



Knowledge for Regional NRM

November 2006

About the Program

There has never been greater public investment in natural resource management (NRM) in Australia, or in research that provides the information and knowledge to improve it. A challenge exists to ensure that this ever increasing knowledge base is used to make on-ground decisions.

The 56 regional NRM bodies around Australia have a significant role in investing public funds for on-ground improvement. The overarching objective of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funded Knowledge for Regional NRM Program is to support these organisations to make full use of the available knowledge and information to perform this role.



This Program is funded by the Australian Government through the Natural Heritage Trust

Phase 1–Investigation

Between February 2005 and August 2006 the Program investigated ways to improve the adoption and sharing of knowledge by regional NRM bodies and looked for ways to improve knowledge connections between regional NRM bodies and research and information providers. The Program took a broad view of the NRM sector, looking beyond Land & Water Australia's accepted areas of interest.

Improving the NRM knowledge system for regions presents the findings of phase one and is available from the Program website, www.lwa.gov.au/regionalknowledge. The paper outlines a comprehensive approach to improving the NRM knowledge system and was designed using contributions from regional NRM bodies, knowledge providers, and successful initiatives from outside both the NRM sector and Australia. The approach consists of three overarching packages which are comprised of a number of services grounded in the real needs of regional bodies.

Phase 2–Implementation

Land & Water Australia has successfully secured NHT funds to commence implementation of the services in the packages described on the following page.

Package 1

Better practice in knowledge management

The 'Better practice in knowledge management' package will provide NRM regions and practitioners with the skills and practices to better search, retrieve, manage and evaluate information. It is proposed to include:

- **Knowledge Management Guidelines for the NRM Sector** to enable regional NRM bodies to develop knowledge strategies appropriate to their circumstances
- **knowledge management training and support** to further develop the information seeking practices of regional NRM bodies and improve their management of knowledge and information.

Package 2

NRM Toolbar

The NRM Toolbar is an information and knowledge management tool for NRM professionals and will be delivered through an internet based toolbar. The system will facilitate the sharing of knowledge between regional NRM bodies and provide mechanisms for two-way flow of knowledge between regions and information providers. Services include:

- **My Library** will support the sharing of references by individuals, groups and organisations through Lists that are searchable by the NRM search engine
- **This Worked Here!** to allow people who implement NRM practices to document and share what worked and what didn't
- an **NRM Funding and Events Calendar** that will publish information on funding and events available to regional NRM bodies
- a **Knowledge Needs Database** to communicate regional NRM body knowledge needs to other regions and to research and information providers
- an **NRM search engine** to increase the relevance of internet searches for NRM professionals.

Package 3

Supporting knowledge brokering in the NRM sector

The 'supporting knowledge brokering in the NRM sector' package aims to provide a range of services to regional NRM bodies to support them to broker knowledge. It includes:

- **brokering existing knowledge and information** to enable regional NRM bodies to get a better grasp on what existing knowledge and information is available and how it meets their knowledge needs
- initiating **collaborative and multiregional investments** in new research and information to address regional knowledge needs
- **Sister Regions** to trial and support mentoring partnerships between regional NRM bodies.

Further opportunities for investment and collaboration

Regions are at the point where knowledge and information management are of critical importance for them to move forward in their day to day business of managing natural resources; there is a risk that regional responses to this urgent need will create a suite of different information and knowledge management systems and processes across the country, none of which will speak to the other. It is critical that a consistent approach is developed now.

Improving the NRM knowledge system for regions is intended to stimulate dialogue on how to improve the NRM knowledge system, while catalysing strategic action and investment into system improvements. The Program invites any organisation with a role or interest in NRM information and knowledge management to contact the Knowledge for Regional NRM Team to discuss areas of potential collaboration.

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