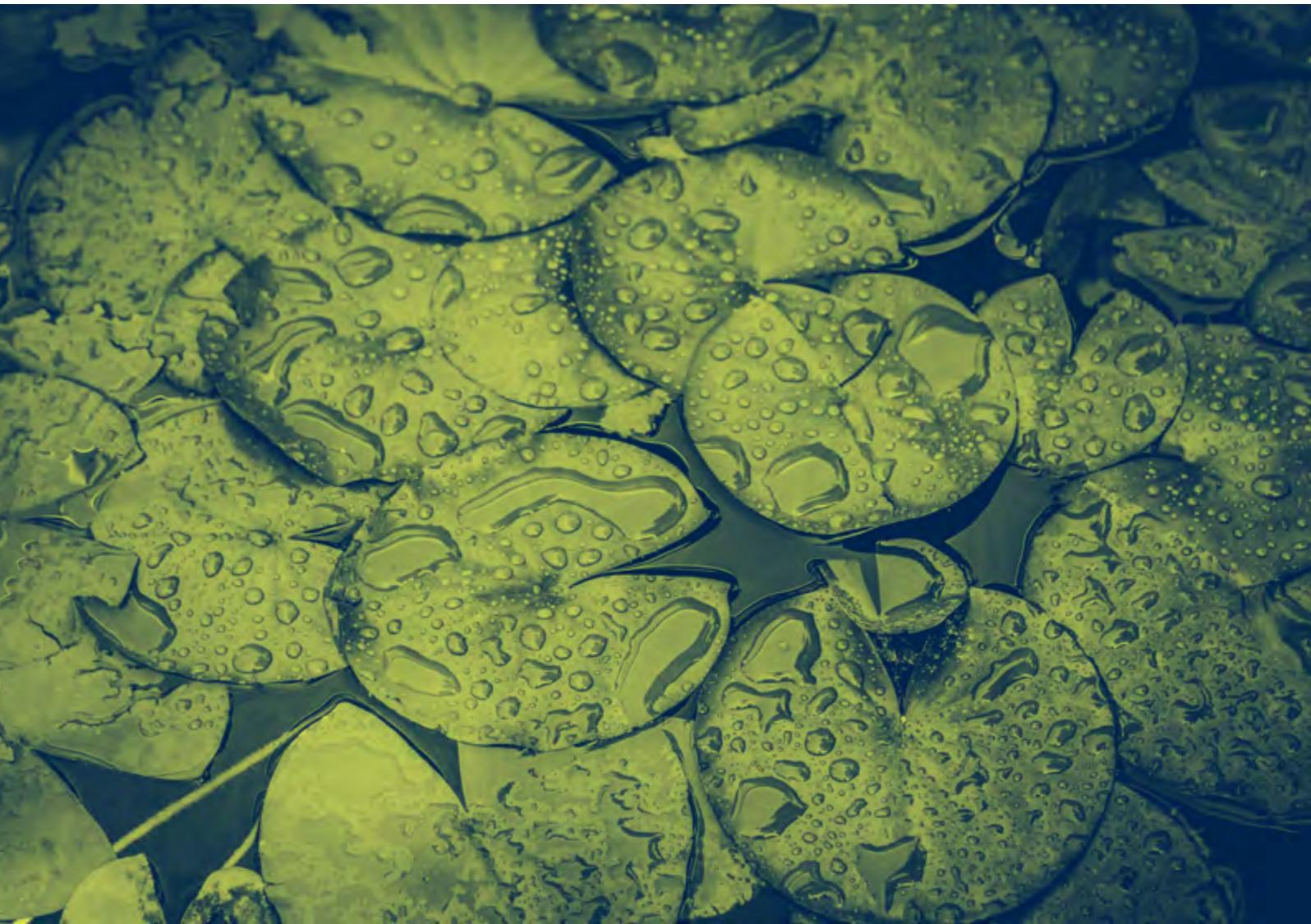




Peter Cullen
Water and
Environment Trust

Strategic Plan

2021-2024



Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Peter Cullen Trust respectfully acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past, present and emerging. The Peter Cullen Trust proudly supports the empowerment of Indigenous leaders through our leadership programs, their ongoing personal and professional development, and their influence, through this strategic plan.



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Our Vision

A world where water and the environment are managed sustainably and equitably.

Our Mission

To bridge Science, People and the Environment through inspiring and cultivating meaningful conversations and capacity building.



Professor Peter Cullen and the Trust

Improving Australia's water and environmental management by enhancing the link between scientific evidence and effective policy-making requires adaptive leadership and communication styles that bring science to life and make it relevant for politicians and policy-makers.

"While scientists can give a measure of what we should do with rivers, the fate of our rivers will depend on politicians having the courage to follow scientific advice." (Peter Cullen)

Exploring and communicating different ways of scientific thinking and evidence is the foundation of Peter Cullen's legacy.

This provides impetus and point of difference for the ongoing role of the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust.

Now entering its thirteenth year, the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust is mandated more than ever to enable those in the environment sector to rise to the challenge of the 'Cullen Benchmark' – to "take the next step and actually make change" (T. Stubbs, 2011).

Whilst the Trust continues to consolidate what we do well in this space, and exploring new and exciting territories, our foundation remains true to Peter's legacy - enabling those who can influence policy for sustainable water management in Australia with knowledge, communication and leadership capabilities in order to "actually make change happen".

The Trust magnifies its impact and reach through its growing network of Fellows (graduates of our Leadership development programs) and Friends (influential leaders and thinkers in the water space).

This Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan describes the journey for the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust for the three years between 2021-2024. It identifies our strategic goals, how we might define success and what initiatives we will undertake to achieve our goals.

It also ensures that we are accountable for the decisions we take; committing to monitoring and evaluating our impact by assessing our progress in achieving these goals. Based on what we learn, we will adjust our journey as required and apply what we learn in order to be more effective.

The Leadership Context: 2021 and beyond...

Globally, 2020 was a year of unprecedented and accelerated change.

In Australia, off the back of extreme drought and devastating bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic placed into the spotlight the link between the health of our planet, the health of our society, the health of workforces, and the health of business.

And everything changed.

In the way we work, the way we produce, the way we consume, in the way we live – and in the way we think about the future.

Uncertainty seems now to be the only certainty.

These previously unimaginable changes to our lives have forced us to adapt – and quickly – in order to survive. To imagine new, innovate and creative ways of operation. This in turn has forced leaders to reimagine the future, to consider how best to lead in times of crisis, uncertainty, ambiguity, and complex challenges.

As leaders require new skills and capabilities to lead in this context, the Peter Cullen Trust also needs to adapt in order to retain relevance AND to fully equip leaders in the water sector to embrace the uncertain times ahead.

We adapt, as must our leaders. As such, this short-term Strategic Plan outlines an adaptive pathway into this continually changing future – to ensure we are nimble and can innovate as we need to.

And yet whilst we continue to operate with a high degree of fluidity, our founding principles remain the same...

The word "CHANGE" is written in large, bold, uppercase letters. Each letter is filled with a different color and has a slight 3D effect with a shadow. The colors are: C (purple), H (blue), A (green), N (yellow), G (orange), and E (pink). The letters are slightly overlapping and have a modern, sans-serif font.

Our Underpinning Principles

Peter Cullen lived and worked with strong principles which significantly contributed to his effectiveness as a science communicator and strong advocate for a healthy planet. It is this set of underlying principles which the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust endeavours to integrate across all its programs and policies and, more importantly perhaps, in the way we do our work, both internally and in working collaboratively with others.

The Trust is not politically aligned and is neither an advocate nor a lobbying organisation. Through developing leaders in the water sector and raising the level of discourse – by facilitating, convening and enabling – it empowers others to be effective communicators and advocates.

Principle 1: Respect Australia as a Living Continent

We must learn to live with nature rather than trying to tame it, through the promotion of land management practices that are in harmony with the highly variable climate that is intrinsic to Australia.

Principle 2: Knowledge is Key

Brokering collaboration within and between knowledge providers and users is crucial for holistic management of Australia's water and environment resources. As Peter once said, knowledge investments guide reform.

Principle 3: Equality & Participation

Knowledge resides in everyone – not just scientists but also in communities across the land. Peter would 'listen to everyone, no matter where they came from'. Knowledge should be heard and shared, challenged and encouraged.

Principle 4: Speaking Truth to Power

Committed and knowledgeable scientists, managers and community advocates can make a contribution to public policy if they are prepared to speak out. We must be courageous and challenge the status quo by clearly articulating the problem and identifying realistic and acceptable ways forward.

Principle 5: Personal Accountability

Peter believed that we each need to manage ourselves and not blame others for our actions, our behaviours and our decisions. By taking accountability for ourselves we can employ effective leadership capabilities.



GOAL ONE:

The ‘bridge’ between science and policy in the management of Australia’s water and environment is strengthened.

What our success looks like

INDIVIDUALS

- Scientists, water professionals and other natural resource managers are able to lead effectively, collaborating with policy-makers who are better able to access and utilise scientific evidence.
- Professionals in the water and environment sectors have leadership skills, knowledge and networks that enable them to promote, develop and implement or influence science-based policy and management more effectively.

NETWORK

- Developments in sustainable water and environmental management and policy are catalysed by a diverse network of professionals with adaptive leadership and influential communication skills.

SYSTEM

- Sustainable water policy and management - and the scientific knowledge to inform them - remain pivotal priorities for all levels of government.

What we will do

INDIVIDUALS

- **Facilitate** conversations, communication and connection between scientists, water professionals, community, and policy-makers via our Friends and Fellows Network events.

NETWORK

- **Encourage**, facilitate and enable Fellows’ contributions to state and national policy development via a strong, engaged and learning oriented PCT Fellows Network.
- Actively and strategically **engage** Friends in the Trust’s initiatives, existing and new.

SYSTEM

- **Convene** conversations addressing the systemic issues and solutions facing the water sector in Australia by hosting a one in three-year flagship event. This event will harness thought leadership within the system and focus on creating system level change as a result.



GOAL TWO:

Australia's water and environmental managers have adaptive leadership and communication skills, nourished by active cross-sectoral networks.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF SYSTEM LEADERSHIP



What our success looks like

INDIVIDUALS

- Increased profile as a preferred partner for leadership training for stakeholders in the water and environmental management sectors across Australia.

NETWORK

- Effective and active support and enabling of the Fellows Network in continuing individual and collective leadership development.

SYSTEM

- A systems approach to sustainable change is considered best practice and is an integral part of Fellows approaches to their leadership and to their work.

What we will do

INDIVIDUALS

- **Facilitate** capacity building, communication and connection between scientists, water professionals, community, and policy-makers via our flagship (Women in Water and Science to Policy) and bespoke leadership and capacity building programs.
- **Instill** a reflective practice and life-long learning culture via our Reconnect, Reflect, Renew Programs.

NETWORK

- **Support** and **enable** a Fellows Program of ongoing leadership development and capacity building, including a strategically aligned professional development program that is innovative and flexible by design so it may adapt to a changing context.
- **Partner** to deliver bespoke programs for stakeholders in the sector.

SYSTEM

- **Widen and deepen** our impact at a systems level, through new bespoke offerings for executive Fellows that catalyse, enable and support the process of systems level change.



GOAL THREE:

Informed and ongoing discussion and debate about the future management of Australia's water and environment resources is fostered.

What our success looks like

INDIVIDUALS

- Avenues for public discourse on sustainable water and environmental management in Australia and our region are increased.

NETWORK

- The Friends and Fellows Networks have access to and are engaged in informed and ongoing discussion and debate via a variety of forums convened by the PCT.

SYSTEM

- There is strong sectoral support for discourse within and between our stakeholders, evidenced by participation by and engagement of our networks.
- We are recognised as an enabler and convenor of high-level conversations of strategic importance on imperative water and environmental matters.

What we will do

INDIVIDUALS

- With a diversity and inclusion approach, we will enable opportunities for all individuals to engage in robust debate and make use of technology to ensure geography isn't a barrier to inclusion and participation.

NETWORK

- **Partner** with aligned organisations to host conversations, events, presentations, forums, for example Lunches with a Leader and a one in three-year flagship event.
- **Host** Chair's lunches for high level thought-leadership discussions.
- **Curate** an annual Peter Cullen Lecture.

SYSTEM

- **Convene** conversations addressing the systemic issues and solutions facing the water sector in Australia by hosting a one in three-year flagship event. This event will harness thought leadership within the system and focus on creating system level change as a result.



GOAL FOUR:

A strong and sustainable Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust.

What our success looks like

INDIVIDUALS

- We have a capable, well-directed and respected staff achieving progress when measured against the priorities, goals and results in this plan.

NETWORK

- Friends and Fellows are committed to the Trust and perceive that they are benefiting from their engagement.

SYSTEM

- Governance and executive leadership of the Trust is strategic, results oriented and accountable.
- We have a stable and more diverse income stream and demonstrate responsible financial stewardship.

What we will do

INDIVIDUALS

- **Promote** a culture of creativity, learning and adaptive management and be willing to take risks to strengthen our effectiveness.

NETWORK

- **Capitalise** on our deductible gift recipient status including through philanthropy, donations and bequests.
- **Pursue** new sources of income that provide a more diverse and sustainable funding base, through identifying new opportunities, partnerships or engagement with like-minded organisations for mutual benefit.
- **Develop** a communication strategy that highlights the work of the Trust, increases our visibility and influence, and fosters the collaboration that is fundamental to our success.

SYSTEM

- **Align** staff, resources and development of systems to the Strategic Plan through its operational plan and budget.
- **Invest** in business processes, systems and technology that supports learning, efficiency and performance.



Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust

Peter Cullen Trust

University of Canberra

ACT 2601

Phone: +61 (0)2 6206 8606

office@petercullentrust.com.au

petercullentrust.org.au

