

Burgess Creek Integrated Catchment Management Plan

Public Consultation Summary



Why Burgess Creek Matters

Burgess Creek is a small but important coastal creek in Noosa Shires Eastern Beaches Locality. Its catchment includes urban neighbourhoods, wetlands and beach, and forms part of everyday landscape for residents, visitors and wildlife.

People value Burgess Creek for different reasons. For some, it contributes to local character, open space and amenity. For others, it is important for wetlands, wildlife and connection to nature. The catchment also supports everyday community activities, with schools, sporting fields, shops and other community services and utilities located within it.

Burgess Creek plays a role in how water moves through the area. Rainfall that falls across the catchment flows through streets, parks and natural areas before making its way through the creek system and out to the ocean. Along the way, water interacts with both built infrastructure and natural landscapes.

The way Burgess Creek functions is influenced by a combination of factors, including:

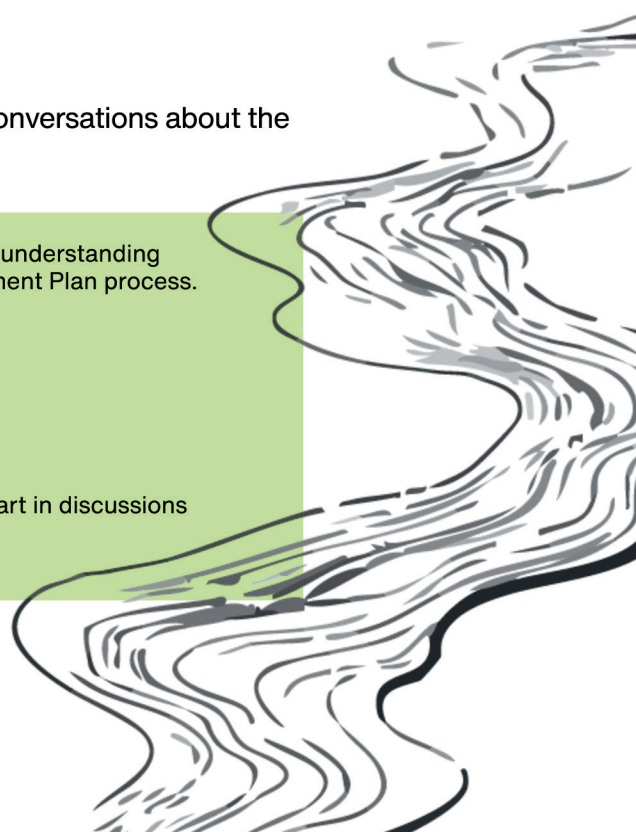
- where and how rain falls,
- permeability of the soil
- how land is used across the catchment,
- how water moves through built and natural areas
- population demands on the wastewater treatment plan, and
- changing climate and coastal conditions.

Understanding these connections helps support more informed conversations about the future of the creek and the places it flows through.

This summary has been prepared to support community and stakeholder understanding of the Burgess Creek catchment and the Integrated Catchment Management Plan process. It is intended inspire conversations that:

- explain how the catchment works,
- describe what is valued about Burgess Creek,
- outline the main challenges, risks and uncertainties, and
- support informed participation in upcoming engagement activities.

This document does not propose solutions or make decisions. Its role is to provide shared background information so people can take part in discussions from a common starting point.





Burgess Creek as it flows through vegetated areas and connects with the coastal environment.

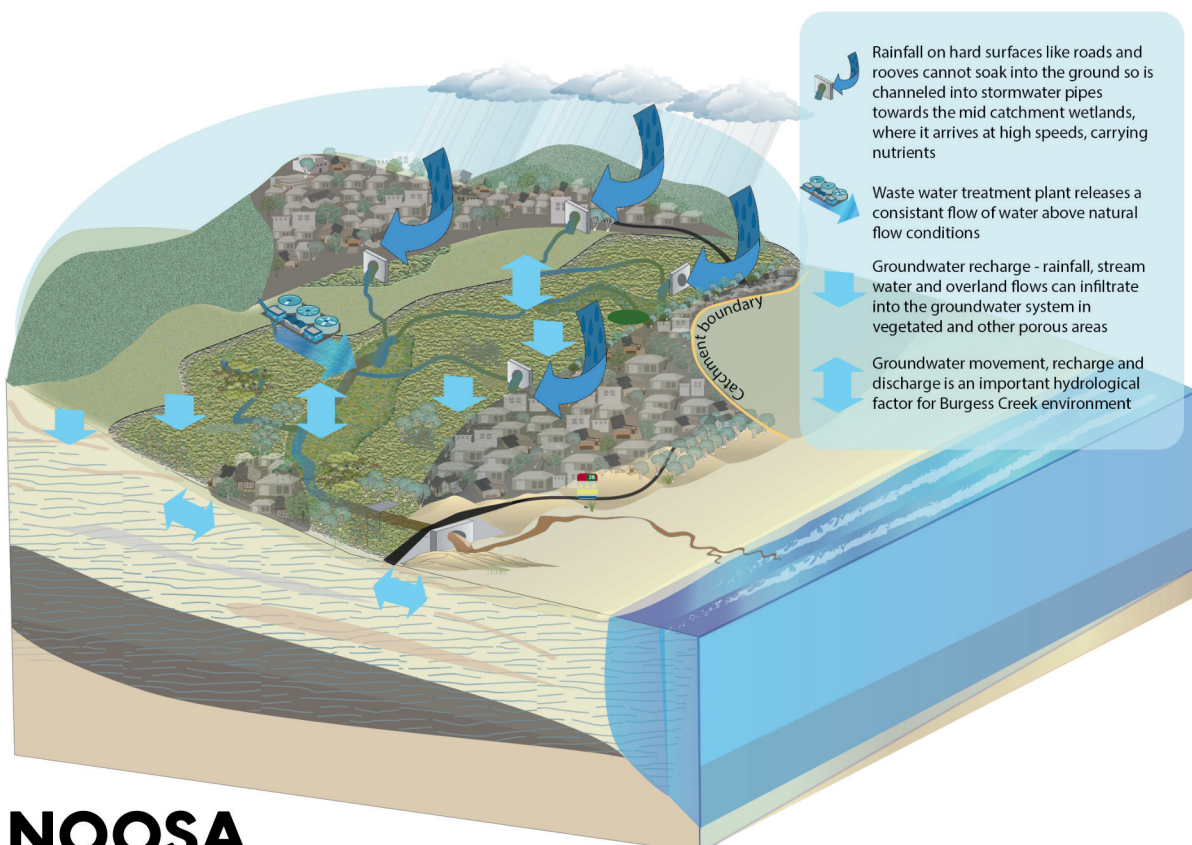
Understanding the Catchment as a System

A catchment is the area of land where rainfall flows toward a common waterway. In the Burgess Creek catchment, rain that falls across the landscape eventually makes its way into the creek and out to the ocean.

Some rainfall soaks into the ground and moves slowly through natural soils and vegetation. Other rainfall flows more quickly over hard surfaces such as roofs, roads and paths before entering drains and waterways. Both of these pathways influence how plants, animals and people live and move in the catchment.

The catchment works as a connected system:

- Water that enters the system upstream can affect areas downstream.
- Both natural landscapes and built areas influence how water moves.
- Changes in one part of the catchment can have effects elsewhere.



The Catchment Zones at a Glance

To help describe how the system changes from the upper catchment to the coast, Burgess Creek is described using four connected zones. They are a simple way of describing how the character and function of the creek changes as it flows through different landscapes on its way to the ocean.

The four catchment zones help provide a shared spatial understanding for community and stakeholder discussions. Although described separately, the zones are closely linked and influence one another.



Zone 1 Upper Catchment

The Upper Catchment includes the higher-lying urban areas of the Burgess Creek Catchment. These areas are made up of established residential and commercial neighbourhoods, with streets, roofs and other hard surfaces.

The coarse, sandy soils in these areas allow lots of rainwater to soak into the ground. Before development, much of the rain that fell in this part of the catchment easily soaked into the ground and slowly moved through the soil to the groundwater table. Today, more rainfall runs off hard surfaces and enters the underground stormwater pipe network, moving more quickly toward lower parts of the catchment.

In this zone:

- Rainfall runs off hardened urban surfaces and enters local drainage systems.
- Water generally moves through the pipes very quickly toward downstream areas.
- How water is managed here can influence conditions further along the creek.

Some undeveloped areas within the Upper Catchment also provide important habitat and movement pathways for local wildlife.

Zone 2 Mid Catchment – Wetland Plains

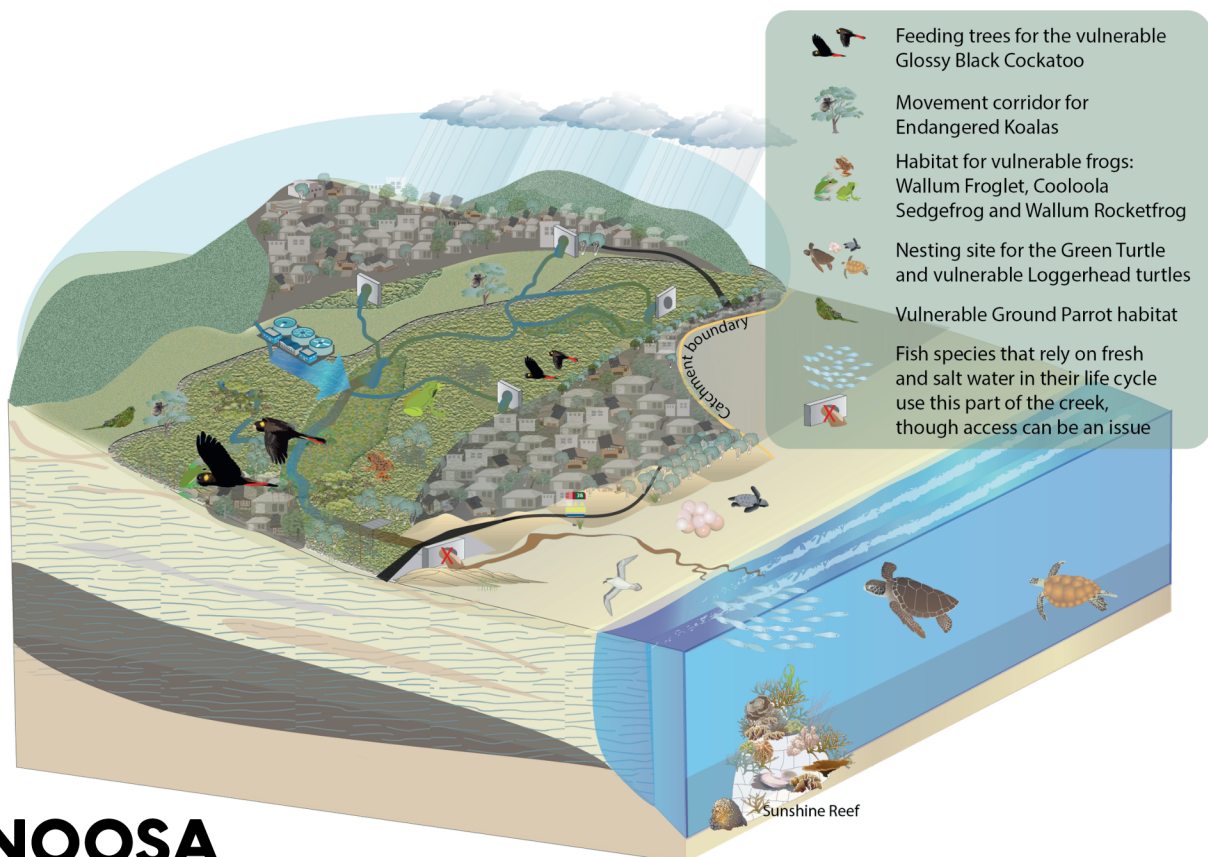
The Mid Catchment includes broad, low-lying wetland areas downstream of the urban headwaters. In this zone, water spreads out across the landscape rather than flowing quickly through pipes or channels.

These wetlands are closely connected to groundwater and support a diverse range of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions. The landscape plays an important role in slowing water down, storing it, and shaping how it moves through the system.

In this zone:

- Water movement is slower and more spread out.
- Wetlands interact with both surface water and groundwater.
- Vegetation and landscape features influence how water is stored and released.

This part of the catchment forms a transition between the urban areas upstream and the more defined creek channel closer to the coast.



Zone 3 Lower Catchment – Outlet Channel

The Lower Catchment is a relatively short section of Burgess Creek where water flows through a more clearly defined creek channel on its way to the beach. This part of the catchment begins downstream of the wetland system at a piped culvert, and forms a visible connection between inland areas and the coast.

In this zone:

- Water flows within a recognisable creek channel.
- Conditions are influenced by both upstream flows and coastal processes.
- The creek becomes a more prominent feature in the landscape.

This part of the catchment supports species that move between freshwater and the ocean at different stages of their life cycle, reflecting its role as a transition between inland and coastal environments.

Overall, the Lower Catchment plays an important role in linking the wetland plains upstream with the coastal environment downstream.

Zone 4 Creek Mouth and Beach Interface

The Creek Mouth and Beach Interface (Zone 4 - light green) is where Burgess Creek meets the coastal environment. This zone is located near Beach Access 38 and includes beach, dunes and near-shore areas influenced by the creek as it flows into the ocean.

In this part of the system:

- Creek flows interact with sand, waves and tides.
- The position of the creek mouth can change over time.
- Coastal conditions and weather patterns influence how the creek connects with the beach.

This area extends beyond the visible creek channel and reflects the dynamic nature of the coastline. It is a place where land, water and coastal processes meet and change over time.



What We Value About Burgess Creek

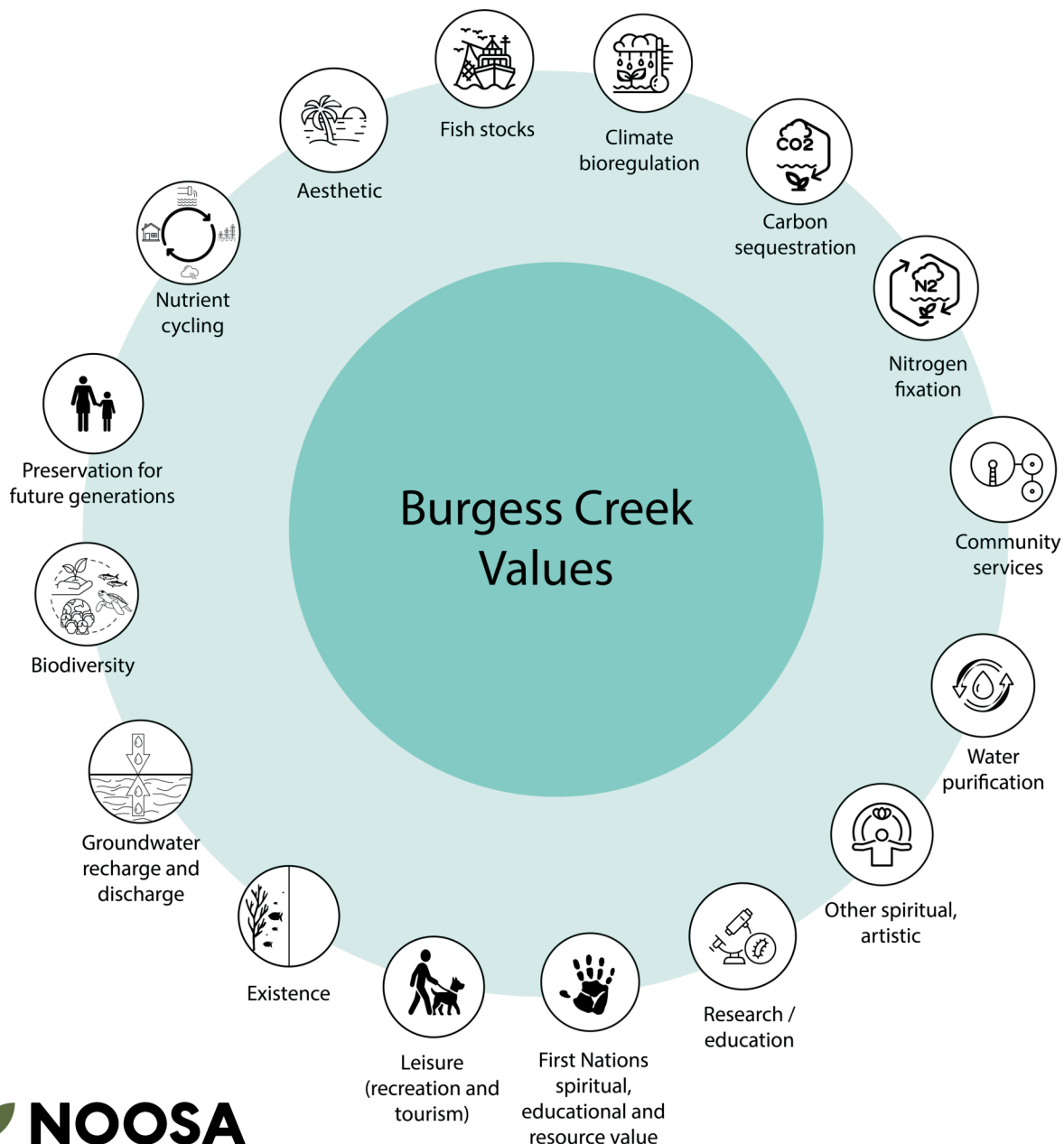
People value the Burgess Creek Catchment in different ways, and these values can vary across different parts of the catchment.

Commonly expressed values include:

- Environmental values, such as wetlands, wildlife habitat and natural landscapes
- Amenity values, including scenery, open space and local character
- Recreation values, such as walking, beach use, sporting fields and enjoying nature
- Functional values, including the role the catchment plays in supporting everyday community activities, essential community sanitation infrastructure and managing water during rainfall

These values are not the same everywhere, and they are not always experienced in the same way by everyone. Understanding this diversity of values is an important part of informed and respectful discussion about the catchment.

Different people value different parts of the creek in different ways.



Key Challenges and Pressures

Like many urban coastal catchments, Burgess Creek is influenced by a range of interacting pressures. These pressures are not always visible and can change over time.

At a high level, these pressures include:

- Changes in population numbers land use and urban form, which can affect how much water enters the catchment and how it moves through it
- How water moves through built and natural areas, including how quickly water moves across the landscape and into the creek
- Interactions between freshwater and coastal processes, where creek flows meet tides, waves and shifting beach conditions
- Extreme weather and climate variability, which can influence rainfall patterns, water movement and coastal conditions
- Vegetation in the catchment is generally adapted to slow-moving, low-nutrient water, and changes in flow speed or nutrient levels can influence the mix of plants and the habitats they provide for wildlife.
- Built structures in parts of the creek can make it harder for some fish to move between freshwater and coastal areas.

These pressures can affect different parts of the catchment in different ways. They also tend to interact with one another, rather than acting in isolation, which adds complexity and uncertainty.

Risks, Tradeoffs and Uncertainty

Managing a catchment involves uncertainty. Natural systems are complex, and not all outcomes can be predicted.

Important considerations include:

- Some risks change over time rather than appearing suddenly.
- Managing one issue can affect other parts of the system.
- There are often tradeoffs between different values or outcomes.
- Knowledge gaps exist, particularly where systems interact.

Being open about uncertainty helps support realistic and informed discussions.

What do we mean by trade-offs?

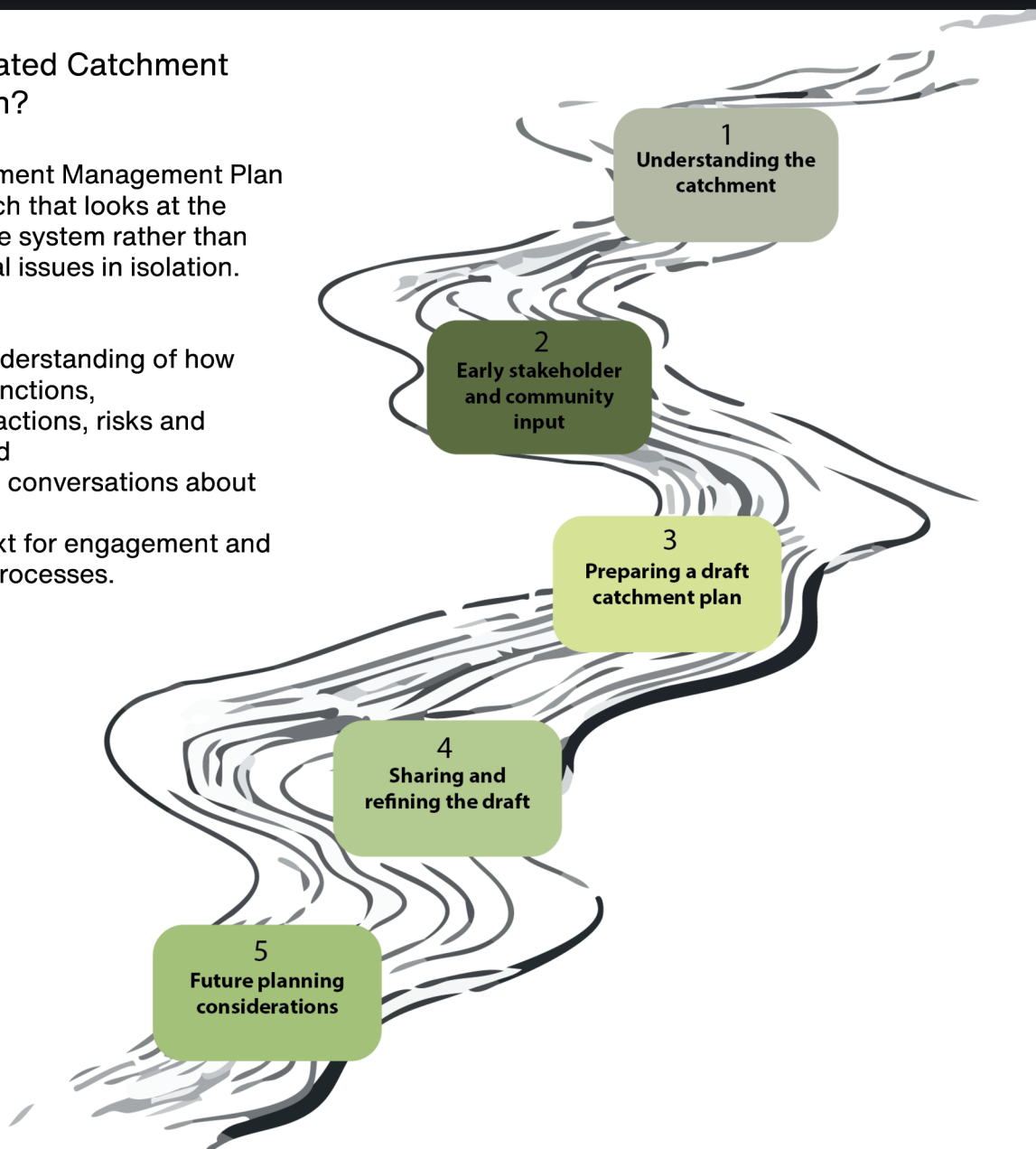
In a catchment, different values and uses can overlap. Improving or protecting one aspect of the system can sometimes affect another. These situations are known as trade-offs. Understanding trade-offs helps support informed discussion about what matters most in different places and circumstances.

What Is an Integrated Catchment Management Plan?

An Integrated Catchment Management Plan is a planning approach that looks at the catchment as a whole system rather than focusing on individual issues in isolation.

It helps to:

- build a shared understanding of how the catchment functions,
- identify key interactions, risks and uncertainties, and
- support informed conversations about future directions.
- It provides context for engagement and future planning processes.



What This Catchment Planning Process Will and Will Not Do

What this catchment planning process will do

- Build a shared understanding of how the Burgess Creek catchment works
- Summarise key values, pressures and areas of uncertainty
- Use community and stakeholder engagement to inform understanding of issues and considerations across the catchment
- Support informed discussion to help shape future planning conversations

What this community engagement stage of the catchment planning process will not do (at this stage)

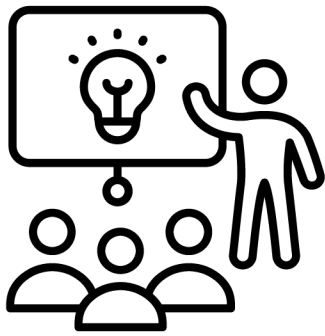
- Make decisions or select preferred options
- Set regulations, limits or targets through this summary or engagement process
- Commit Council or other organisations to specific actions
- Replace existing planning, regulatory or approval processes

How the Community Can Be Involved

Community and stakeholder input is an important part of understanding the catchment from different perspectives.

Engagement activities will invite people to share views about:

- what they value in different parts of the catchment,
- where they see knowledge gaps or uncertainties,
- what considerations matter most in different zones.
- Thinking about the catchment in zones can help support these conversations.



Targeted workshops



Broader engagement online

What Happens Next

Feedback gathered through community and stakeholder engagement will help inform the next stages of the Burgess Creek catchment planning process. This input will be considered alongside technical and policy contexts to support future planning discussions.

The catchment planning process is expected to progress through a number of broad stages, from building understanding and gathering input, through to preparing and refining a draft plan. Opportunities for further engagement may occur as the process continues.

- Details about specific engagement activities will be shared separately.

