

# Research Strategic Plan



The Institute for Land, Water and Society (ILWS) is one of six Research Centres in Charles Sturt University (CSU). It was formed in 2005 by combining research strengths in biophysical, social and economic research. From its inception, ILWS has sought to facilitate integration of environmental, social and economic research aims and practices. This focus on facilitating systemic research has positioned ILWS as a ‘go to’ institute to address the issues that arise when managing social-ecological systems that are characterised by uncertainty and complexity.

**The aim of the ILWS Research Strategic Plan is to guide our activities in support of the CSU Strategy, including the Research Sub-plan and Research Narrative, which outline CSU’s research directions.**

## Mission

Our mission is: *To undertake internationally recognised integrated environmental, social and economic research for rural and regional areas.*

## Strategic principles

The ILWS Research Strategic Plan is supported by the following principles:

1. Research direction – four clearly defined research themes involving researchers across all CSU’s Faculties
2. Research approach – pure and applied research that is, where possible, multi- and trans-disciplinary.
3. Research collaboration – networking with key researchers, government, industry and community partners in our areas of strength.
4. Research culture – fostering professional development, peer support and recognition.
5. Research skills – through mentoring and training.
6. Communication - supporting engagement to increase community input into research and to disseminate research outcomes.
7. Integration – undertaken within and across research themes and disciplines.

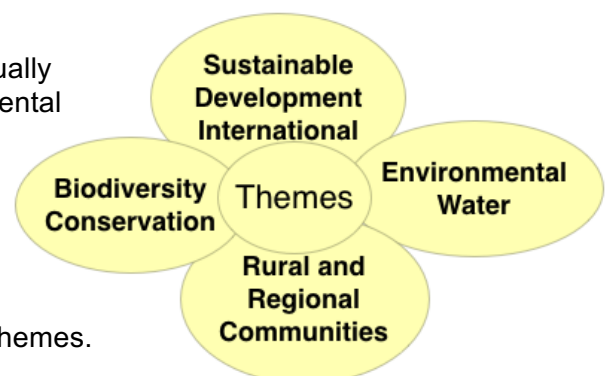
## Research focus

ILWS has an articulated research agenda that aligns with the CSU Strategic Plan and Research Sub-plan and with the themes outlined in the Research Narrative, and with national directions. Four clear research objectives encourage researchers to seek opportunities for integrating their research interests with those of other researchers, and with their regional, national and international communities. The ILWS research agenda encourages innovation and ‘nimbleness’ as researchers learn from their peers and other communities, identify emerging issues of importance, and establish appropriate responses.

## Research themes

Research is undertaken within four thematic (not mutually exclusive) areas: Biodiversity conservation, Environmental water; Rural and Regional Communities; Sustainable Development (International).

While established and emerging projects are associated with a research theme, researchers may be active within any, all or across multiple thematic areas. Integration of project development and implementation is encouraged within and across the themes.



## The plan

This plan articulates four strategic research objectives and a series of strategies to guide our research over the next five years. Its purpose is to distil the objectives and elaborate strategies and measures of research performance.

The research objectives and strategies were developed through consultation with members, an environmental scan which identified future challenges and opportunities for research and stakeholder consultation. These processes are ongoing and iterative.

### ILWS has four key research strategic objectives:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** To maintain and enhance our profile as an internationally recognized provider of integrated quality research that enhances environmental, social and economic conditions in rural and regional areas, in Australia and overseas
- **Strategic Objective 2:** To sustain our position as a recognized and leading research Centre, in areas relevant to our communities, with an annual turnover of over \$4 Million by 2020
- **Strategic Objective 3:** To remain a preferred provider for research that integrates environmental, social and, economic disciplines, with pure and applied research that influences and informs our community of interest, the professions, governments and others
- **Strategic Objective 4:** To continue to be recognized for our unique ability to bring environmental social and economic disciplines together to address issues relating to communities and landscapes

### Measuring success

Progress towards meeting the Strategic Objectives is measured through eight key performance indicators, with 5-year targets as outlined in the table below.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BASELINE @2014	TARGET by 2020	Baseline 2014 Target by 2020
Research publications (HERDC)	76.347 points per year	>114 points (+ 50%) per year	
Value of externally funded research grants	\$1.95M per year	\$4M per year (+ 105%)	
Number of grant applications (by start date)	16 in 2014	50 by 2020 (+ 212%)	
Number of projects managed	38 in 2014	50 by 2020 (+ 32%)	
Average project value per year	\$65,000 per year	\$100,000 (+ 54%) per year	
Average research income per staff	\$28,000 per year	\$42,000 per year (+ 50%)	
ILWS regional reach Local /regional projects	Albury – 27 projects Wagga Wagga – 2 projects Bathurst – 5 projects	Albury – 35 projects (+30%) Wagga Wagga – 3 projects (+50%) Bathurst – 8 projects (+60%)	
Community engagement	18 researchers actively involved	27 researchers actively involved (+50%)	

## Strategic objectives and Action plan

OUTCOMES	ILWS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ILWS STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES	ILWS STRATEGIES and ACTION PLAN
1. Improved research output, impact and productivity focused on issues relevant to CSU communities and strengths.	1,2,3 1,4 1,2,3,4 1,2,3,4 1,2,3,4 1,2,3,4 1,2,3 2,3,4 1,2,3,4	1,7 1,2,7 1,2,3,7 3,6,7 1,2,3,6,7 1,2,3,6,7 1,2,3,6,7 1,3,4,5,6 1,2,3,4,5,6,7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align ILWS research themes with narrative in line with existing and emerging strengths (e.g. resilient communities)</li> <li>Increase the scale and sharpen the focus of ILWS research priorities in relation to relevant <a href="#">National Research Priorities</a></li> <li>Develop emerging research themes in line with <a href="#">National Research Priorities</a> and <a href="#">CSU Research Narrative</a> (e.g. Regional Development) and investigate and capitalize on the research opportunities provided by the '<a href="#">Australia in the Asian Century</a>' and other relevant policy papers</li> <li>Finalize &amp; implement ILWS Stakeholder Engagement Plan to position ILWS as major player in integrated research / facilitator of business development</li> <li>Build on and gain leverage from existing relationships and projects to secure new project funding, with a focus on large initiatives</li> <li>Actively visit funding bodies to promote ILWS capability particularly integrated Research</li> <li>Actively engage with our local communities and industries to develop collaborative initiatives/linkages (partnership) that serve their needs</li> <li>Support CSU in the various external compliance processes such as ERA and HERDC</li> <li>Investigate the establishment of a Centre of excellence in a relevant research area, to serve as a point of interaction amongst other higher education institutions, governments, industries, private sector and the wider community</li> </ol>
	2,4 2,4 2,4	1,2,3,6 1,2,3,4,5,7 1,2,3,4,5,6,7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the office of DVC-R to provide relevant information in relation to Centre's review and Complete Centre reaccreditation</li> <li>Seek to Work collaboratively with schools and faculties to influence academic hiring to maintain the Centre's potential to address key research areas</li> <li>Respond to requests to assist other Centre's and units in business development, social media, grant writing and project management</li> </ol>
	1,4 2 2,3	4,5,6 1,3,4,5 1,2,3,4,5,6,7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support members through members' support funds, Director's fund and training / mentoring programs</li> <li>Develop a Financial Strategy to reduce reliance on central funds allocations for ILWS activities and initiatives e.g. project administration levy</li> <li>Re-invest recovered funds as further leverage for large initiatives where potential returned income to CSU is high and to support viable large research initiatives that address ILWS priorities</li> <li>Foster and support large CSU-lead initiatives through additional support and resources to encourage researchers to consider leading them</li> <li>Investigate operating models for supporting commercial research</li> </ol>
	1,2,3 2	1,2,3,4,6,7 2,3,6,7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage members to take leadership roles in developing large initiatives through targeted enhanced support</li> <li>Coordinate Grant submissions including budgeting and other business aspects</li> <li>Assist in 'brokering' research teams for large initiatives</li> <li>Support members in grant submissions, administration, project / contract management and promotion / communications activities</li> <li>Contribute to enhancing research impact including policy making</li> <li>Work with schools/appoint researchers with strong track records in securing research income and/or policy outcomes, with an emphasis on those able to transfer large projects</li> <li>Build capacity within ILWS research community through the provision of a supportive environment that facilitates innovative thinking and approaches</li> <li>Clearly communicate the contributions of research income and findings, publications and student completion (external communications)</li> </ol>
	1,2,3,4 1,2,3 1,2,3,4 1,2,3 1,2,4 1,2 1,2,3,4 1,2,3,4	4,5,6 1,2,4,5,6,7 1,2,4,5,6,7 4,5,6 1,2,3,6,7 1,2,3,4,5,6 4,5,6 6	
2. Foundation established for successful Indigenous research within ILWS	1,4 1,2,3,4 2,4	1,2,3,6,7 1,2,3,6,7 1,2,3,6,7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain leverage from existing projects to establish collaborative partnerships with Indigenous groups to facilitate inclusion of Indigenous cultural values and traditional scientific knowledge and methods in monitoring programs</li> <li>Develop and deliver multi and trans-disciplinary applied research projects in collaboration with relevant communities to meet immediate real world needs</li> <li>Further develop the emerging research theme 'Historical Ecology' to provide a comprehensive knowledge of people's (including indigenous) interactions with the environment and address present and future issues such as sustainable farming and landscape management</li> </ol>

## The Institute

### Members

ILWS 'critical mass' comprises almost 70 researchers from many schools and all Faculties with research areas covering the arts, communication, education, economics, regional development, social science, natural resource management, ecology, biodiversity, cultural heritage, modelling, environmental management, eco-agriculture and aquatic science and management.

### Business Team

The Business Team undertakes business development, contract and project management, grant coordination, mentoring and promotional tasks, to allow ILWS researchers to concentrate on achieving research outcomes and outputs. These support activities are undertaken within the wider CSU structure and synchronized with the activities of other work units.

### Structure

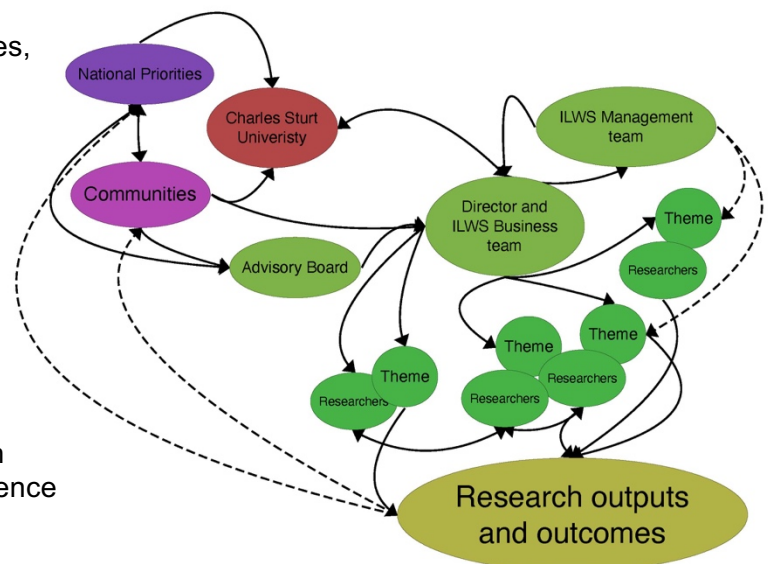
The ILWS organisational framework provides for collective input into research direction as well as appropriate governance and oversight of institute activities (See Figure below).

### Management Team

Including representatives from the four thematic areas and across most campuses, the Management Team provides a mechanism for ensuring dialogue between members and providing advice (operational and strategic) to the ILWS Director.

### Advisory Board

An external body of public figures that provides strategic advice to the ILWS Director and Management Team, covering emerging research opportunities, potential research partnerships and pathways for linking science with policy.



## Engagement

### Partnerships

ILWS research is made possible by significant financial and in-kind investment from funding bodies, government departments and agencies. ILWS has well-established partnerships with State and Federal Government Departments, agencies and other tertiary institutions in Australia and overseas.

ILWS researchers are involved in collaborative and commissioned work around Australia and the world, providing opportunities to influences local, regional, national geographic communities and Academic communities.

## Communications

Our periodic newsletter [Connections](#) showcases ILWS research keeping members, partners and funders informed, with rolling updates on research activities and news.

The [Biennial Report](#) summarises the major research initiatives and their outcomes over a two year period.

ILWS engages with the wider community and promotes its research through the extensive use of print, radio, TV and social media. We can be found on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and the [Web](#).



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