

Situation Analysis – South East Natural Resource Management Board

Background

Drawing from the initial Practice Change Project workshop and various publications, the following is a situation analysis of the South East 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 South East catchment for circulation among the ten regions involved in the project. This will enable the participating regions to better understand each others situations.

The Region

Geography

The South East region has unique landforms and distinctive natural characteristics that have originated from a long, complex geological history. The region is distinguished by a series of stranded dunes that rise between 20-50 metres above interdunal plains. These plains can be inundated over winter and host a variety of internationally-recognised wetland systems, including the Ramsar-listed Bool and Hacks Lagoons and part of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Wetlands. The region also hosts an extensive network of limestone sink holes and caves, which include the World Heritage listed Naracoorte Caves.

The South East region shares a northern boundary with the South Australian Murray Darling Basin NRM Region, and an eastern boundary with the State of Victoria.

Demographics

In 2003, the population of the South East region was estimated to be just over 63,000 people. This represents 4.2% of the State's total population. The majority of South East residents live in the Lower South East, with 38% in Mount Gambier. Other towns in the region include Millicent, Beachport, and Penola in the south; Naracoorte and Kingston in the central area, with Bordertown, Keith, Tintinara and Coonalpyn in the northern part of the region.

The South East region is home to a number of Indigenous groups and their descendants including Tanganekald, Meintangk, Bunganditj, Ngarakt/Tatiara and Portaruwutj peoples.

Land uses

With a favourable climate, suitable soils and underground water the South East has a strong history as a highly productive area supporting a diverse and profitable industry base. The region contributes about \$5 billion towards the South Australian GDP with more than 30% of the State's GDP produced by the South East's agricultural sector. The key

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economic activities in the region supported by natural resources include plantation forestry, wine/viticulture, agriculture, dairy, potatoes, fishing/aquaculture and their associated industries.

NRM issues

The key priority areas for natural resource management in the South East region are:

- dryland salinity
- pest plants and animals
- irrigation induced salinity
- maintaining the quality and quantity of urban water supplies
- sustainable groundwater use
- ecosystem fragmentation and degradation, threatening native species
- coastal and marine biodiversity

The Regional NRM Organisation

History

The South East NRM Board was established in May 2005. Members of the South East NRM Board are both community and government members with knowledge, skills and experience across many areas of NRM, including water, soil, biodiversity or pest plant/animal management, primary production, business, local government, community and Indigenous interests

Organisational arrangements

Under the NRM Act, the South East region has just established (in March 2007) three sub-regional bodies in the South East – the Northern, Central and Southern NRM Groups. The Groups will strongly promote local integration of effort for natural resources management, providing important links to local communities and local NRM issues. They will be closely involved in the process to develop the Regional NRM Plan. South East Natural Resources Management Board staff include:

Fred Stadter – South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Commonwealth and State Programs Manager*

Joy Cunneen - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Finance Manager*

Kristy Heaver - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Finance & Administration Officer*



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Leanne Lambert - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Administration Officer*

Jane Featherstonhaugh - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Corporate Services Manager (To take up position in August)*

Cathy Ashby - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Community Landcare Coordinator*

Fontella Koleff - SE Natural Resources Management Board, *Community Engagement Manager*

Leonie Casey - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Indigenous Landcare Officer - Currently on Leave*

Alan Robins - Wattle Range, *Authorised Officer*

Andrew Shepherd - Grant, *Authorised Officer*

Anton Kurray - Grant, *Senior Authorised Officer*

Dean Burgoyne - Lacepede Tatiara Robe, *Authorised Officer*

Grant Doyle - Grant, *Spray Operator*

Ian Qualmann - Coorong, *Senior Authorised Officer*

Joel Horn - Coorong, *Authorised Officer*

John Kuhl - Naracoorte Lucindale, *Senior Authorised Officer*

John McShane - Naracoorte Lucindale, *Senior Authorised Officer*

Justine Drew - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Operations Manager*

Malcolm Unger - Grant, *Spray Operator*

Neville Staude - Lacepede Tatiara Robe, *Authorised Officer*

Peter Jackson - Lacepede Tatiara Robe, *Authorised Officer*

Saxon Ellis - Wattle Range, *Authorised Officer*

Tony Richman - Lacepede Tatiara Robe, *Authorised Officer*

Ann Aldersey - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Regional Planning Manager*

Lauren Pittard-Robb - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Acting Senior Policy & Planning Officer*

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Daniela Conesa - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Water Planning Officer*

David Williamson - SE Natural Resources Management Board, *Project Officer*

Jack England - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Saltland Catchment Agronomist*

Jenny Peterson - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Water Planning Officer*

Fiona Partington - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Planning Officer*

Katrin Springer - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Project Officer*

Joel Vandeppeer - SE Natural Resources Management Board, *Project Officer*

Sean Miller - SE Natural Resources Management Board, *Monitoring & Evaluation Officer*

Terry Strickland - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *Irrigation Efficiency Project Officer*

Hugo Hopton - South East Natural Resources Management Board, *General Manager*

Board Members

- David Geddes - Presiding Member
- Jim Osborne
- Di Ashby
- Pip Rasenberg
- Louise Stock
- Chris Johnson
- Richard Vickery
- Dale Lewis
- Robert Mock
- Stuart West
- Peter Alexander
- Adrian Gargett
- Brian Bartch
- Helen Schultz

Key functions

The South East NRM Board plays an active role in the management of the region's soil, water, ecosystems, coast and marine environments. Under the NRM Act, the Board's functions include:

- The preparation and implementation of a Regional NRM



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Plan for the South East.

- The promotion of public awareness and understanding of integrated and sustainable natural resources management.
- Undertaking or supporting educational initiatives to assist people to take steps to improve the management of natural resources.
- Providing advice with respect to the assessment of various activities or proposal referred to the Board under the NRM Act or any other Act.
- Resolving any issues that may arise between any NRM groups that are relevant to the management of natural resources within the South East.
- Providing advice on any matter relevant to the condition of natural resources within the South East, or on the management of those resources.

Budget

Total budget – \$6.2m (with \$2.975m raised by NRM levy). The remainder of the budget (non-levy) provided by State and Commonwealth Government sources which must be matched with regional dollars enabled by the levy.

The NRM Planning Process

History

Currently the SE NRM Board operates under the Initial NRM Plan (2006-2007) which was developed to allow the amalgamated bodies to continue operations under a single strategic direction.

The Board is now focused on developing a new South East Regional Natural Resources Management Plan. The plan combines the management of soil, water, biodiversity, coast and near-shore marine environment in the region and will have a 50 year vision for the management of these natural resources.

NRM plan

A Concept Statement comprising the preliminary design stage for the Plan was issued for comment in September 2006 and was a statement of intent outlining the Board's process to develop a Regional NRM Plan.

It is anticipated that widespread community, industry and government consultation on the draft plan will occur early next year before implementation commences in 2009.

As part of the drafting of the plan the Board, along with the support of a Plan Advisory Group, made up of stakeholders,

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including representation from both the government and the community, are investigating the resource conditions of our natural resources and the social and economic drivers and impacts on NRM in the region.

- There are also Technical Reference Groups which have been formed to look at the various natural features – biodiversity (including Estuaries, Coast and Marine), Soils and Land Management and Water.
- The regional plan also determines the Board’s extensive and balanced work program which is designed to meet the requirements of the NRM Act, protect and enhance the natural resources of the region and meet the expectations of the levy-paying community. Activities will include:
 - Continued emphasis on sustainable groundwater management and irrigation efficiency
 - Region-wide pest plant and animal control program
 - Priority on-ground environmental projects, including the protection of Mosquito Creek and the Blue Lake
 - Research into sustainable land management techniques
 - Informing and involving the regional community in NRM

In addition to the various technical reference groups for the Regional NRM Plan, there are also a series of community committees and groups which have been established to assist the Board with policy and planning development of NRM issues. Some of these include Water Allocation Planning committees, the Tintinara-Coonalpyn Land Water Management Planning Committee and the South East Deer Advisory Committee.

Resource condition targets

Asset	Resource Condition Targets (RCTs)
	Due to the development of the SE Regional Plan the RCTs are currently being developed

Management action targets

Asset	Management Action Targets (MATs)
	Due to the development of the SE Regional Plan the MAT s are currently being developed

Philosophy and thinking

The SE NRM’s approach to NRM is based on:

- process and philosophy of valuing stakeholder and community contributions and feedback early in the process, before decisions have been made;
- trust and understanding of others perspectives;

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- strong community ownership and taking the time to bring others along with the process;
- a mix of “stick” (eg regulation*) and “carrot” (education, incentives etc);
- science and provision of relevant information to identify changes required;
- strong networks- and relationships based on trust;
- an ability and willingness to try new things.

*NB regulation is mainly related to SE NRM’s responsibility for Animal and Pest Control

People, energy and skills

The team come from a variety of backgrounds. Some projects officers have worked in similar roles in the past and so have brought that experience to their new roles. They also have media and communications skills, natural resource management technical knowledge and experience in extension and regulatory environments.

Expectations of involvement in project

Expectations

- Develop a greater understanding of their customers (knowing, not assuming)
- Enhanced flexibility / ability to adapt
- Develop a greater understanding of drivers of behaviour and change
- Develop a greater understanding of the role of awareness in practice change
- To practice some of the discussed tools while being sensitive to the operative environment i.e. an understanding of the broader context of change

Tools

Some tools that SE NRM is interested in include:

- Booklet of how to monitor and evaluate behavioural change
- How to use focus groups
- Benchmarking – who are we, where are we at and who are our customers?