**Outcome 1:** By 2023 there is restoration of, and reduction in threats to, the Ecological Character of [Ramsar sites](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Australia.pdf?1490761000), through the implementation of priority actions.

Context

The Ramsar Convention's broad aims are to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain. The convention requires signatories to describe the ecological character of the Ramsar site at the time of designation. Management plans then set out how this ecological character will be maintained. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) establishes a framework for managing Ramsar wetlands in Australia. Under Schedule 6 the general principles are outlined for the management of wetlands of international importance.

Inputs

* Commonwealth funding for the delivery of Management actions listed in Ramsar site management plans.
* EPBC Act, schedule 6.
* Ramsar Management Plans.
* Regional NRM Plans.
* Ramsar Information Sheets.

*Rationale*

The EPBC framework for managing Ramsar sites is the basis for all Ramsar management plans. Delivering management actions set out in these plans ensures Commonwealth funding is being invested in line with the requirements of the EPBC Act.

Outputs

While there may be outputs specific to individual Ramsar sites, **example** outputs include:

* Number of hectares weed/pest control-initial and follow up.
* Number of pest animals killed.
* Number of upstream barriers removed.
* Number of hectares of riparian revegetation.
* Number of properties joining water bodies upstream of a Ramsar site with improved management practices.
* Number of tonnes of fertiliser reduced.
* Ad hoc outputs related to site specific activities.

Problem

To meet its obligation under the Ramsar convention the Commonwealth must ensure the 65 designated Ramsar sites in Australia maintain, or improve, their ecological character.

Services

While there may be activities specific to individual Ramsar sites, **example** services include:

* Pest plant and animal control on Ramsar sites and joining land.
* Removal of upstream barriers to water flow.
* Riparian remediation.
* Fencing.
* Management practice change on properties joining water bodies upstream of a Ramsar site e.g. reduced application of fertilizers.

Note that community consultation in the planning and delivery of works on Ramsar sites is a requirement of the EPBC Act.

*Rationale*

The geographic spread of Regional Land Partnerships, and the combined agriculture and environment delivery, will allow key management actions listed in management plans to be addressed through one process. The targeting of funding to the ecological character of Ramsar sites ensures that the program will be delivering on MNES and therefore be constitutionally valid.

*Rationale*

The Australian Government has developed management principles checklist that builds on the EPBC Act Ramsar management principles. These are used, to help in the development of a Ramsar management plan. Investing in the actions identified by the management plans developed under this robust framework should see the maintenance, or improvement, in the ecological character of the Ramsar site.

*Rationale*

Management plans have set the priority actions to achieve maintenance, or improvement, of ecological character. This suite of outputs reflects those actions. These outputs can be used as indicators of progress in order to facilitate milestone payments and gauge program progress.