

Situation Analysis – South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resource Management Board

Background Drawing on various publications, the following is a situation analysis of the South Australian Arid Lands NRM Board. It includes the key NRM issues, organisational structure, the resource condition targets and management action targets that have been identified. The purpose of the situation analysis is to provide an overview of the Arid Lands catchment for circulation among the eight regions involved in the project. This will enable the participating regions to better understand each others situations.

The Region

Geography The SA Rangelands covers some 538,577 km² of the northern arid and semiarid zone of South Australia. The region represents almost 55% of the land area of the state and constitutes a large portion of both the Lake Eyre Basin (LEB) and the Great Artesian Basin (GAB). It is bordered to the west by Aboriginal lands (the Anangu Pitjantjatjara and Maralinga Tjarutja lands), to the north by the Northern Territory, to the east by Queensland and New South Wales, and to the south by incorporated local government areas.

Demographics The human population in the rangelands is small (approximately 10,000) and geographically sparse. The climate, resulting landforms and natural systems also limit the human activity and population. Many Aboriginal people live in townships, and along with other traditional owners from outside the region, have a close connection with the landscape.

Land uses Most of the land is leasehold tenure used primarily for pastoral purposes. Large mining and petroleum companies also operate in the rangelands and this land use is increasing. The region contains some of the State's most important conservation reserves and National Parks and a number of pastoral leases have also been purchased privately for conservation purposes. A large number of tourists visit the region to see iconic places such as the Flinders Ranges and Lake Eyre.

NRM issues The vision of the SA Arid lands Natural Resource Management Board for the region is as follows. *The Arid Lands Region is a healthy, naturally functioning ecosystem with sustainable industries and vibrant communities.*

The key goals of natural resource management in the SA rangelands are from the vision above and include:

- Naturally Functioning Ecosystems;
- Sustainable Industries; and
- Vibrant communities.

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The Regional NRM Organisation

History

The South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management (SAAL NRM) Board is one of eight statutory boards working in partnership with local landholders, industry, government agencies, and environmental and community interest groups to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable management of South Australia's natural resources.

Organisational arrangements

SA Arid Lands NRM Board includes 22 staff that is employed to support the Board and its programs. The head office is located in Port Augusta but there is also staff located in Adelaide, Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy and Dulkaninna Station.

Key functions

The Board Staff develop and deliver the NRM projects of the regional NRM board and are assigned to work with NRM groups in the implementation of the regional NRM plan.

Their roles include:

- planning
- administration
- community capacity building and educational programs
- providing expertise in specific fields
- facilitating and implementing on-ground works
- compliance

Budget

Total budget – \$4.7m (07/08). The budget provided by State and Commonwealth Government sources is \$2.3m through NHT funding.

The NRM Planning Process

History

The SA Rangelands Integrated Natural Resource Management (SARINRM) Group, formed in 2001, was given the charter to develop an Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan and Investment Strategy (IS) for the rangelands. Together, they will work to manage and enhance the natural resources on which the economy and communities of the SA Rangelands are based. Guiding that effort will be the INRM Plan and IS. Extensive community and stakeholder consultation was an important part in developing the Plan and IS. They are consistent with existing policies, agreed national standards and are underpinned by current knowledge and community values. Importantly, the Plan builds on and extends the tremendous work, investment and achievements that have already been made in the region. New actions are included to fill identified gaps or where additional information is required before on-ground action can be taken. The Plan draws together the knowledge, resources, strategies and actions of numerous groups to achieve integrated management of natural resources across the whole SA Rangelands.

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NRM plan

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is a statutory Authority under the Natural Resource management Act 2004 and is required to develop an NRM plan for the region. While the Board's comprehensive NRM plan is under development an initial plan comprising of the Rangelands INRM plan and the Arid Areas Catchment Water Management Plan will be used to guide activities and investments. A series of draft targets for Resource condition and management actions has also been developed as part of the comprehensive NRM plan development process. These are also being used to guide investment within the region. The INRM plan is the foundation for management and investment decisions and will ensure focussed and strategic natural resource management (NRM) outcomes. The plan sets a path for sustainable growth and development in land, water, biodiversity and heritage assets in line with the region's vision for the next 50 years. With an integrated approach, future actions and investments will be focused on achieving common outcomes in an efficient and cost effective way. Regional priorities have been implemented through action at local and regional scales. Monitoring and evaluation of activities, and information sharing, will support continuous improvement and adaptive management. The Plan conforms to the principles of:

- addressing priority issues at priority locations;
- engaging in preventative responses that address the causes of natural resource degradation rather than the symptoms;
- ensuring that those identified to carry out work have the capacity (resources and experience) to undertake it; and
- allowing for effective partnerships between community, landholders, traditional owners, industry and government.

Draft resource condition targets

Draft Resource Condition Targets (RCTs)
1. Health of all water dependent ecosystems maintained and minimum 25% priority WDEs improved by 2030.
2. The extent and condition (integrity, linkage and resilience) of natural habitat is maintained and improved from 2007 levels by 2030.
3. By 2030, there is no significant threat to biodiversity from introduced (feral/pest) species to X% of terrestrial and aquatic areas.
4. By 2030, 50% of species and communities in each of the 2007 risk categories have moved to a lower category and by 2013, no species or ecological communities has moved to a higher risk category from 2007.
5. Quality and pressure of groundwater systems are maintained or improved within the parameters of natural variation.
6. By 2030, the SAAL region community and stakeholders are confident, informed, committed and able to deliver effective and sustainable NRM outcomes.
7. Maximise contribution of industry and community towards sustainable development and natural ecosystem functioning.

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Draft management action targets

Draft Management Action Targets (MATs)
<p>1.1 All water resources are prioritised and managed within sustainable limits by 2013</p> <p>1.2 Landholders with wetlands are managing priority 25% of wetlands for conservation value using recommended management options by 2013</p> <p>1.3 Clear and transparent processes for coordinating between neighbouring regions (including cross jurisdictional) and between agencies are in place</p>
<p>2.1 All land being managed according to best practice guidelines by 2013.</p> <p>2.2 Priority areas for maintaining, improving and reconstructing biodiversity are managed to maintain landscape scale biodiversity values and function by 2013</p> <p>2.3 25% of terrestrial and aquatic areas with reduced total threat to biodiversity from introduced (feral/pest) species by 2013</p> <p>2.4 Climate Change MAT ?</p>
<p>3.1 Key introduced species that impact threatened species/populations are controlled by 2013</p>
<p>4.1 20% of threatened and rare species/community habitats actively managed for biodiversity outcomes by 2013</p>
<p>5.1 Water Allocation Plan finalised and operational for prescribed basins by 2013 (see MAT 1.1)</p> <p>5.2 (insert new MAT based on CWMB Plan for outcome in 5-10 years from WAP)</p> <p>5.3 No spring extinction as a result of water extraction by 2013</p> <p>5.4 Groundwater quality maintained at a level to support healthy ecosystems (see MAT 1.1)</p> <p>5.5 Water resources managed to sustain arid lands industry and community. (see MAT 1.1)</p>
<p>6.1 There is broad agreement on a shared vision by all stakeholders in the SAAL region by 2013</p> <p>6.2 All regional aboriginal communities and enterprises engaged in NRM planning and programs by 2013</p> <p>6.3 The SAAL region communities have capabilities and access to capabilities to deliver effective NRM outcomes by 2013</p> <p>6.4 Information is accessible for communities and industries to effectively and responsibly manage their natural resources by 2013</p> <p>6.5 NRM Groups membership is highly valued and sought after because they are highly relevant, effective, influential and are respected by the community in 2013</p>
<p>7.1 Pastoral industry actively participating in the establishment of targets for the industry for trends of cover and diversity of vegetation and landscape function and is achieving targets by 2013</p> <p>7.2 Greater than 50% of pastoralists have participated in training, planning or mentoring programs in the region by 2013</p> <p>7.3 At least two sustainable production system groups (eg. EMS) established in the arid lands by 2013</p> <p>7.4 Adherence to 'best practice' environmental performance by 85% of the operators in all industries by 2013</p> <p>7.5 No further degradation of natural resources at priority sites through uncontrolled or inappropriate public access and use by 2013</p> <p>7.6 50% of tourism operators are "accredited" for Environmentally Aware tourism by 2013</p> <p>7.7 All mining or petroleum companies operating in the region involved actively in the NRM process (through groups/programs/board/SEB activities/offsets) by 2013</p>

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Expectations of involvement in project

Expectations

To share information with other regions from around Australia and capitalise on their learnings. The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is a small organisation with a limited budget so there is real benefit to our region cooperating with other neighbouring regions to develop effective cross border activities that improve or add to our current programs.