Visioning: Think, Pair, Share

# Introduction

In this visioning exercise, all individuals offer ideas for the vision in a brainstorming session. The ideas are written or stuck onto a wall, then clustered, synthesized and edited by a small group to form a Vision Statement. This exercise can be done inside 90 minutes, even with a large group (≈ 60 people).

**Pros:** this provides an early opportunity for participants to engage with each other and to begin working collaboratively; everyone participates throughout (no-one has an opportunity to switch-off); it creates a lot of energy.

**Cons:** it takes longer than other exercises and is more complicated to manage; it can be challenging where a proportion of participants are reliant on language translation support.

# Exercise:

**Context:**

In a typical CPSG planning workshop, before the visioning process participants will have listened to presentations about the species, their ecological status, cultural significance and conservation status and had an opportunity to discuss these. Everyone has been equipped with paper and pen.

**Steps:**

1. Introduce the concept of visioning and explain its value to the planning process.
2. Introduce key concepts relevant to thinking about a long-term future for species such as (adapted from Redford et al. 2011):
   * Representation: within major ecological settings and of the taxon’s genetic diversity.
   * Replication: to avoid irreplaceable loss.
   * Ecological function: supporting the species’ interaction with a full suite of associated flora and fauna.
   * Human socio-economic and cultural needs and desires: supporting these in a manner consistent with species conservation.
   * Management system diversity: in some cases the ongoing presence, for the foreseeable future, of conservation support through more or less intensive population-level management *in situ* or *ex situ*, is relevant to this step.
3. Provide relevant examples of Vision Statements (see below).
4. Set the scene [example]: “The year is 50 years in the future, the species is in a very different and much improved situation….”
5. Give everyone 5 minutes to describe, in 3-5 bullet points, one or more themes, characteristics or ideas that they would like to see captured in a description of that situation.
6. After 5 minutes, invite participants to turn to the person next to them, share what they have written and work together to remove any duplication and to merge their two submissions into one set of bullet points (5 mins).
7. Invite the groups of two to form groups of four and repeat the exercise (10 mins).
8. Continue until the number of groups in the room is no more than six (fewer if that is workable).
9. Give each of the large groups a flip-chart and pen and invite them to craft a final set of bullet points or, if they prefer, a draft Vision Statement. Ensure each group appoints a presenter before they begin work (20 mins).
10. Invite presenters to bring flip-charts to the front of the room to read out what they have produced (5 mins each).
11. Ask everyone else to listen carefully and identify common themes. Call for these at the end and highlight them on the flip-charts.
12. Assign a visioning working group to craft a Vision Statement from the submissions, taking into account the major themes identified.
13. Provide opportunities throughout the planning process for iterative review and revision towards agreeing a final Vision Statement by the end of the meeting.
14. To help operationalise the Vision Statement, and where there is time to do so, ask the visioning working group to take the major themes and to define each in practical, operational terms that can be measures; to set a target for each, and to establish a baseline from which progress can be measures (see example below). For more detail, see Operationalising the Vision

# Vision examples

**Conservation Planning Workshop for Australian Mainland Mala**

**50-YEAR MALA VISION:** a secure and resilient mala population that is genetically viable and has maintained wild behaviours. There is a well-established management system where several large enclosures are spread across the species’ ecological and geographical range, allowing for a changing climate, and where mala traditional knowledge and customs are sustained. Australians are aware of mala and acknowledge their cultural and ecological values. On ground predator control has produced a situation in which wild release is conceivable.

**Scimitar-horned Oryx Reintroduction Planning**

The 50-year VISION for the international SHO conservation community is:

Viable, secure, free ranging populations of scimitar horned oryx moving through a regional mosaic of interconnected areas, both strictly protected and for multiple use, distributed within ancestral range, in harmony with local people, restoring pride, cultural and natural heritage, economic and ecosystem value.

**Helmeted Hornbill Conservation Planning Workshop**

It is 2042: The unique Helmeted Hornbill thrives in viable, ecologically functional populations in forests, both intact and managed, within its natural range. These wild hornbills are cherished by local and global communities and are protected from threats such as trade and habitat loss through international collaboration.

# Example of an operationalized vision (for the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle)

**Vision**

It is 2030. The Bellinger River Snapping Turtle project is a model conservation program for supporting critically endangered native fauna, facilitated by multi-agency collaboration and community engagement. This program has led to river health restoration and a sustainable turtle population that is disease free.

**Definitions and targets**

Bellinger River Virus does not pose a threat to the species in the wild.

*Target:* EITHER absence of virus (not detectable via testing), OR immunity or protection provided to the species (by vaccine or otherwise).

*2016 baseline:* absence of virus not confirmed. No vaccine or other form of protection available or observed.

*Emydura macquarii* does not pose a threat to the species in the wild.

*Target*: EITHER absence of *E. macquarii* OR control methods that ensure hybridisation threat is eliminated.

*2016 baseline:* *E. macquarii* present. No control measures in place or tested.

The species is abundant in the Bellinger River.

*Target:* The adult population is at least 150 by 2030.

*2016 baseline:* adult population in river = zero; ≈ 300 juveniles present

Restoration of the species and its ecosystem are sufficient for ongoing resistance to known threats.

*Target:* Stability of population size over time and strong rate of recovery following stochastic events.

*2016 baseline:* Recently unstable. Monitoring in place.

The community supports the recovery program and is actively engaged in the long-term health of the Bellinger River system.

*Target:* Landholder involvement indicated by at least 15 km riparian zone rehabilitated by 2021 and by a citizen science project on river health including a minimum of 70 volunteers.

*2016 baseline:* Framework for discussions with landholders in place. No Citizen Science project underway.

Multi-agency collaboration is in place and working positively for the program.

*Target:* OEH, Taronga, DPI and BSC have continued active involvement.

*2016 baseline:* All 4 agencies currently involved actively.

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**Date:** June 5, 2024