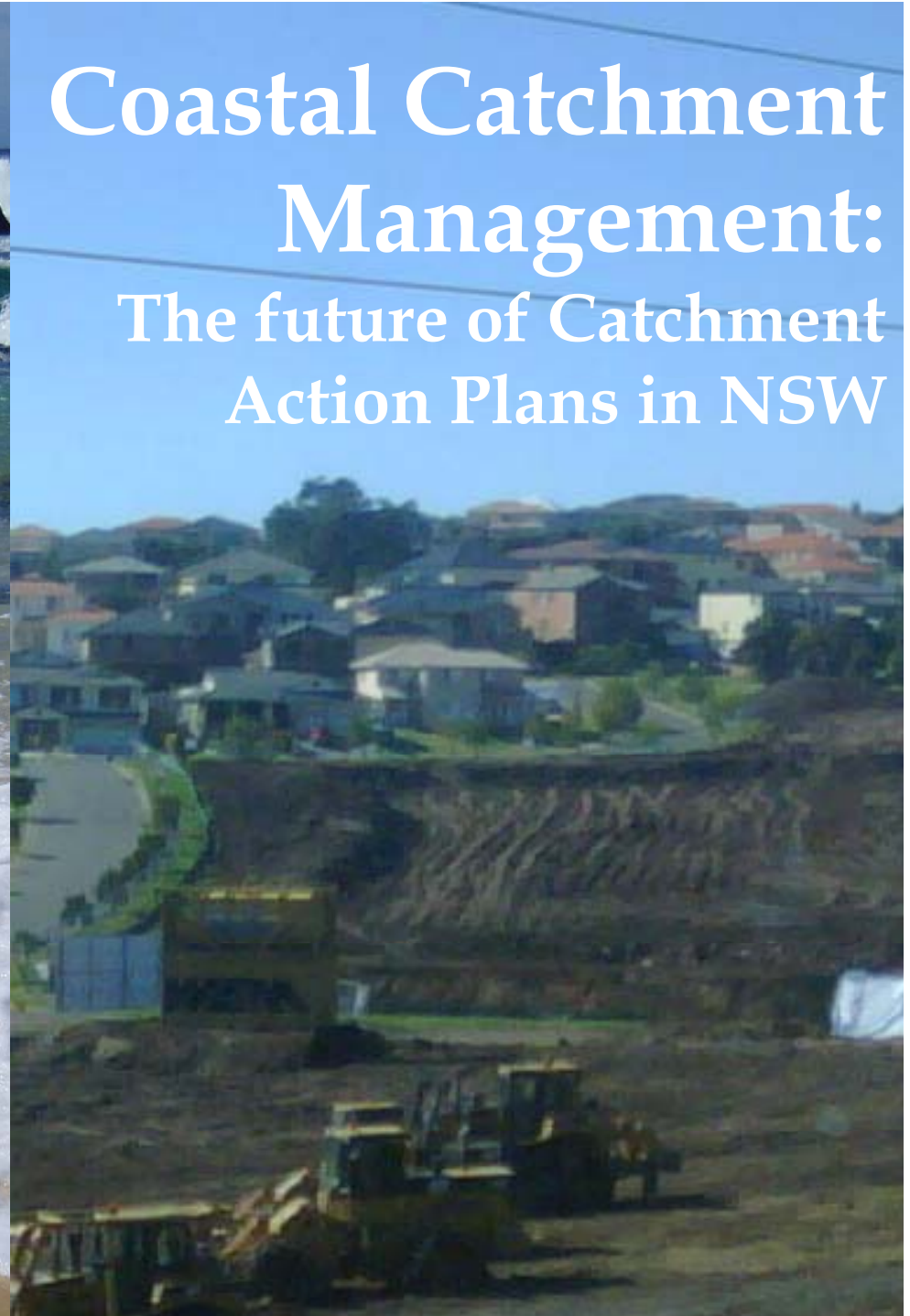


Dr John Williams
Commissioner
Natural Resources Commission


Coastal Catchment Management: The future of Catchment Action Plans in NSW





A complex landscape
means complex
challenges...

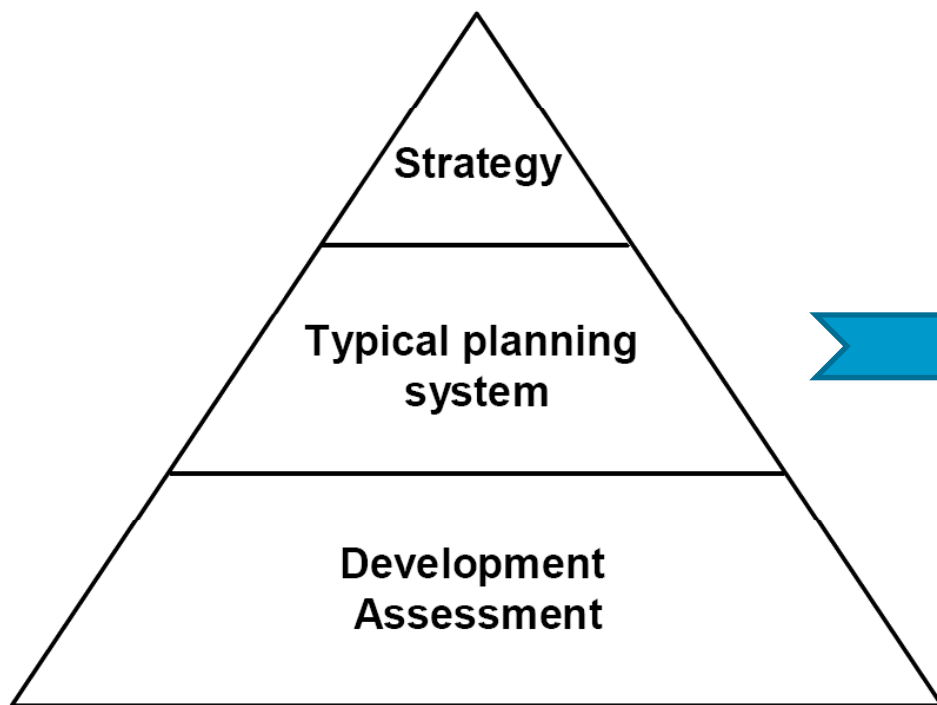
*Image sourced from the Australian
Greenhouse Office, Copyright
Commonwealth of Australia 2004*

- 
- Population growth
 - Land-use change
 - Climate change and variability
 - Sea level rise

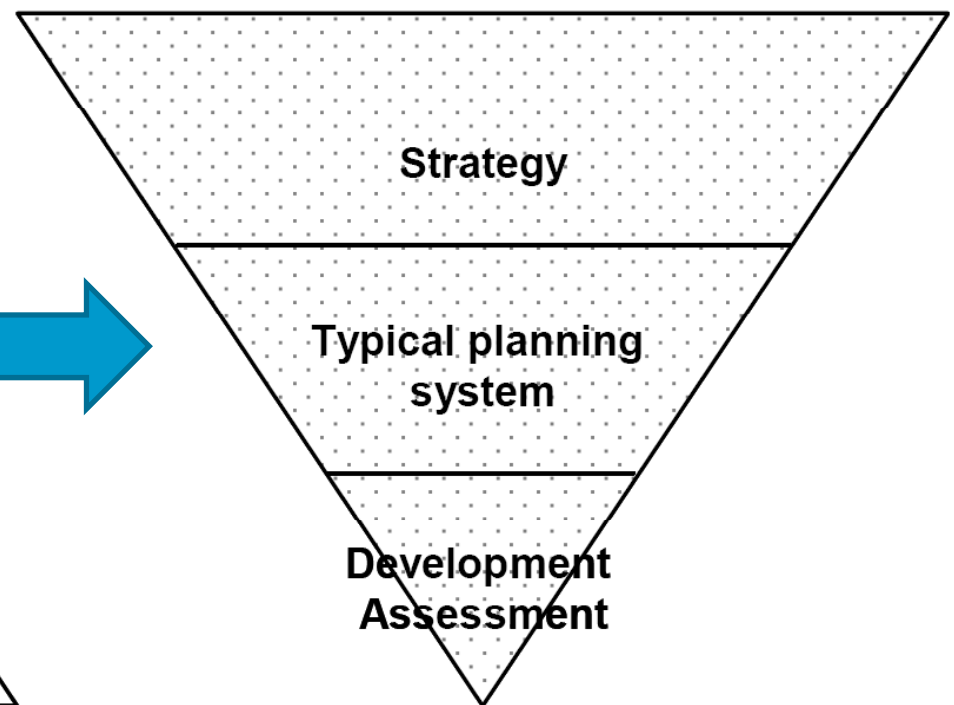


Thinking strategically about coastal planning

CURRENT PLANNING EFFORT



GOAL FOR PLANNING EFFORT



(Source: Planning Institute of Australia)

What have we learned from SEPP 71?

- Individual decisions are being made at the development scale
- NSW runs the risk of:
 - cumulative development impacts
 - missed opportunities to maximise landscape functionality.

Solution: a more co-ordinated, strategic approach to coastal development

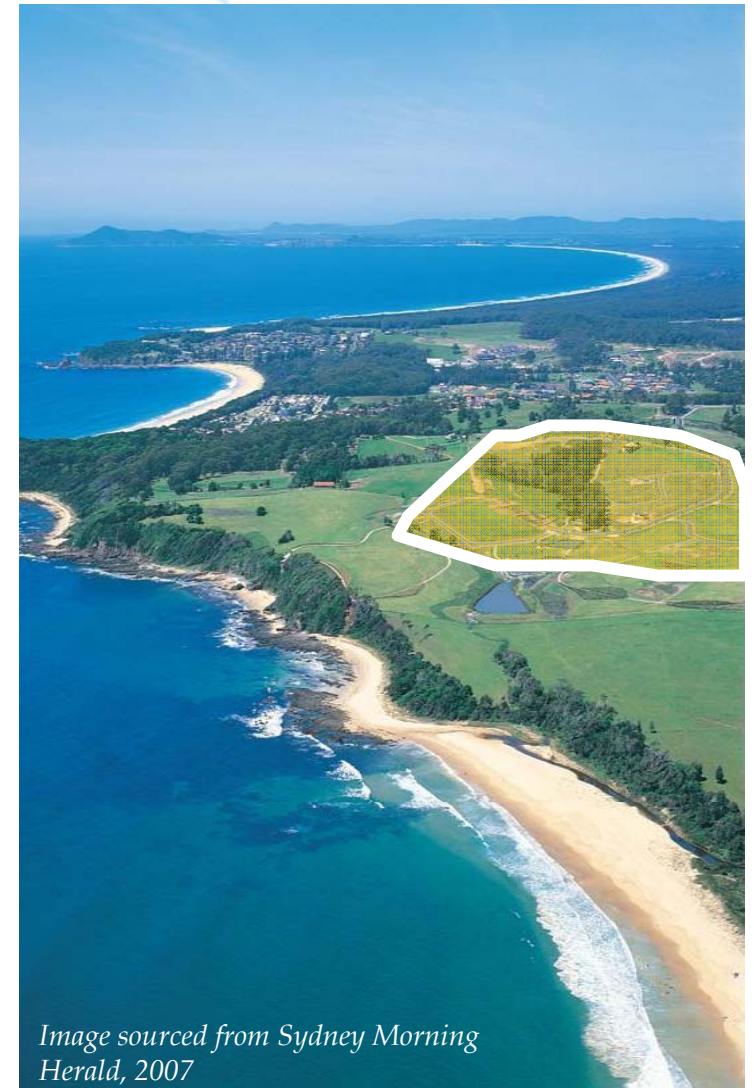
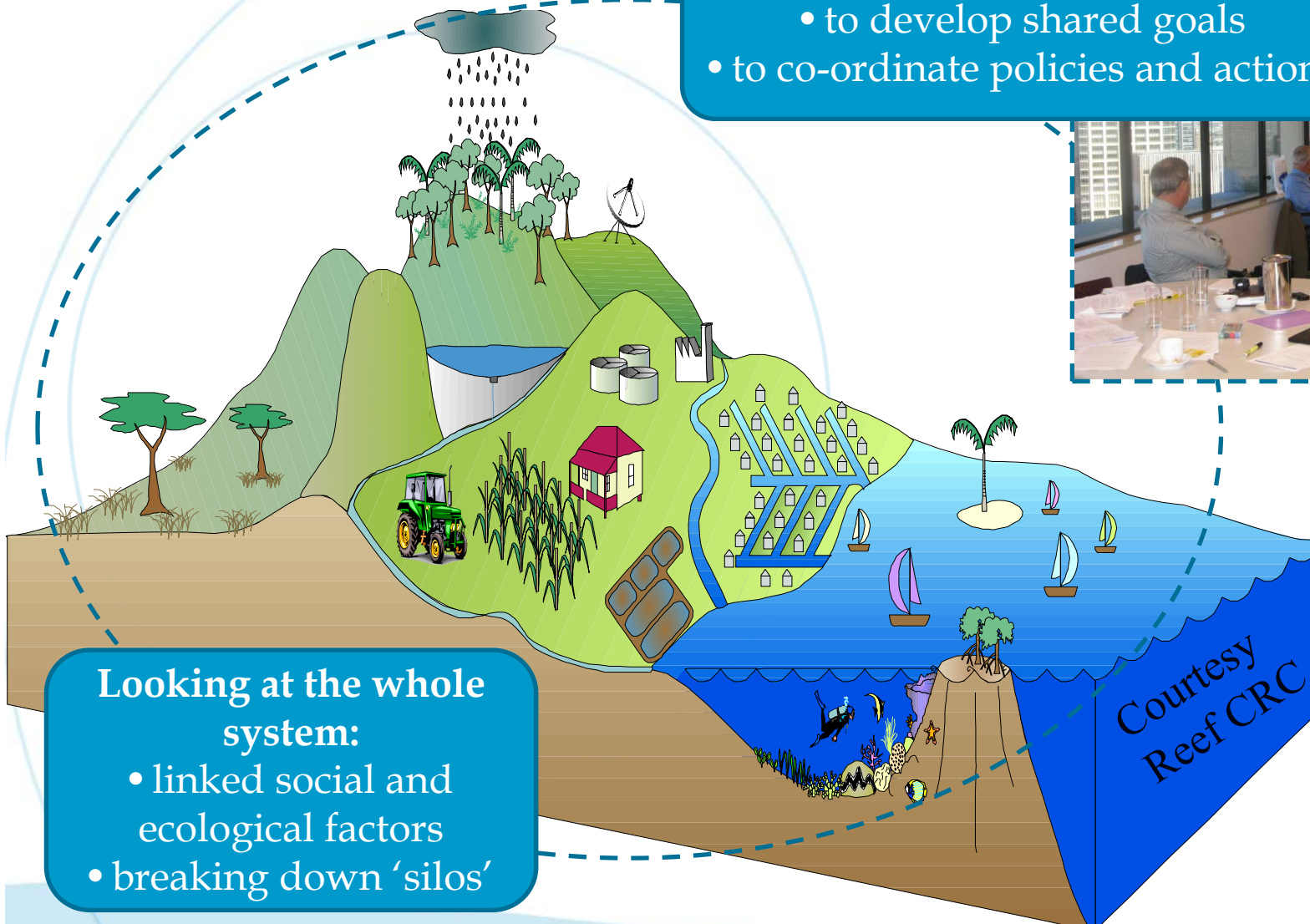
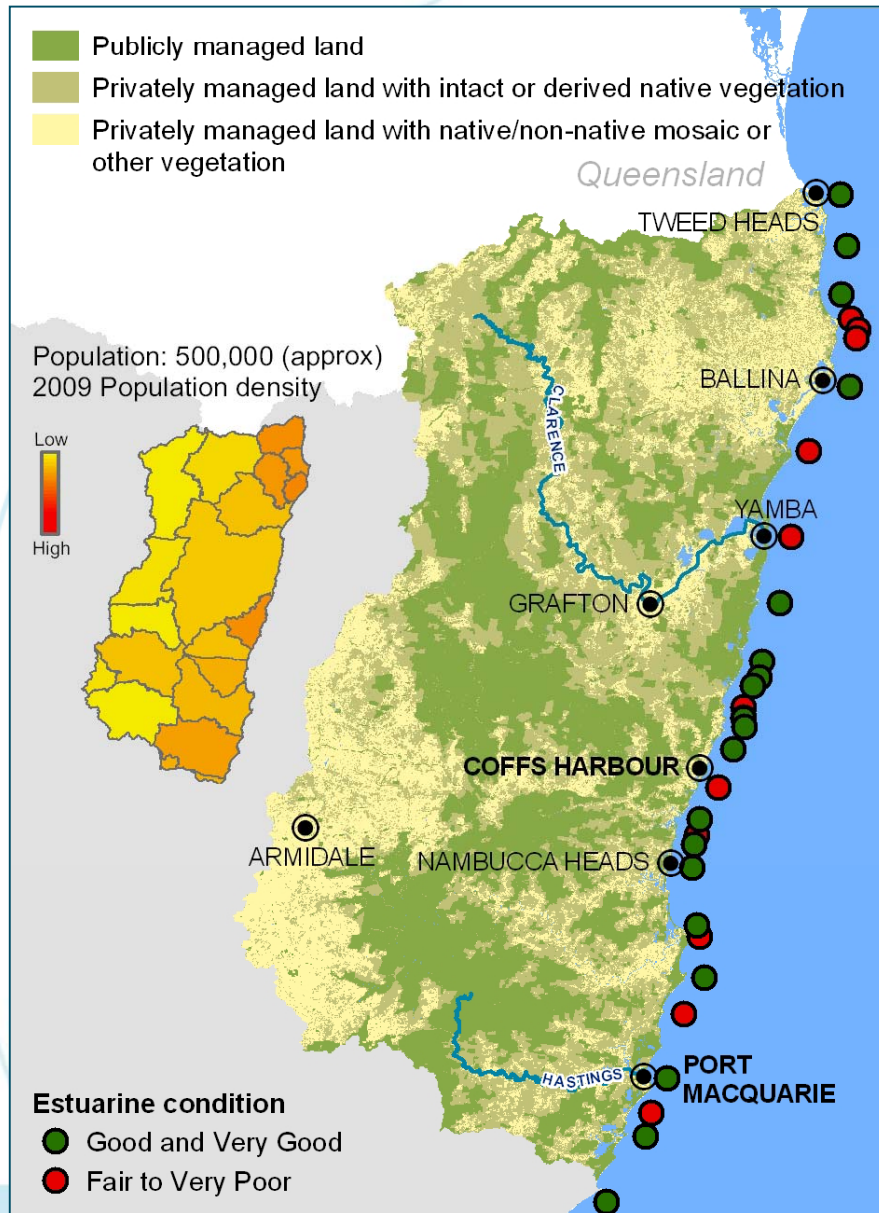


Image sourced from Sydney Morning Herald, 2007

Changing our approach to coastal planning



Challenges in Northern Rivers



NRM and planning strategies:

■ NSW Government

- Far North Coast Regional Strategy
- Mid North Coast Regional Strategy
- Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan
- 11 Water Sharing Plans
- Draft Regional Conservation Plan
- Draft NSW Biodiversity Strategy
- Upcoming - Strategic Regional Land Use Plans

■ Australian Government and NSW Government

- Northern Rivers Regional Biodiversity Management Plans

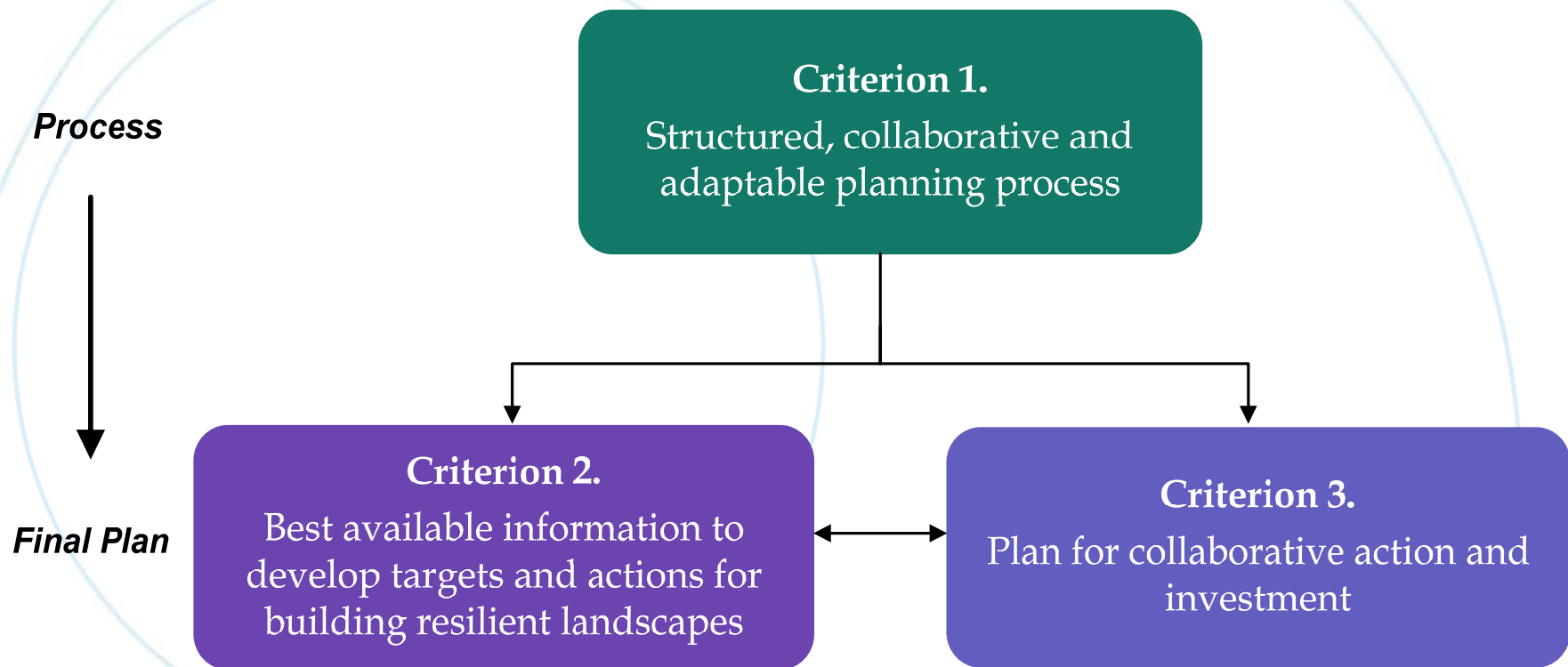
■ NSW Local Government

- Community Strategic Plans
- 22 Estuary Management Plans

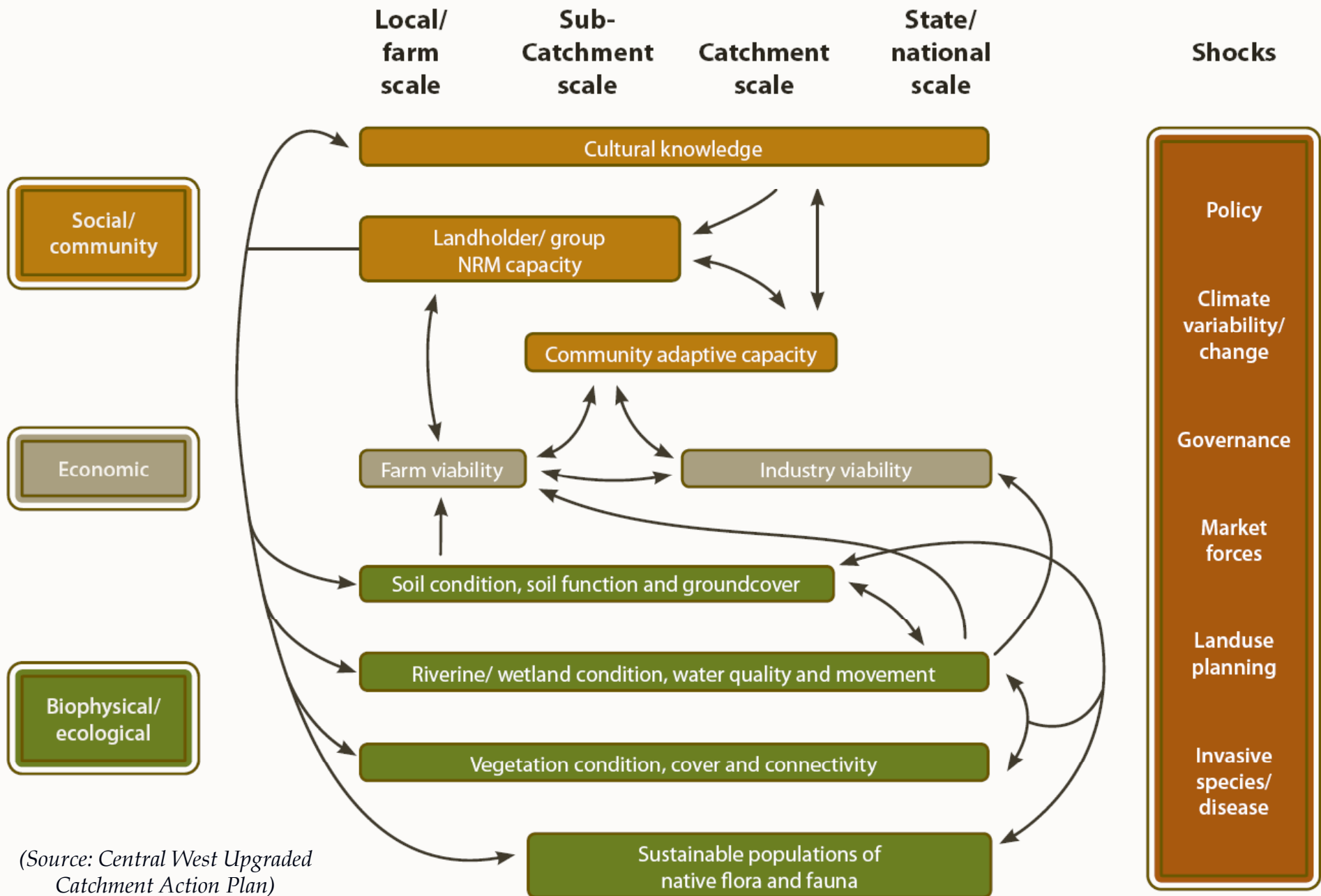
How can catchment action plans help?

- Considering current and desired landscape trajectories
- Understanding landscape systems and function
- Identifying shared goals and priorities
- Co-ordinating investment and actions

Upgrading catchment action plans

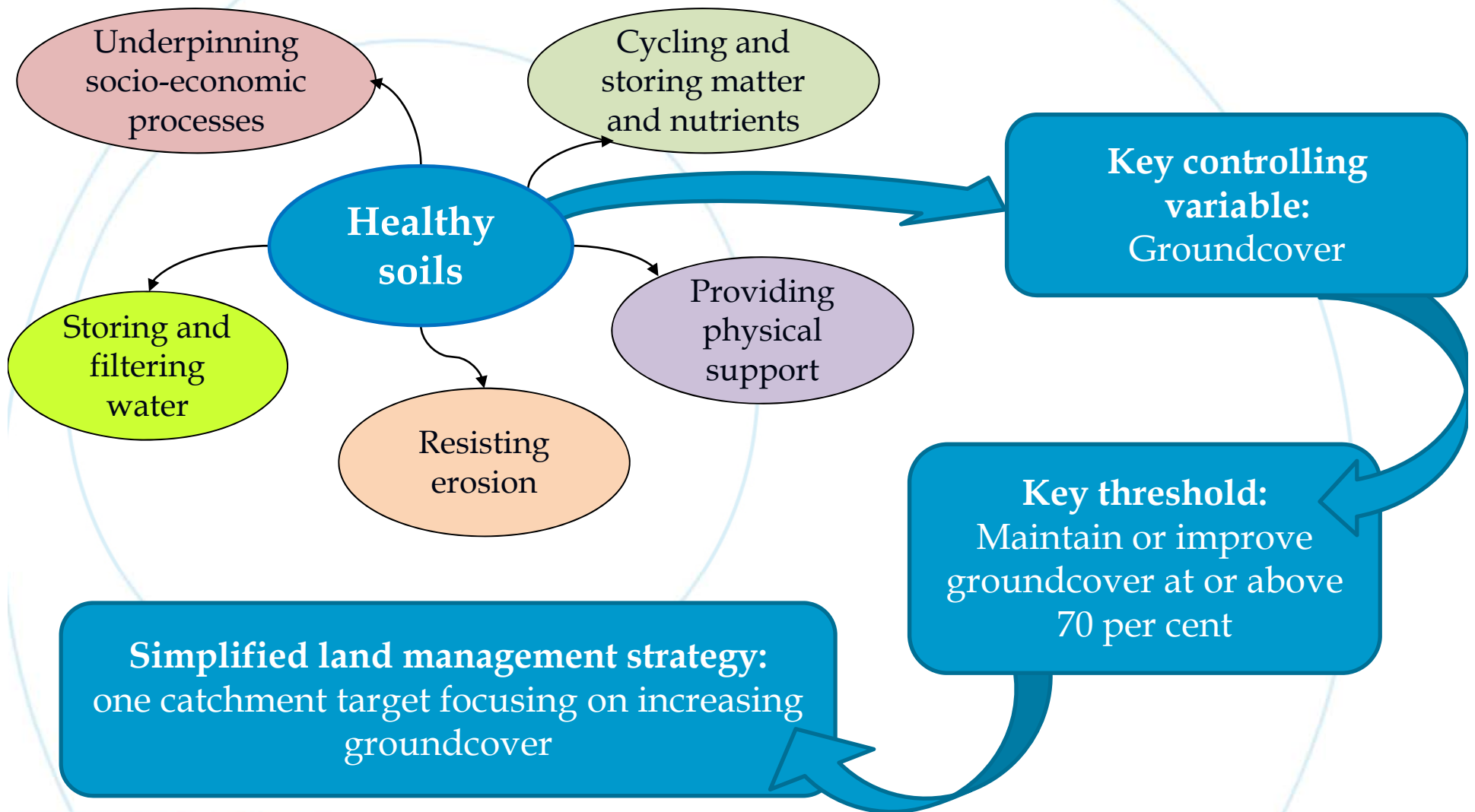


Managing landscapes as systems



(Source: Central West Upgraded Catchment Action Plan)

Using resilience to focus on what is really important



Desired state

I. Good condition
Intact vegetation >70% cover
Characteristics:
 Vegetation mostly contiguous
 Good condition vegetation (appropriate floristic and structural diversity)
 Greater the 15% per Bioregion managed for conservation outcomes

Clearing and development, land use planning, disease, natural events (flood/ fire), invasive species, climate change



II. Transitional state
Varigated vegetation 30 - 70% cover
Characteristics:
 Shape, size and proximity can still support native species
 Balance of conservation and production management

Clearing and development, land use planning, disease, natural events (flood/ fire), invasive species, climate change



Drivers and threats

III. Transitional state
Fragmented vegetation 10 - 30% cover
Characteristics:
 Patches small and scattered
 Proximity of patches sparse
 Minimal support for native species
 Production management > conservation management

Increase patch size and proximity, conservation covenants, supportive policy, market based instruments, improve vegetation condition

Priority actions

Increase patch size and proximity, conservation covenants, supportive policy, market based instruments, improve vegetation condition

Clearing and development, land use planning, disease, natural events (flood/fire), catastrophic events (may be related to climate change), invasive species

Irreversible change

IV. Poor condition
Relictual vegetation <10% cover
Characteristics:
 Only small remnants of vegetation remaining
 Shape, size and proximity of vegetation not adequate to support native species
 Majority of landscape managed for production

Undesirable state

Using state and transition diagrams

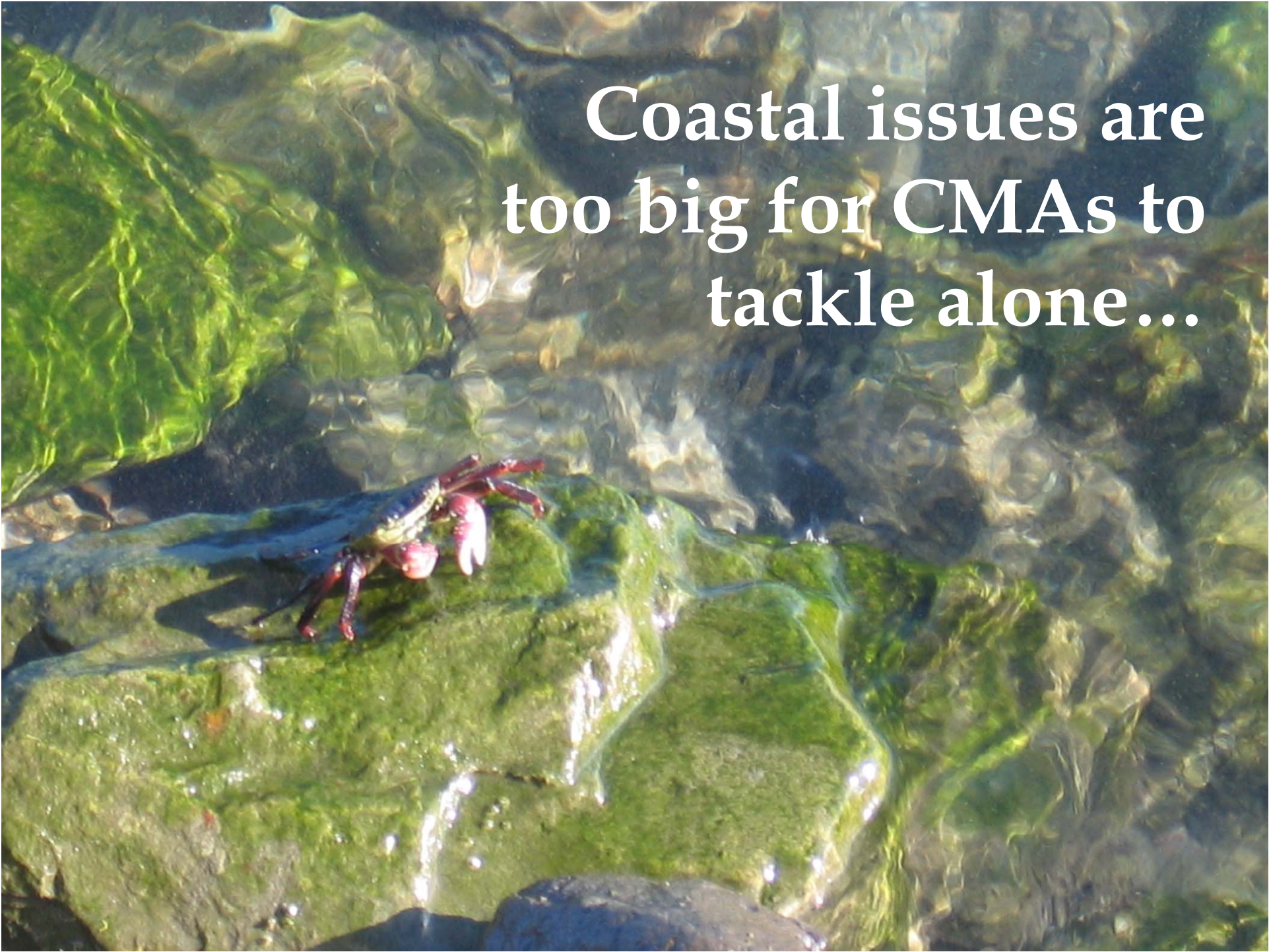
Example – State and transition model for native vegetation system

(Source: Central West Upgraded Catchment Action Plan)

*Image sourced from
Southern Rivers CMA*

**Challenge:
What does a coastal
system look like?**



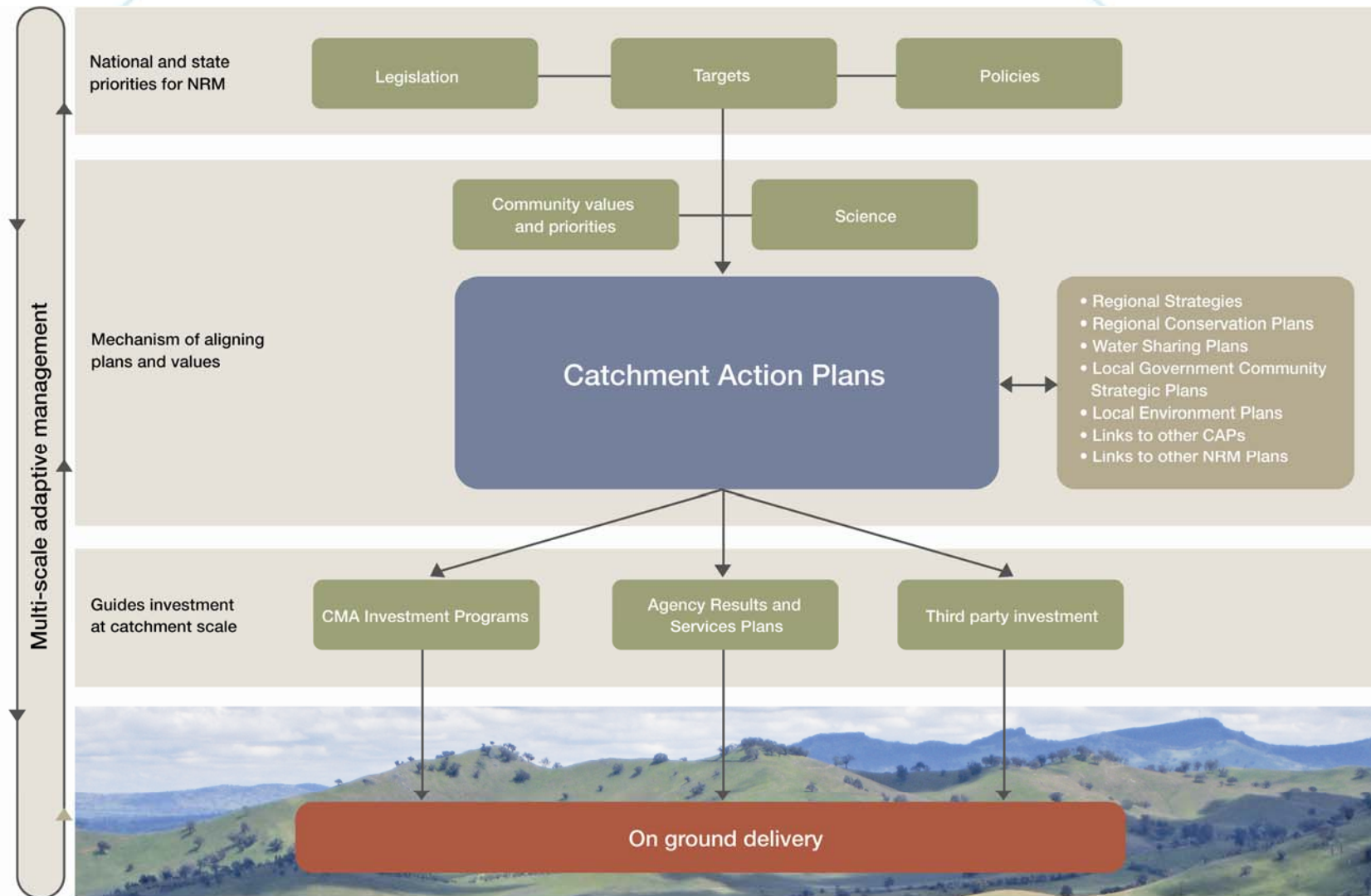
A photograph of a red crab on a mossy rock in shallow water. The crab is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame, resting on a large, flat rock covered in vibrant green moss. The water is clear and shallow, with sunlight filtering through, creating shimmering patterns on the rocks and water surface. The background shows more rocks and water, with some green algae or seaweed visible on the left side. The overall scene is a natural coastal environment.

Coastal issues are
too big for CMAs to
tackle alone...

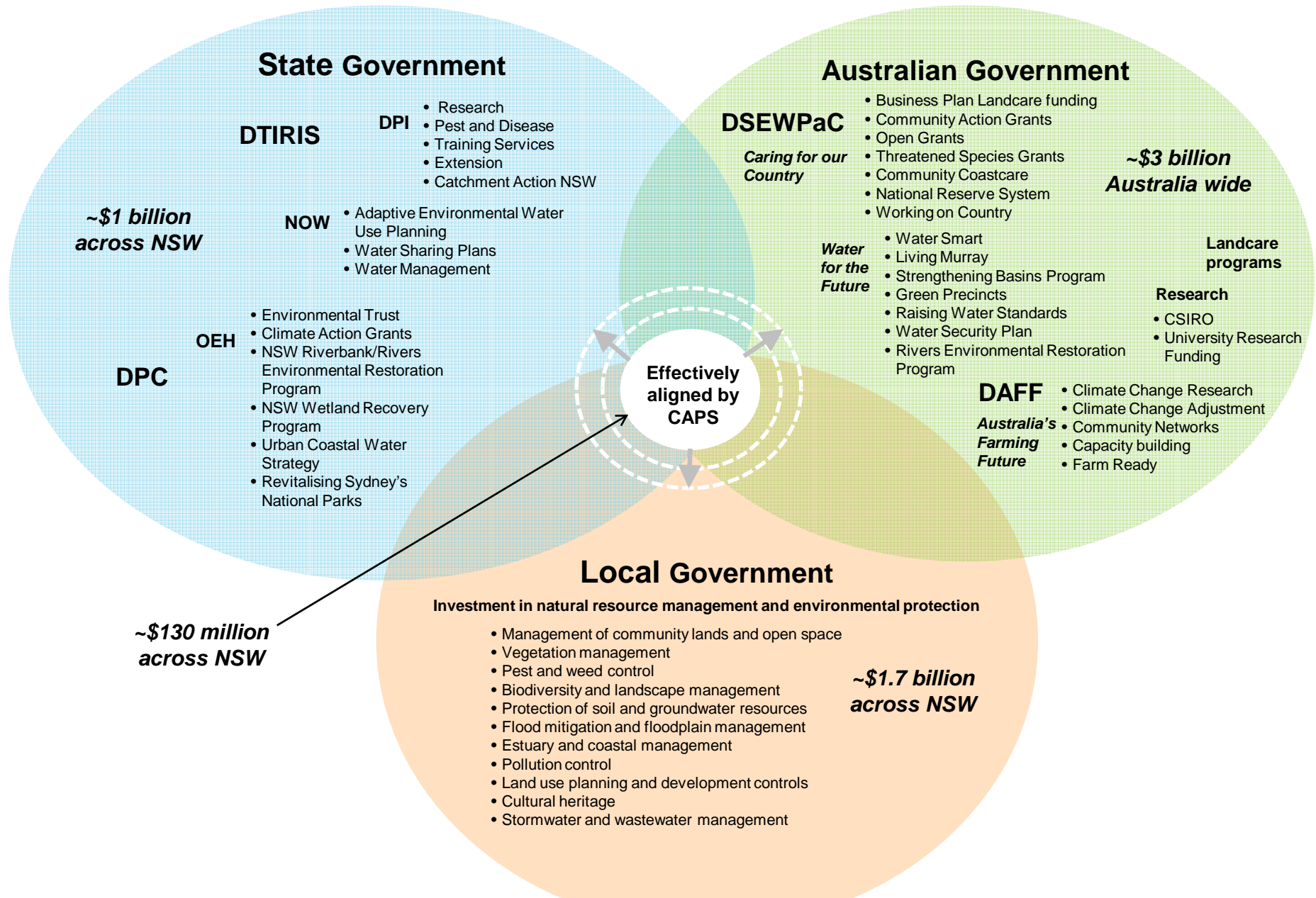
Coordinating actions and investments



Our vision for catchment action plans

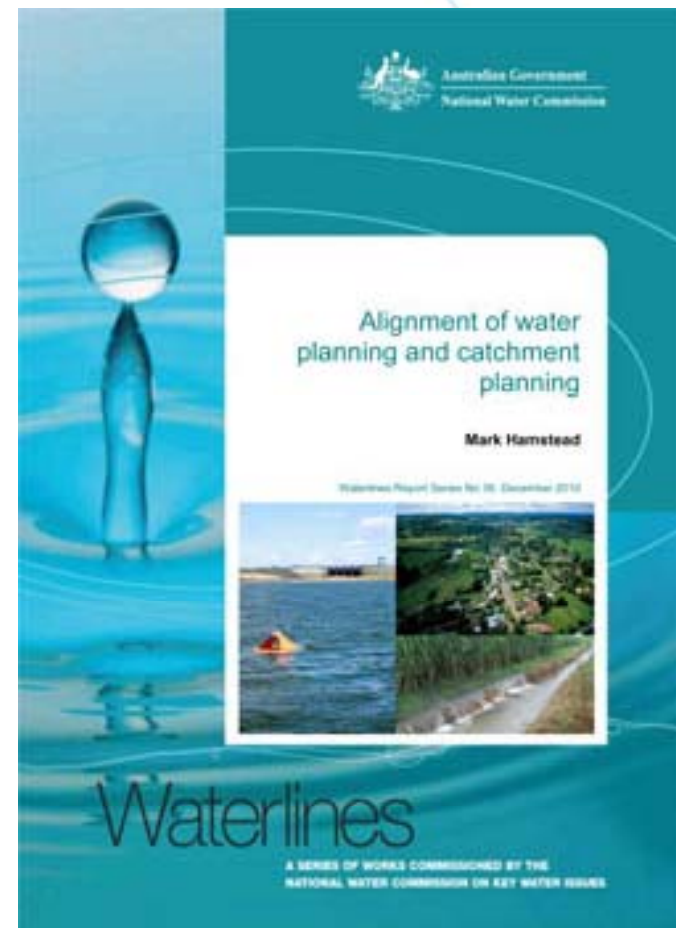


Alignment opportunities



Alignment in action – water planning and catchment planning in Hunter-Central Rivers region

- Co-operation between water and catchment planners
- Strong 'alignment' possible
- Plans based on common values, information and risk assessments
- Solving state issues at local scale



Identifying common goals

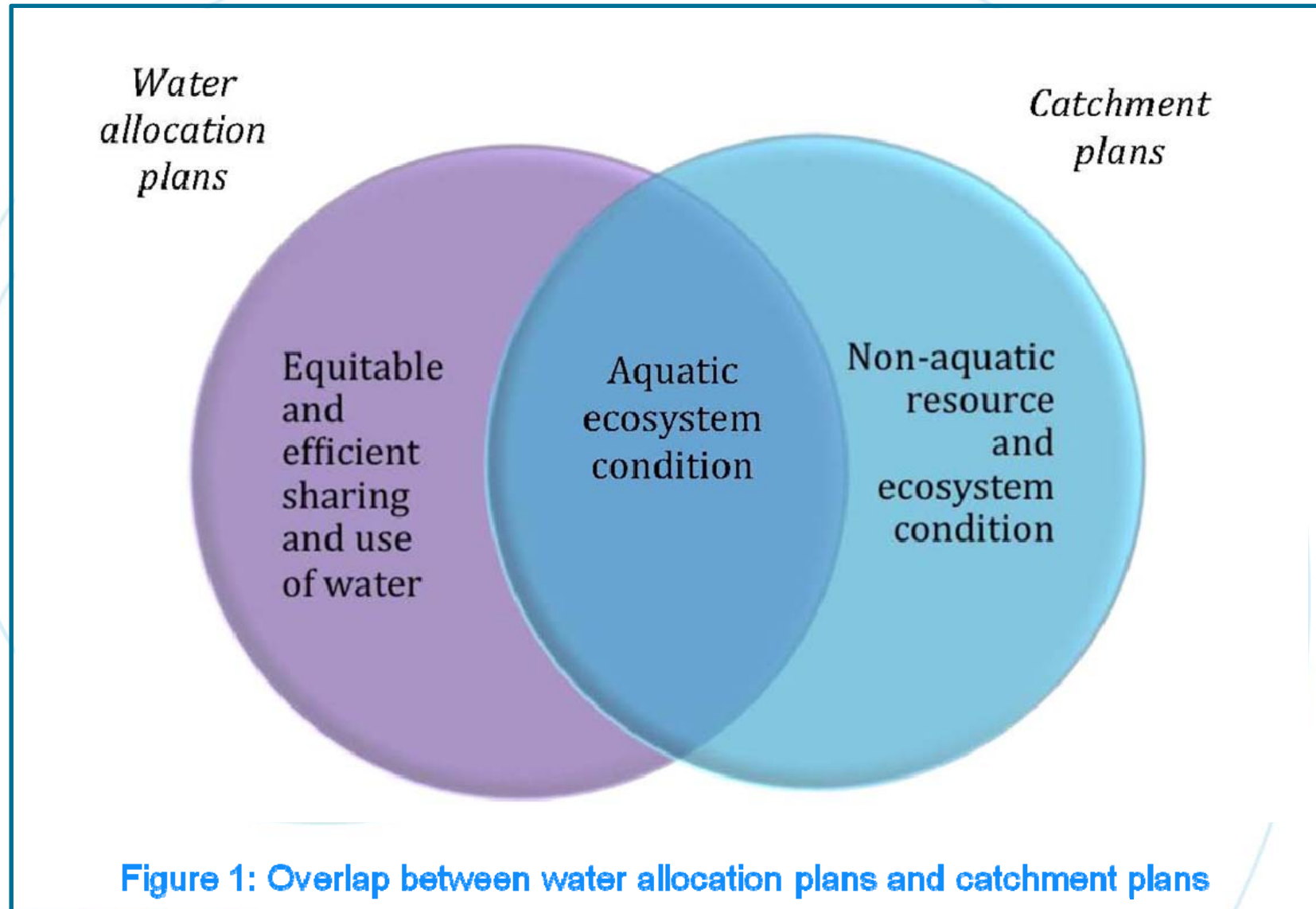
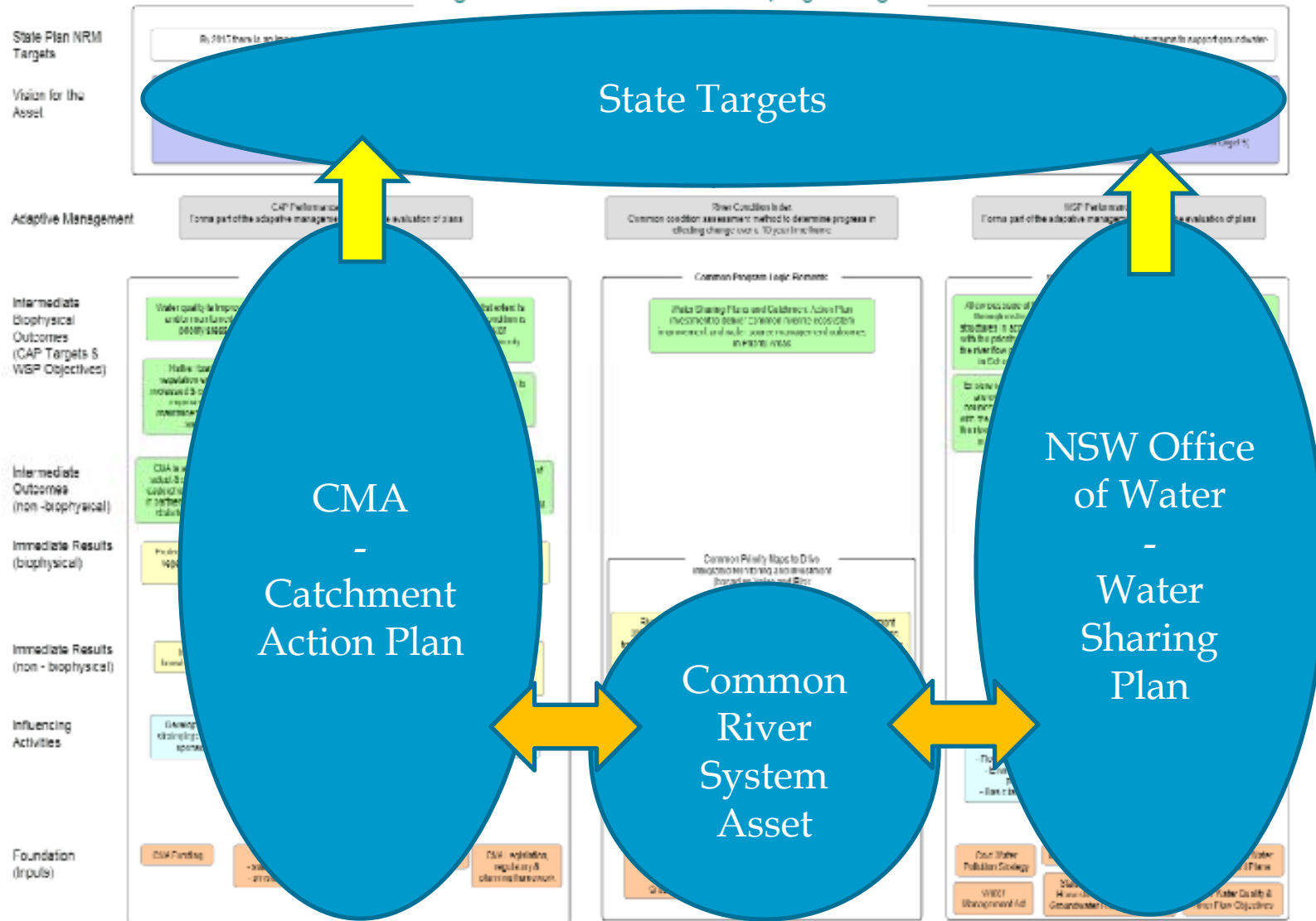



Figure 18: Linked WSP and CAP program logic





The decisions we all make today will open or close the opportunities that may be available to us in the future...

Get involved in upgrading your coastal catchment action plan to help determine your region's future.