

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Communiqué

NRMMC 16

5 NOVEMBER 2009

Primary Industries, Natural Resources, and Environment Ministers from across Australia met in Perth on Thursday 5 November 2009. This was the sixteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Specific issues dealt with by Council are detailed below.

Aquaculture in Commonwealth Waters

Council noted the need to develop a regulatory framework for aquaculture development in Commonwealth waters that could allow state and Northern Territory governments to manage and regulate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters. Over the next year, the Australian Government will work with the state and territory governments to develop a preferred option for regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters that offers national consistency, promotes best-practice operations and streamlines approval processes.

Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design – A National Guide

Council endorsed the publication: *Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design – A National Guide*. The guide is a useful information tool for urban planners and development assessors and will encourage national consistency in the assessment of water sensitive urban developments. The guide will be available from the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council website:
<http://www.mincos.gov.au/publications>.

National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands – Module for Notifying Changes in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Sites under Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention

Council endorsed the latest module in the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands series: *National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands (Article 3.2) Module 3 of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands – Implementing the Ramsar Convention in Australia*.

Review of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity – the Revised Draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

Council endorsed the strategic framework for the development of *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030* and asked for the development of measureable targets for consideration by Council at its next meeting.

Review of the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation

Council agreed to release the draft revised *Australia's Native Vegetation Framework* for public consultation. The communication plan and a review timeline were also endorsed.

Review of the National Koala Conservation Strategy

Council endorsed the National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014. The strategy aims to conserve koalas by retaining viable populations in the wild throughout their natural range. The strategy provides a national coordinating framework for plans and actions to conserve and manage koalas, many of which are already being undertaken by state and local governments. It will be coordinated by a cross-jurisdictional implementation team and regular engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including researchers, local governments, conservation groups and developers.

Ministers also agreed to report in detail at the next Council meeting on how the strategy is being implemented and what practical results are being achieved on the ground.

Draft Feral Camel Action Plan

Council agreed to release the draft national Feral Camel Management Plan for public consultation. The draft plan addresses the negative impacts of the overabundance of camels in the Australian rangelands and provides a platform for the ongoing long-term management of camels. It also provides guidance for the development of partnerships and social capacities among natural resource managers, industry and communities, in particular the Aboriginal communities of the rangelands. The draft action plan will be available on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website in the near future for a public comment period of two months.

Progress on National Agreement on Biosecurity and Implementing other Recommendations of the Beale Review

Council provided comment on the development of a formal agreement on a national biosecurity system and an associated Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents.

Overarching Policy Framework for Ongoing Eradication Programs

Council agreed to measures to improve consistency in the governance and management of existing and future eradication programs not covered by existing formal agreements.

Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation in PI and NRM – Annual Report

Council endorsed the *Indigenous Reconciliation in Primary Industries and Natural Resource Management: Annual Report 2008-09*. Council recognised the importance of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to participate in natural resource management initiatives and agreed to promote critical success factors for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Ministers agreed all natural resource management bodies would be written to, to provide a copy of the critical success factors, encouraging them to engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.

Aquaculture Land Use Mapping and Environmental Management

Council received a presentation from CSIRO on recent research into managing the environmental impacts of aquaculture and on the potential to develop aquaculture across northern Australia and increase seafood production using ecologically sustainable systems. This research demonstrates that commercial, large-scale, closed system aquaculture in Australia is operating at world's best practice.

Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Bureau of Statistics – Activities in National Environmental Information

Council heard a joint presentation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Bureau of Meteorology outlining the range of work being undertaken to provide environmental data and statistics to support prioritisation and development of policy on climate change and land and water management among others.