



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

**NATURAL  
RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
MINISTERIAL  
COUNCIL**

**Record and Resolutions**

**Fifteenth Meeting  
Hobart  
21 May 2009**



**RECORD AND RESOLUTIONS**

**OF THE**

**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

*“To promote the conservation and sustainable use  
of Australia’s natural resources.”*

**FIFTEENTH MEETING  
HOBART, 21 MAY 2009**

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ISSN 1446-0114

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**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL****FIFTEENTH MEETING  
HOBART, 21 MAY 2009**

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**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**FIFTEENTH MEETING  
HOBART, 21 MAY 2009**

**COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS**

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**

The Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP (Chair)

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

The Hon. Tony Burke MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly MP  
(representing Senator the Hon. Penny Wong)

Parliamentary Secretary for Water

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

Ms Lisa Corbyn\*  
(representing The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP)

Director General  
Department of Environment and Climate Change

**VICTORIA**

The Hon. Joe Helper MP

Minister for Agriculture

The Hon. Tim Holding MP

Minister for Water

**QUEENSLAND**

The Hon. Stephen Robertson MP

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

The Hon. Tim Mulherin MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

The Hon. Terry Redman MLA  
(and representing the Hon. Norman Moore MLC)

Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry

Ms Dawn Fitzgerald  
(representing the Hon. Donna Faragher MLC)

Minister for the Environment

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

The Hon. Jay Weatherill MP

Minister for Environment and Conservation

**TASMANIA**

The Hon. David Llewellyn MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

The Hon. Alison Anderson MLA

Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Mr Simon Corbell MLA

Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change

**AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

Cr Bill Mitchell

Councillor

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE***\*Denotes member for the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee***AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**

Ms Robyn Kruk\* Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and  
the Arts  
Mr Tony Slatyer  
Mr Malcolm Forbes  
Ms Alex Rankin

Dr Conall O'Connell\* Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Mr Stephen Hunter  
Mr Rob Delane

Dr Neil McKenzie CSIRO Land and Water  
Dr Neville Smith\* Bureau of Meteorology  
Dr Mike Coughlan

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

Mr Tim Rogers Department of Environment and Climate Change

Ms Wendy Stamp Department of Primary Industries  
Ms Jennifer Ranson

**VICTORIA**

Mr Peter Harris\* Department of Sustainability and Environment  
Mr Kevin Love

Mr Luke Wilson Department of Primary Industries  
Dr Hugh Millar Biosecurity Victoria

**QUEENSLAND**

Mr Robert Setter\* Department of Employment, Economic Development  
and Innovation  
Mr Elton Miller

Mr John Bradley\* Department of Environment and Resource  
Management

Mr Tony Roberts  
Ms Debra-Lee Best

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Mr Ian Longson\* Department of Agriculture and Food  
Damian Collopy

Mr Keiran McNamara\* Department of Environment and Conservation

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Mr Geoff Knight\* Department of Primary Industries and Resources  
Dr Don Plowman

Mr Scott Ashby\* Department of Land, Water and Biodiversity  
Mr Andrew Johnson Conservation  
Ms Alyssa Sandford

Mr Allan Holmes\* Department for the Environment and Heritage

**TASMANIA**

Mr Kim Evans\*  
Ms Michele Moseley  
Mr John Whittington

Department of Primary Industries and Water

Mr Andrew Blakesley  
Ms Fiona Howroyd  
Mr Donald Riddell

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Dr Diana Leeder

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the  
Arts and Sports

Mr Rod Gobbey

Department of Regional Development, Primary  
Industry, Fisheries and Resources

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Mr David Papps

Department of the Environment, Climate Change,  
Energy and Water

Mr Hamish McNulty

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

**NEW ZEALAND**

Mr Dan Bolger

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Dr Paul Reynolds

Ministry for the Environment

**ALGA**

Mr John Pritchard

Australian Local Government Association

**SECRETARIAT**

Ms Kate Woffenden  
Mrs Leah Kaminski  
Ms Victoria Carpenter  
Mr Osman Mewett  
Ms Carol Cribb

**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**FIFTEENTH MEETING  
HOBART, 21 MAY 2009**

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**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL****FIFTEENTH MEETING  
HOBART, 21 MAY 2009**

The Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP, the meeting Chair, welcomed all Ministers to the fifteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Minister Garret acknowledged the traditional owners of this area, the Mouheneenner people, and acknowledged the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the custodians of Tasmania.

The Chair especially welcomed newly appointed Ministers to their first Council meeting, namely:

- The Hon. Paul Caica MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and Minister for Forests, South Australia
- The Hon. Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade, Queensland

Apologies were noted from:

- The Hon. Phillip Costa MP, Minister for Water, New South Wales
- The Hon. Ian McDonald MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, New South Wales
- The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP, Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, New South Wales
- The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Victoria
- The Hon. Norman Moore MLC, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Fisheries; Electoral Affairs, Western Australia
- The Hon. Graham Jacobs MLA, Minister for Water; Mental Health, Western Australia
- The Hon. Donna Faragher MLC, Minister for the Environment; Youth, Western Australia
- The Hon. Karlene Maywald MP, Minister for Water Security, Minister for the River Murray, South Australia
- The Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MHA, Minister for the Environment, Heritage, Parks and the Arts, Tasmania
- The Hon. Kon Vatskalis MLA, Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources, Northern Territory
- The Hon. Tim Groser MP, Minister of Conservation, New Zealand
- The Hon. Nick Smith MP, Minister for the Environment, Minister Responsible for Climate Change Issues, New Zealand.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.1</b>

**A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING THE NEGATIVE  
IMPACTS OF FERAL CAMELS ACROSS AUSTRALIA**

1. Feral camels are already a significant pest across Australia's rangelands. The current estimated population of more than one million is doubling in size every nine years. This increasing population is undermining pastoral production, severely damaging infrastructure in remote communities and on pastoral leases, compromising public safety, and destroying key environmental and cultural assets. The direct economic impacts of camels are greater than \$14 million annually and increasing. Costs to the natural environment and cultural heritage are yet to be quantified and may be immeasurable. Under global warming, the impact of camels on the fragile wetlands of arid Australia and other key values will likely be exacerbated.
2. Feral camels are spread over more than 3 million square kilometres encompassing most of arid and semi-arid WA, SA, NT and parts of western Queensland. Forty three per cent of the camels are believed to be on Aboriginal land, 22 per cent on pastoral land, 25 per cent on crown land and 10 per cent on other land tenures. Camels are highly mobile and can move over thousands of square kilometres in a 12 month period. This means that a coordinated national approach to management is needed to effectively mitigate the negative impacts of the species.
3. Management of the impacts of feral camels is a complicated issue. It is best achieved by the Commonwealth and the states and territories working together in partnership with industry, land managers and the community.
4. The negative impacts of feral camels are best addressed through an integrated and holistic management approach, focused on reducing camel density through a combination of commercial (live sale and meat production) and non-commercial approaches (broadscale aerial culling and localised ground culling), and fencing to protect some key assets.
5. Not all management methods are acceptable to all land owners/managers and not all approaches are suited to all areas. While most pastoral and conservation landholders are comfortable with shooting camels without making use of the carcass, many Aboriginal people are not. Many pastoral and conservation landholders are more interested in mitigating the impacts of feral camels than in making money out of them. In contrast, many Aboriginal people want jobs based wholly or in part on managing camels and their impacts. Commercial approaches are hampered by constraints on physical access to camels over much of the species' range, high transport costs, a lack of processing infrastructure and poor market development.

6. A recent report by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) provided a framework for managing the impacts of feral camels across their range. This framework defines four management zones on the basis of the perceived need for management intervention aimed at reducing impacts and the range of constraints on available management options. The report recommended that feral camels be managed to a long-term target density of 0.1-0.2 camels per square kilometre at property to regional scales in order to mitigate broadscale negative impacts on key assets.
7. Reaching the recommended management targets over all of the camel's range may take as long as 8 years, even with a concerted effort. Many of the camels are in extremely remote locations, seasonal conditions will not always be favourable for undertaking management activities, and considerable effort will be required in community consultations in some areas before any form of management could be attempted. Once impacts have been reduced to acceptable levels, there will be a need for periodic low intensity management intervention to maintain this outcome.
8. Taking into account population growth, as many as 1.2 million camels may need to be removed over 6-8 years in order to achieve a target density of 0.1 camels per square kilometre.
9. The DKCRC report reviewed legislation and regulations relating to feral camel management. This review highlighted that there were elements of state/territory legislation that would likely impede cross-border management activities, particularly in respect of the registration and use of firearms. Some jurisdictions also have laws and regulations that limit opportunities for using feral camels for meat.
10. The DKCRC has submitted a large project expression of interest focusing on managing the impacts of feral camels to the Caring for Our Country program. This proposal was developed in conjunction with relevant state and territory governments, industry, land managers and the community and proposes to address the issue in a holistic manner over an eight year period (2010-17). It is hoped that the DKCRC will be invited to develop a detailed project proposal, as a result of the expression of interest, over the next few months.
11. Assuming a 6-8 year timeframe and an aerial culling cost of \$40 per camel (DKCRC report), the cost of achieving the target density of 0.1 camels per square kilometre would be in the order of \$48 million. Aerial culling costs vary with density and there will be additional costs associated with consultation, communications and monitoring. Overall management costs would be lower if commercial approaches were used in some areas.
12. This figure is meant to serve as a guide. The full management cost will become clearer when detailed regional action plans are developed.
13. It is important that immediate action is taken to address the negative impacts of feral camels. Faced with an increasing population, the longer the delay, the greater the level of damage and the greater the cost of management intervention needed to mitigate the damage.

## RESOLUTIONS

### 14. Council:

- (a) **AGREED** that the damage being caused by feral camels is severe and the issue requires immediate attention by the affected jurisdictions;
- (b) **NOTED** that the level of damage will increase as the camel population increases;
- (c) **AGREED** that affected jurisdictions and the Australian Government should prepare an action plan within the next three months, and building on existing work, to ensure management strategies are coordinated across jurisdictions and follow the principles set out in the Australian Pest Animal Strategy (APAS), including coordination across all levels of government in partnership with industry, land and water managers and the community, regardless of land tenure;
- (d) **NOTED** that management of the impacts of feral camels will require significant levels of resourcing and detailed analysis would be required before jurisdictions could make specific commitments; and
- (e) **NOTED** that there may be a need for affected jurisdictions to develop Memorandums of Understanding and work towards reviewing legislation and/or regulations in order to facilitate effective collaboration and to overcome impediments to the delivery of cross-border management actions where these might exist.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.2</b>

### UPDATE ON THE VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES

#### RESOLUTION

1. Council **NOTED** the presentation from Tim Holding, Victorian Minister for Water, on the bushfires and follow up activities.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.3</b>

## NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – AUSTRALIAN GUIDELINES FOR WATER RECYCLING PHASE 2

1. The Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) endorsed the *National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling – Managing Health and Environmental Risks: Phase 1* at NRMMC 11 (November 2006). NRMMC 11 also endorsed, out-of-session, the initiation of Phase 2 of the guidelines development comprising of the ‘Augmentation of Drinking Water Supplies’, ‘Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse’ and ‘Managed Aquifer Recharge’ modules. NRMMC 13 (April 2008) endorsed *National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Augmentation of Drinking Water Supplies*.
2. The Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) have been jointly developing the Phase 2 guidelines. The draft guidelines will also be considered by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). EPHC will consider the guidelines at its 18th meeting on Friday 22 May, 2009. A Joint Steering Committee including representatives from the EPH and NRM Standing Committees, health agencies, NHMRC, the National Water Commission and the water industry has overseen the development of the Phase 2 guidelines. Expert working groups have developed the modules with input from consultants appointed to undertake specific projects in relation to each of the modules. The NEPC Service Corporation has provided project management services for the development of the guidelines.

### **Managed Aquifer Recharge**

3. The draft National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managed Aquifer Recharge module (Annex A) is attached for consideration and endorsement. The draft has been prepared by the Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) Working Group with substantial input through a consultancy with CSIRO Land and Water. The module describes how to apply the risk management framework set out in Phase 1 of the guidelines for the specific purpose of managed aquifer recharge as a method of recycling water and represents a valuable resource to the emerging science of managed aquifer recharge.
4. The draft module was released for two months public consultation in May 2008. Public consultation meetings were held in each state and territory capital during the public consultation period. Eighteen submissions were received, a summary of submissions and responses is attached (Annex C). The module was also subject to international peer review.
5. Key issues raised in submissions and addressed in the revised guidelines include:
  - (a) verification of attenuation in aquifers

- (b) streamline structure and improve readability/utility of the guidelines
  - (c) implementation of the guidelines/impact on existing schemes
  - (d) guidelines too stringent – costs of monitoring
  - (e) specific guidance on how the guidelines relate to other guidelines
  - (f) address decommissioning
  - (g) the ‘aquifer and groundwater-dependent ecosystems’ section has been revised and extended
  - (h) a new appendix on aquifer characteristics and their suitability for managed aquifer recharge has been inserted.
6. In addition, more specific information provided by peer reviewers Dr Jorg Drewes, Advanced Water Technology Center, Colorado School of Mines (organic chemicals in water recycling), and Dr. Jack Schijven, Expert Centre for Methodology and Information Services, National Institute of Public Health and the Environment, the Netherlands (pathogens) has been incorporated into the revised guidelines.
  7. Submissions also requested case studies to illustrate use of the guidelines. It is proposed to develop case studies in a separate document to be made available with the guidelines.
  8. In a related National Water Commission project, data are being collected on pathogen attenuation at selected Australian MAR sites. This information will also be made available as supporting information in June 2009. The MAR Guidelines Working Group will provide oversight on the development of this information.

### **Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use**

9. The draft National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use (Annex B) module is attached for Council’s endorsement. The draft has been prepared by the Stormwater Re-use Working Group with input from expert consultancies. The module describes how to apply the risk management framework set out in Phase 1 of the guidelines for the specific purpose of harvesting and re-using stormwater for non-potable uses. Note that potable use of stormwater is addressed in the *Augmentation of Drinking Water Supplies* module.
10. The draft module was released for two months public consultation in May 2008. Public consultation meetings were held in each state and territory capital during the public consultation period. Seventeen submissions were received, a summary of submissions and responses is attached (Annex D). The module was also subject to international peer review.
11. The technical working group overseeing the guideline’s preparation has modified the revised draft to take into account comments received during the consultation period.
12. The guidelines also incorporate the findings of a stormwater pathogen monitoring program in Sydney published by the Australian Water Quality Centre in November 2008. This is the most comprehensive assessment of pathogen levels in stormwater in Australia. The analysis of the data from this study has enabled the stormwater treatment requirements for reuse to be reduced, as the interim data used in the consultation draft were found to be overly conservative.
13. An additional laboratory study carried out by the Australian Water Quality Centre during the consultation period investigated the relationship between turbidity levels in

stormwater and the effectiveness of UV disinfection. The results of this study have found that moderately high levels of turbidity do not impact on the effectiveness of UV disinfection for the level of treatment required. The findings from this study have been incorporated in the revised draft to address some concerns raised during the consultations.

14. In addition to the major changes noted above relating to stormwater treatment requirements and turbidity, a number of other relatively minor changes were made, principally to improve readability and to clarify some sections of text.
15. When approved by the EPHC and NHMRC, the Guidelines will be published on relevant websites and media release issued by the EPHC Chair.

## RESOLUTIONS

16. Council:
  - (a) **ENDORSED** the documents National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managed Aquifer Recharge ([Annex A](#)) and National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use ([Annex B](#)); and
  - (b) **AGREED** to publish the above documents, once endorsed, on the NRMMC and EPHC websites.

**ANNEX A:** National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managed Aquifer Recharge

**ANNEX B:** National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use

**ANNEX C:** Summary of Submissions and Responses on the draft National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managed Aquifer Recharge

**ANNEX D:** Summary of Submissions and Responses on the draft National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use

*[Annexes A-D are held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.4</b>

**WATER TRADING: SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PERMANENT TRADE  
PROCESSING TIMES**

1. COAG instigated the development of service standards for water trades in response to concerns raised by market participants about the time taken by state authorities to approve water trades.
2. In November 2008, COAG adopted service standards for trade approval times by state authorities for allocation (temporary) trade. COAG also agreed to develop service standards for trade approval times by state authorities for entitlement (permanent) trade, to be implemented by 1 July 2009. This is one of a suite of actions agreed by COAG to improve the water market.
3. The COAG Water Sub Group has now developed proposed service standards for entitlement (permanent) trade.
5. Basin states have now committed through the COAG Water Sub Group to process 90 per cent of applications for approval of permanent trade within 20 business days and 90 per cent of applications for registration of permanent trade within 10 business days.

**RESOLUTION**

6. Council:
  - (a) **AGREED** the New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, Queensland and ACT governments adopt the following service standards for trade processing times by state authorities for permanent water trade, to be implemented from 1 July 2009:
    - Approval stage – 90 per cent of entitlement trades within 20 business days
    - Registration stage – 90 per cent of entitlement trades within 10 business days

with the standards to apply in South Australia within the River Murray prescribed watercourse only. Jurisdictions will ‘stop the clock’ while the application is back with the buyer or seller due to incorrect/incomplete information when calculating time taken to approve the trade.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.5</b>

### AUSTRALIAN BIOSECURITY SYSTEM REFORM – BEALE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

1. On 18 December 2008, the government released the report of the independent review of Australia's biosecurity arrangements and its preliminary response. The Beale report made 84 recommendations—to which the Australian Government has agreed in principle. Recommendations can broadly be grouped into four themes: strengthened partnerships; improved governance arrangements; targeted operational focus and increased resourcing. A key recommendation was the development of a national agreement on biosecurity to strengthen the partnership between Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
2. Reactions and initial views on the Beale report were sought from state and territory governments in January 2009 and at the Primary Industries Ministerial Forum in February 2009. Feedback was largely positive but some matters were identified for further discussion and as likely points of differing views. This included concerns with recommendations regarding the Commonwealth potentially overriding state measures on the movement of goods and the replacement of existing intergovernmental agreements with a national agreement on biosecurity.
3. At the 4th Primary Industries Ministerial Forum on 13 February 2009, ministers agreed to negotiating a national agreement on biosecurity and establishing a high level working group for relevant ministers' consideration by the end of 2009.
4. The proposed national agreement will allow for stronger science and risk-based approaches and foster an improved working partnership across the biosecurity continuum, including post border diagnostic and response arrangements. The proposed agreement would include that states and territories are consulted on the setting of Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection, on national priorities for major new investments, and on certain policy decisions and operational matters such as appointments to a national biosecurity commission. It will also outline agreed cost-sharing arrangements covering all relevant sectors, improved information sharing arrangements and systems, and greater Commonwealth involvement in domestic ballast water management. A list of recommendations from the Beale report that need to be considered in developing the agreement are at [Annex A](#).
5. The Beale report concludes that a more significant effort is required to address biosecurity risks to the environment. The review panel made a number of recommendations to this effect. These include:
  - (a) replacing the primary production focused Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council with a new biosecurity advisory council that is made up members

- with a broad range of skills in biosecurity (including environmental biosecurity);
- (b) ensuring the new biosecurity commission has the capacity to assess risks to the environment when conducting import risk analyses;
  - (c) the establishment of a post-border monitoring and surveillance program for national priority exotic pests and diseases including those that impact on the terrestrial and aquatic environments; and
  - (d) broadening the membership of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia to encompass environmental pest and disease issues including those affecting the aquatic and terrestrial environments.
6. The proposed framework for a national agreement on biosecurity includes high-level principles and the process for applying these principles as the body of the agreement and a series of supporting schedules providing details on more complex policy issues (such as sharing biosecurity operations, and funding issues). It is suggested that the overarching agreement be finalised by the end of 2009 with schedules to be developed over a longer timeframe, with key schedules given priority.
  7. A high level working group has been established to progress the development of a national agreement on biosecurity and held its first meeting on 21 April 2009. Representatives are Peter Dinan (ACT), Rod Gobbey (NT), Scott Davenport (NSW), Kareena Arthy (Qld), Don Plowman (SA), Alex Schaap (Tas), Hugh Millar (Vic) and Damian Collopy (WA). The working group has been tasked with developing a framework for the new agreement; identifying and resolving key policy issues; consulting with expert groups to develop content; recommending how existing intergovernmental agreements will be included; reaching whole of government positions on biosecurity policy issues; and reporting to the relevant Standing Committees and Ministerial Councils on its progress. It will also work with the National Biosecurity Committee and link the development of the agreement to the committee's work program.
  8. The working group will also report its progress to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council in November 2009.

#### **General Beale Implementation update**

9. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in conjunction with other Australian Government agencies, is drafting new biosecurity legislation to enable the reforms proposed in the Beale report. The primary legislation is scheduled to be introduced into Parliament in 2010. An exposure draft is scheduled to be circulated in late 2009.
10. A range of administrative changes will be made to the Australian Government's biosecurity services over the coming months. These include implementing a new Biosecurity Services Group within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, consolidating the department's biosecurity functions; establishing the Biosecurity Advisory Council, which will replace the Quarantine and Export Advisory Council; appointing an interim Inspector General of Biosecurity; and adding an economist to the Eminent Scientists Group.
11. State and territory primary industries ministers have been consulted, through the Primary Industries Ministerial Forum, on the approach to develop the new national

agreement on biosecurity. Officials from primary industries and natural resource management portfolios were also consulted at Standing Committee meetings in March.

12. Initial consultations with state and territory primary industries officials took place in January 2009 to brief them on the Beale report and seek initial views on the proposed Commonwealth, state and territory arrangements.

## RESOLUTIONS

13. Council:

- (a) **NOTED** that at the 4th Primary Industries Ministerial Forum, primary industries ministers endorsed the principle of a strengthened partnership approach for managing biosecurity, including environmental biosecurity as outlined in the report of the independent review of Australia's current arrangements, *One Biosecurity: a working partnership*;
- (b) **NOTED** that state and territory primary industries representatives have been invited to participate in a working group to negotiate the development of a national agreement on biosecurity by the end of 2009;
- (c) **NOTED** that primary industries representatives will be expected to participate on the basis of whole of government positions of individual jurisdictions and make the necessary arrangements to achieve this;
- (d) **NOTED** that the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council will be kept informed and consulted on relevant issues as the new agreement on biosecurity is developed; and
- (e) **NOTED** progress on the development of new biosecurity legislation to replace the *Quarantine Act 1908* and progress on a range of institutional reforms.

**ANNEX A:** List of major Beale recommendations for a national agreement on biosecurity

**LIST OF MAJOR BEALE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NATIONAL  
AGREEMENT ON BIOSECURITY**

<b>Rec.</b>	<b>Text</b>
Rec. 1	The Commonwealth's biosecurity legislation should provide that authority given by the Commonwealth to import goods into Australia also authorises the goods to be imported into a state or territory on the same conditions (if any). It should provide that this authority operates to the exclusion of any state or territory law that imposes biosecurity regulation on the direct, or indirect via another state or territory, import of the goods into the state or territory.
Rec. 3	As part of this extended reach, the Commonwealth should increase its resources to support the monitoring, surveillance, investigation and, where appropriate, prosecutions associated with post-border biosecurity detections (see also Recommendation 74).
Rec. 4	The Commonwealth should extend its legislative reach to cover the field with respect to international and domestic ballast water regulation.
Rec. 6	The biosecurity legislation should continue to provide for national powers to deal with biosecurity emergencies. However, the powers should not be limited to quarantineable pests and diseases and associated measures and emergencies. They should clearly extend to biosecurity measures generally and biosecurity emergencies supported by the Commonwealth's constitutional reach. The opportunity should be taken to rationalise and simplify the existing powers, including by providing that they may be invoked or exercised by the Minister rather than the Governor-General.
Rec. 7	The biosecurity legislation should provide the Commonwealth with the capacity to override a specified law of a state or territory that imposes biosecurity controls on the use, movement, treatment or disposal of domestic goods imported into the state or territory from another state or territory. This capacity should only be available where the National Biosecurity Commission has determined that the biosecurity controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) are not justified by an examination and evaluation of available scientific information; or</li> <li>b) are more trade restrictive than required and so constitute a disguised restriction on interstate trade and commerce in domestic product(s).</li> </ul>

Rec. 9	<p>A National Agreement on Biosecurity, to underpin a partnership approach between the Commonwealth and the states and territories on biosecurity, should provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) the Commonwealth to consult with the states and territories on the Appropriate Level of Protection and Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis Guidelines and priorities for considering market access requests;</li> <li>d) the Commonwealth to consult with the states and territories on the appointment of members of the National Biosecurity Commission (other than the Director of Biosecurity); emergency response policy and arrangements, including the circumstances in which the Commonwealth would utilise its national emergency management powers;</li> <li>e) the steps preceding the Commonwealth's use of its legislative authority to override inappropriate state and territory controls on interstate trade in domestic products;</li> <li>f) joint decisions on national priorities for investment by jurisdictions, including in monitoring and surveillance (including identifying national priority exotic pests and diseases for Commonwealth investment), research and development and biosecurity infrastructure; and</li> <li>g) full and automatic information sharing between jurisdictions (in a manner consistent with obligations under the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>), including information collected through pre-border intelligence activities, border controls (such as interception data) and information gathered through monitoring and surveillance programs (see Recommendation 54).</li> </ul>
Rec. 10	<p>The National Agreement on Biosecurity should replace existing intergovernmental agreements such as the <i>Memorandum of Understanding on Animal and Plant Quarantine Measures</i> and the <i>Intergovernmental Agreement on AusBIOSEC</i>.</p>
Rec. 11	<p>The aim should be to develop the Biosecurity Act (see Recommendation 43) and negotiate the National Agreement on Biosecurity within two years. While agreement with the states and territories is highly desirable, the Commonwealth should reserve the right to proceed with the Panel's recommendations unilaterally, or with a limited number of participating states and territories, if agreement is not forthcoming within that timeframe.</p>
Rec. 22	<p>The biosecurity legislation should require that the Commonwealth obtain the support of any five of the states and territories before it can appoint the Chair and members of the National Biosecurity Commission, other than the Director of Biosecurity.</p>
Rec. 27	<p>To enhance biosecurity planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) where Industry Biosecurity Plans already exist, there should be strong encouragement for their implementation at an individual business level;</li> <li>b) industries or sectors that are vulnerable but not covered by Biosecurity Plans (for example, the aquatic wildcatch and aquaculture industries), should be encouraged to develop a Biosecurity Plan; and</li> <li>c) governments should work with managers of land for conservation purposes to ensure that they have appropriate biosecurity plans and practices.</li> </ul>

Rec. 29	<p>To enhance communications effectiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) messages promoting Australia's biosecurity should cover the biosecurity continuum;</li><li>b) new communication options, including those available on the Internet, should be employed by the National Biosecurity Authority; and</li><li>c) particular efforts should be made in collaboration with the states and territories, local governments, community and business groups to inform peri-urban farmers, including from non-English speaking backgrounds, of Australia's biosecurity policies and to engage them in monitoring, surveillance and response strategies.</li></ul>
Rec. 35	<p>The:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Guidelines should include a requirement for the assessment of any relevant regional differences in biosecurity status and risk;</li><li>b) states and territories should be consulted on the terms of this requirement before it is included in the Guidelines; and</li><li>c) Commonwealth and the states and territories should develop a protocol on the collection and timely provision of the scientific evidence necessary to demonstrate biosecurity threat status to support both the Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis process and improved access to export markets for Australian products.</li></ul>

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.6</b>

### NATIONAL RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT ERADICATION PROGRAM

1. Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) is one of the world's most invasive pests, which rapidly establishes in a wide range of environments, impacting natural fauna, agriculture, public infrastructure, human health and social amenity. It delivers a painful sting that poses a significant health risk to susceptible people, including causing allergic reactions and, in some cases, death. The presence of colonies in backyards and public recreation areas can render them unusable.
2. RIFA are widespread in the United States and, in Texas alone, around \$1.2 billion is spent each year on control of the pest. US experts confirm that the density of infestation is now much lower in Australia than levels experienced in the United States, following the success of the program to date.
3. The National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) began in 2001 with the detection of RIFA in Richlands and the Port of Brisbane. There were areas of dense infestation, with densities of up to 6000 colonies/ha recorded. Following intensive surveillance and treatment, the level of infestation dropped considerably with only around 100 new infested parcels being detected each year since 2004-05. In 2007, a large infestation was found on an unused mine site near Amberley. This discovery was significant in that it was the first major detection in a peri-urban or rural area. RIFA was also detected in Gladstone in 2006.
4. The NFAEP is based on elements of treatment, surveillance, science, community engagement and movement controls. Queensland manages the program on behalf of the national funding partners.
5. An information paper providing an overview of RIFA, maps of infestation for each year of the program and an outline of the experience in the United States is attached ([Annex E](#)).
6. NRMMC 11 (November 2006) agreed in principle to a five year continuation of the NFAEP, with funding allocated for 2009-10 of \$7.471 million. Following the detection at Amberley and in more peri-urban areas of Brisbane in 2007, Queensland presented a paper to NRMMC 14 (November 2008) for a \$24 million program in 2009-10 to essentially catch up on treatment and surveillance that has not been able to occur due to funding shortfalls in previous years, and to undertake R&D on better ways to detect RIFA in rural areas. Ministers referred the paper to the National Biosecurity Committee for advice. Standing Committee subsequently established a group of CEOs and senior officials (CEO Group) to oversee the program. That group met in Brisbane on 23 April 2009. Queensland hosted a briefing session for officials on 22 April.

7. The CEO Group confirmed that eradication of RIFA should remain the primary objective as the pest has the potential to have a considerable impact on many Australians should it become widespread. However, the previously agreed allocation of \$7.471 million was not considered adequate to either eradicate or control RIFA enough to maintain THE option for eradication in the future.
8. The CEO Group noted that the program is successful in detecting and destroying RIFA nests in urban areas, with particular acknowledgement of the role community engagement and passive surveillance by the public has played in this success. However, concern was expressed about whether current approaches for detecting and treating RIFA will be effective in the more peri-urban and rural areas where RIFA are now being found. The proximity of the infestation to nearby agricultural land was of particular concern. As a result, the program in 2009-10 is being split into urban and peri-urban/rural elements.
9. **URBAN RIFA PROGRAM:** The priority for the 2009-10 urban RIFA program is to maintain the high levels of community engagement and rely on passive surveillance for new detections. Another Fire Ant Reward Scheme is proposed as it increases the incentive for the public to report suspect nests and reduces reporting and response times. It is also a good way to provide confidence about the spread (or otherwise) of RIFA. Treatment of new detections and high risk areas of previous infestation will occur and limited active surveillance will be done in high risk areas.
10. **RURAL RIFA PROGRAM:** Given the limited budget and the fact that infestations are found close to the edge of the current restricted area a different approach is proposed (Annex F). Consideration is being given to doing two rounds of broadscale baiting around the edge of the western perimeter of the restricted area (i.e. the Amberley area), including a 4 km buffer, as a prophylactic treatment instead of undertaking surveillance activities as per existing protocols. This acknowledges that there are limits in the efficacy of current survey methods in less populated areas. Baiting has been used successfully in the past to suppress and eradicate large areas of infestation and is less expensive per hectare than people-based surveillance methods. This approach will be validated and/or refined through the technical advisory arrangements proposed at Annex C. As well as existing community engagement activities, a new way of engaging rural landholders will be trialled through the establishment of local fire ant action groups.
11. Based on the approaches outlined above, a draft response plan for 2009-10 has been prepared (Annex B). It is proposed the Group of CEOs and Senior Officials finalise the plan in line with the budget agreed by Ministers.

12. **REMOTE SENSING TECHNOLOGY:** A critical element to the success of any continuing rural RIFA program will be the development of alternative surveillance technology. Much of the land surrounding current known infestations is sparsely populated. Remote sensing for RIFA is based on thermal, multi-spectral and visual imaging technologies. Preliminary investigations show that RIFA nests may be up to 15 degrees warmer than the surrounding ground temperature, making them visible under thermal imaging methods. Previous research has also shown that RIFA nests have different spectral signatures to that of surrounding soil and vegetation. The theory is that not every nest has to be found using this technology – if one nest can be detected other surveillance techniques can be used to delimit the cluster of infestation (for example, sniffer dogs or human surveillance) or broadscale treatment can be done to blanket the area. RIFA prefer to nest in open disturbed land, so there is a level of confidence that if RIFA are present they will be detected in clearings.
13. Remote sensing has been applied to detecting fire ants in the United States, but needs to be adapted and validated for use in Australia. The CEOs Group has endorsed an R&D program of up to \$1 million to develop, test and validate remote sensing technology ([Annex G](#)). Opportunities to leverage additional funding to the preferred \$2 million investment will be pursued.
14. **MODELLING AND GENETIC ANALYSIS:** Monash University has developed a spread model for RIFA which is increasingly being used for testing the merits of alternate scenarios. Queensland has also developed genetic analysis techniques which are providing useful insights into the spread of RIFA and the effects of eradication efforts on RIFA populations. This information is now being incorporated into the Monash model. A priority for 2009-10 will be to incorporate as much of this information as possible into the model to increase its sophistication and usefulness.
15. Genetic analysis provides a high level of certainty that there have been three separate incursions of RIFA (Port of Brisbane, Gladstone and south-west Brisbane) and that two of those (Port of Brisbane and Gladstone) have likely been eradicated. The Amberley infestation is a sub-population of the south-west Brisbane population, indicating that it had probably been there for some time. The current focus of genetic analysis is to identify the parent-child relationship of nests which will provide a lot of information about the spread of the pest. A map of the populations is attached ([Annex H](#)).
16. One risk of the broadscale baiting approach proposed under the rural RIFA program is that it could result in a major information gap. At this stage, there are almost ten years of good data as samples have been consistently collected and stored throughout the program. There is a possibility that the broadscale baiting could mask the location of colonies. This knowledge is needed to make informed decisions on boundaries and buffers used in treatment programs. Given the need to understand how RIFA spreads in rural areas, this loss of data could be critical. However, on balance, the recommendation is to proceed with prophylactic treatment given the threat of spread into agricultural areas.

17. **GOVERNANCE:** The NFAEP is not conducted under a cost-sharing deed. However, it is proposed to apply similar governance arrangements that exist under the deeds to the NFAEP. The CEOs Group will be the equivalent of a national management group. The terms of reference and membership of the National Tramp Ant Committee will be reviewed to ensure it can adequately perform the functions of a consultative committee. A sub-committee of the CEOs Group will oversee the conduct of the independent review. An improved quarterly reporting system will also be implemented to ensure funding partners have up-to-date information about the program. The proposed governance arrangements are attached for consideration (Annex C).
18. **INDEPENDENT REVIEW:** While this paper primarily focuses on the 2009-10 NFAEP, it is important that a rigorous assessment is made of the long-term outlook for the program, including the feasibility of eradication. An independent review of the program is proposed to consider all scientific data (both in Australia and internationally), operational performance and cost:benefit analysis in order to make recommendations for the length, scale and nature of a future NFAEP, should it be determined to be in the national interest. A draft terms of reference is attached for endorsement (Annex D).
19. A group of CEOs and senior officials from all jurisdictions met on 23 April 2009 to discuss the 2009-10 program and endorse the directions contained in this paper.
20. The program proposed by the CEOs Group will cost \$15 million in 2009-10. This will include a \$13.95 million operational program, up to \$1 million on an R&D program for remote surveillance technology and \$50,000 for an independent review of the program.
21. Ministers had previously agreed (in 2006) funding of \$7.471 million for 2009-10.

## RESOLUTIONS

23. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** the advice of the CEO and Senior Officials Group for Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) that the previously agreed allocation of \$7.471 million was not considered adequate to either eradicate or control RIFA enough to maintain an option for eradication in the future;
  - (b) **NOTED** that the objective of the 2009-10 National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) is to suppress the spread of RIFA and maintain the option for eradication in the longer term while an independent review is conducted to inform the future of the program;
  - (c) **NOTED** the proposal for a program of research and development for remote sensing technology to improve detection of RIFA in peri-urban and rural areas;
  - (d) **AGREED** to funding of \$15 million in 2009-10, subject to jurisdiction budget processes, for NFAEP operations (\$13.95 million), development of remote sensing technologies (up to \$1 million) and an independent review of the program (\$50,000), with funding shares for each jurisdiction based on previous funding formulas (Annex A);

- (e) **NOTED** the draft 2009-10 NFAEP Response Plan (Annex B);
- (f) **AGREED** to the amended governance arrangements for the NFAEP (Annex C) and that the Group of CEOs and Senior Officials will act as a ‘national management group’ for the NFAEP, including being responsible for finalising the NFAEP Response Plan for 2009-10 within the budget agreed at (d);
- (g) **AGREED** to the Terms of Reference of the independent review of the NFAEP (Annex D) with membership to be finalised by the CEO Group; and
- (h) **NOTED** that advice on the NFAEP for 2010-11 onwards will be provided to Ministers for consideration in November 2009, after the independent review has reported and the National Biosecurity Committee has completed its advice on the future of long-term eradication programs.

<b>ANNEX A:</b>	Funding shares for 2009-10 NFAEP
<b>ANNEX B:</b>	NFAEP Response Plan
<b>ANNEX C:</b>	Proposed Governance Arrangements for NFAEP
<b>ANNEX D:</b>	Draft Terms of Reference for NFAEP Independent Review
<b>ANNEX E:</b>	RIFA Information Paper
<b>ANNEX F:</b>	Map of RIFA infestation
<b>ANNEX G:</b>	Remote Sensing
<b>ANNEX H:</b>	RIFA Genetic Analysis

*[Annexes B-H are held by the Secretariat]*

**Contributions of Funding Partners for Red Imported Fire Ant Program  
2009-10**

	<b>Share</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 7,471,000</b>
Australian Government	50.0%	\$7,500,000	\$ 3,735,500
New South Wales	16.9%	\$2,535,000	\$ 1,262,599
Victoria	12.4%	\$1,860,000	\$ 926,404
Queensland	9.4%	\$1,410,000	\$ 702,274
Western Australia	4.9%	\$735,000	\$ 366,079
South Australia	3.9%	\$585,000	\$ 291,369
Tasmania	1.2%	\$180,000	\$ 89,652
Northern Territory	0.5%	\$75,000	\$ 37,355
Australian Capital Territory	0.8%	\$120,000	\$ 59,768

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.7</b>

### WEEDS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE PROGRAM – CONTINUATION AND ENHANCEMENT

1. The twenty Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) have been the subject of national collaborative management by all jurisdictions for over five years. The WoNS program is the operational arm for the implementation of the revised Australian Weed Strategy (AWS) endorsed by NRMMC 11 (November 2006). Its predecessor, the 1997 National Weed Strategy (NWS), was endorsed by the Australia New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC), the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCANZ) and the Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture (MCFFA) – predecessors to the NRMMC.
2. Under Goal 2 of the NWS, ‘to reduce the impact of existing weed problems of national significance’, Councils agreed to prioritise national action on twenty WoNS.
3. Strategic management plans were developed for each of the twenty species and all jurisdictions supported the implementation of these strategic management plans under the WoNS program. This goal remains current in the revised 2007 AWS.
4. In agreeing to this approach and to the WoNs program, ANZECC, ARMCANZ and MCFFA also agreed that the program would need to be reviewed to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the approach. A review of each strategic management plan after five years of action was proposed.
5. The Australian Weeds Committee (AWC) is a sub-committee of the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) and has primary responsibility for overseeing the WoNS program.

#### **Review of the WoNS program**

6. The AWC is seeking NRMMC endorsement for the continuation of the WoNS program based on the recommendations of an independent review. Recommendations including the restructure of the WoNS list to phase out species now being effectively managed, and a call for the nominations of additional high priority species and their subsequent endorsement as WoNS by NRMMC.
7. The WoNS list is currently a static list. The need for the list to be more dynamic and address new species has been the subject of discussion by ministers, governments, land managers and the community for some time. Implementing the major recommendations of the review would achieve this outcome.

8. Non-continuation of the WoNS program would negate the operational elements of the AWS and make it difficult for all governments to meet their obligations under this agreed national strategy.
9. In 2007 the AWC commissioned an independent review of the WoNS program, nominating for review seven of the species that have had active management for at least five years. The AWC will review the remaining thirteen species over the next six months to assess progress against the strategic management plans.
10. The review concluded that a nationally strategic approach has been highly successful, leveraging consistent multi-jurisdictional activity on high priority species. It states that 'all seven WoNS programs examined have a national perspective and have made significant contributions to the delivery areas outlined in the strategic plans developed for their management'.
11. AWC considers that the recommendations from the comprehensive review of the first seven species provide an appropriate guide to improve the whole WoNS program.

#### **AWC response to recommendations**

12. The AWC established a subcommittee to actively pursue the review's fourteen recommendations for improving the performance of the program. Ten of these are relatively straightforward, such as noting identified research needs and improving of mapping. AWC has actioned all ten of these recommendations.
13. The following four key recommendations propose significant changes to the structure of the WoNS Program and the AWC has undertaken significant scoping work on them:

Recommendation 1.1: To review progress on the current WoNS management strategies with a view to placing them in the appropriate level of a new phased approach.

*The AWC agrees with this recommendation and will ensure all WoNS species are reviewed during 2009. Development of a review process is currently underway.*

Recommendation 1.3: To develop a model for a phased approach to reducing resources allocated to the current WoNS, with the AWC monitoring ongoing performance at jurisdiction level to allow resources to be redirected to new species over time.

*The AWC has undertaken significant scoping work to develop the phased approach to meet this recommendation, see details at Annex A.*

Recommendation 1.4: To undertake a new WoNS nomination and prioritisation process, which will determine additional species to be given WoNS status and determine resources to be directed to establishing a nationally coordinated response.

*The AWC agrees with this recommendation and has worked with the national risk assessment technical committee to develop the process for determining new species, see details at Annex A.*

Recommendation 1.11: To ensure continued high quality staffing of the Facilitator and Coordinator positions so that operating programs are not compromised.

*The AWC agrees with this recommendation and recommends that consideration be given to a four-year commitment (2009-2013)( subject to jurisdictional budgetary considerations) to continue the shared cost funding model, across all jurisdictions, for the National Coordination Positions and National Management Committees, who are critical for successful delivery of the program.*

14. In considering introducing new species to the WoNS list, the AWC acknowledges that this cannot be done on the assumption of additional resources being available. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to consolidation of current functions to ensure that additional work can be undertaken within the existing resource base.
15. Endorsement of the continuation of the WoNS program would signify agreement to continue to recognise WoNS species as the priority species for collaborative investment within the limits of jurisdiction's available funds. Funding of on-ground works to address the WoNS species is currently handled within individual jurisdictions' weed programs. Support from the Australian Government is provided through various funding programs on a competitive basis, for example the Australian Weeds Research Centre funding, Australia's Farming Future program or Caring for our Country.
16. The WoNS coordinators are currently employed by states and territories (as described in Table 1 below) with support from the Australian Government, under a cost shared arrangement. States and territories cover the cost of participation of their own officers and provide infrastructure with the Australian Government providing for the cost of dedicated coordinators and contributing to the involvement of non-government members in management groups. The AWC and NBC support the continuation of this arrangement for a period of five years (2009-2013). Note that this is subject to support from the Australian Government for an indicative budget of \$2 million dollars per annum and a \$2 million dollar matching contribution from jurisdictions as described in Table 2 below.

Table 1 – Current distribution of Coordinator positions based on State and Territories volunteering to host positions for specific species (this may change as new species are introduced)	
NSW	3 – Serrated Tussock, Aquatics, Bitou Bush and Bone Seed.
VIC	3 – Blackberry, Willows, Chilean Needle Grass
SA	1 – Bridal Creeper
NT	1 – Athel Pine and Mimosa
QLD	4 – Hymenachne and Pond Apple, Prickle Bushes (parkinsonia, mesquite and prickly acacia), Lantana, Parthenium and Rubber Vine
TAS	1 – Gorse

Table 2 – Current Shared Cost Arrangements Per Annum	
Australian Government Funding (Coordinator salary, travel and support for running national management groups)	Host Agency Contribution (housing and on-costs, accommodation, equipment, phone, support staff including travel, use of fleet vehicles, etc)
Approximately \$2 million a year	Approximately \$2 million in kind a year

**RESOLUTIONS**

## 17. Council:

- (a) **NOTED** the findings of the independent review of the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) program, which supported its continuation and made fourteen recommendations for improving the performance of the program;
- (b) **NOTED** the Australian Weeds Committee (AWC) has actioned ten of the more straightforward recommendations (a summary of the review findings and AWC's response to the recommendations is provided at Annex A);
- (c) **ENDORSED** the continuation of the WoNS program with revisions based on the recommendations of the review, including the restructure of the WoNS list to phase out species now being effectively managed and a call for further species nominations and subsequent endorsement of additional WoNS species;
- (d) **ENDORSED**, subject to jurisdictional budgetary processes, the proposed administrative arrangements, budget and cost sharing arrangements for continuing WoNs coordinators based on the current shared cost arrangements; and
- (e) **AGREED** that Standing Committee provide an update on the progress in implementing the review's recommendations to Council's next meeting in November 2009.

**ANNEX A:** The Australian Weeds Committee's Response to the Recommendations Contained in the Review of the Management of Seven Weeds of National Significance

# The Australian Weeds Committee's Response to the Recommendations Contained in the Review of the Management of Seven Weeds of National Significance

## Introduction

This document outlines the Australian Weeds Committee's (AWC) response to the recommendations contained in the Review of the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) undertaken by the Beaten Track Group for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under the auspices of the AWC.

### Overarching Conclusion of the Review

The Review concludes that:

“All seven WoNS programs examined have a national perspective and have made significant contributions to the delivery areas outlined in the strategic plans developed for their management. It is clear that in recent years significant improvements in the overall program reporting for each WoNS has been achieved. In addition advances have been made in mapping weed distributions, in understanding the issues associated with each weed and in the implementation of control methods.

All programs established effective collaborations with state agencies, local government, industry and research groups and have produced significant documents and other material to raise awareness in the target stakeholder groups and for weed management. This nationally coordinated approach and the networks developed will be useful for the future management of invasive species other than weeds.

The areas of the programs that worked well include the establishment of management advisory committees and co-ordination at the national level; establishing working relationships and on-the-ground actions with state bodies, local governments and research bodies. Transferring project knowledge across WoNS through joint workshops was an effective internal information strategy. Areas that can be improved include improved evidence-based analyses of the ecological and economic benefits of weed management, clear performance measures coupled with further improvements in monitoring the impacts of management actions and in reporting, especially as it relates to the use of performance indicators.

Research and control methods for the various WoNS species were at different stages of maturity when the program started, consequently there are differences in what has been achieved and what remains to be done.”

### AWC Response

The AWC agrees with this conclusion and considers that the program has been of considerable value and should be continued as many benefits have been accrued through the management of individual species in a nationally

coordinated and consistent way. The AWC considers that the benefits from the program include:

- Development and implementation of nationally agreed goals;
- Strengthened commitment to strategic investment through coordination of programs;
- Development of best practice management information;
- Improved understanding of the national distribution and a clearer understanding of species predicted and actual distributions;
- Strengthened focus on prevention of spread through targeting of outlier infestations and implementation of containment lines;
- Strengthened networks at the landholder, local, state and national levels;
- Exchange and sharing of resources both human and technology based;
- Increased landholder commitment to addressing management issues;
- Increased capacity to provide quality advice to senior management and elected representatives enabling them to make more informed decisions;
- Closer liaison between community, government and research providers with stakeholders being more involved and having ownership of research programs;
- Increased communication specifically targeted to community needs with landholders exchanging information and offering solutions to each other;
- Increased resources from states, local government and community;

## 1. The Recommendations of the Review

The following 14 recommendations have been made to the AWC for improving the program and resolving future management and listing of species. The AWC has considered these and is responding to them with a planned approach outlined below. The AWC has agreed to a timetable for the implementation of the recommendations as set out in the attached Gantt chart.

### ***Governance: National strategies update***

#### **1. We recommend**

- a) regular review and revision of the national strategies at two-yearly intervals;**
- b) endorsement and encouragement for the National Coordinators to work with their National Management Groups to improve the strategies; and**
- c) increased and regular activity at National Management Group level to drive progress towards change in all Strategic Plans.**

#### **AWC response:**

- a) The AWC considers that while the overarching goals within the strategies do not require modification in the short term, National Management Groups should have a clear purpose for their strategy and regularly review implementation. Where there are major changes to the directions or

priorities identified then the National Management Group should advise the AWC in order to ensure that key stakeholders have an active role in the revision.

- b) Support will be provided to Coordinators to facilitate improved implementation planning through training in the program logic and the Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Improvement (MERI) Framework.
- c) The AWC recognises that there is significant demand placed on members of the National Management Groups,. The amount of group work varies depending on the WoNS management phase and the type of work demanded by the species. Groups undertake significant work out of session, particularly when developing best practice manuals or weed risk assessment. The level of activity must be assessed and applied on a case by case basis, partly determined by the resources available.

### **Key Actions**

- All WONS will be subjected to major review by 30 June 2009;
- All strategies will be revised to address the gaps identified in the review in a similar time frame;
- The strategies will undergo review at a maximum of two yearly intervals with major reviews at five years;
- The strategies must be targeted, transparent and have a rationale for the actions backed by measurable performance criteria;
- Outcome based deliverables should be achievable within a maximum five year period;
- Revisions must consider new opportunities that would significantly enhance the management of the species as high priority actions;

### ***Governance: Performance indicators***

**2. We recommend the development of more explicit performance indicators with measurable timelines and specified targets for each WoNS. The logical pathway method developed here could be adopted as the framework for future reporting and assessment.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC recognises the difficulty in measuring performance of broader natural resource issues and believes that the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework (MERI Framework), combined with Performance Story Reporting is the most appropriate method to use at this time.

### **Key Actions**

- A MERI workshop will be held in the first half of 2009; to ensure all WONS coordinators can apply a program logic framework to their national strategies. This will enable the development of improved performance indicated that will directly link to a program logic.

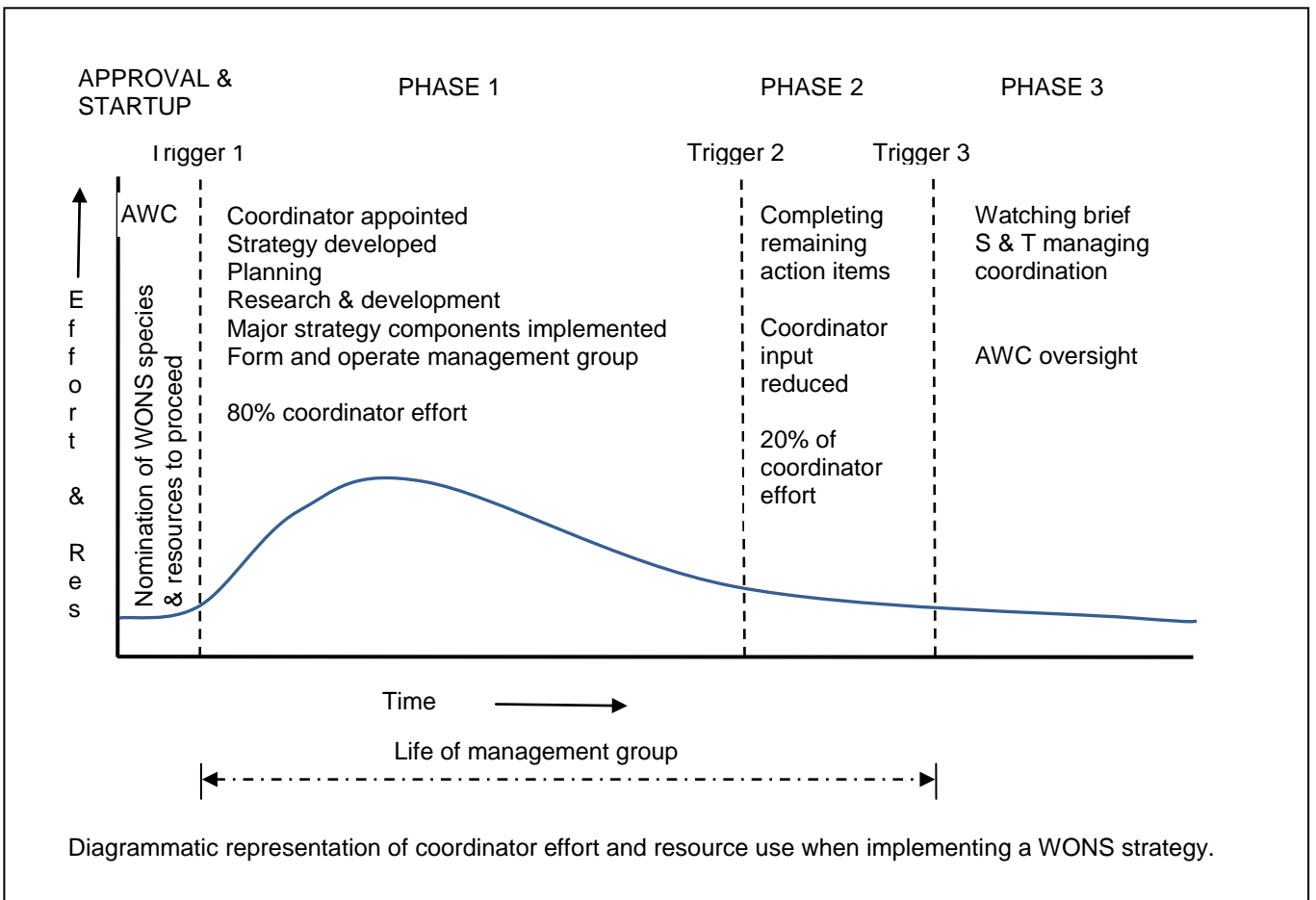
- This approach will inform future methodology for reporting and assessment.

**Governance: The tiered funding model and amending the list of WoNS**

**3. We recommend that the AWC adopt the tiered funding model proposed in this review to provide appropriate long-term support for weeds management.**

**AWC response:**

The AWC has devised a phased model to define the level of resources required for each species. This model is schematically presented below:



As can be seen from the diagram there are three triggers which give the WONS a phased status for management and operational purposes at AWC level. The AWC wishes to maintain and foster on ground action for all species and believes that this must be maintained even though the need for national coordination should reduce over time. For example a WONS species in phase 3 will be managed by states and territories, but without the services of a coordinator being generally monitored by AWC on an annual reporting basis.

Weed species are expected to maintain their WONS status into the future as in most instances they will continue to represent a major threat to Australia, but their management and awareness will have been improved to an extent where jurisdictions core business structures should be able to manage them effectively.

### **Key Actions**

- Methodology for reviewing current WoNS species is being developed by an AWC working group including:
  - Standard terms of reference for reviews.
  - A stakeholder survey and consultation process.
  - Review of progress against targets within the strategies in consultation with National taskforces.
  - Approval and appeals process through AWC.
  - Criteria for transition through the proposed phases.
- AWC will review all WONS and classify them into Phases by the end of FY09 with a view to reallocating some of the existing resources to new WONS species yet to be determined.
- AWC will communicate these changes to key stakeholders over coming months.
- AWC is cognisant of the skill, expertise, value and commitment of the existing coordinator network and wishes to see this retained, but recognises that species hosting arrangements will need to be adjusted and that coordinator responsibilities and species will likely change.

### **Governance: Reprioritise WONS**

**4. We recommend that WoNS be re-prioritised using a modification of the original selection criteria taking into account impacts on biodiversity and other relevant environmental parameters.**

#### **AWC response:**

The AWC considers that it is opportune to review the criteria for assessment of species to include new and improved information and has consulted with Weed Risk Assessment officers in all jurisdictions.. The AWC acknowledges that the development of refined criteria would need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified consultant. The Australian Government would consider a request from AWC to fund such a study.

The AWC recommends that jurisdictions be asked to submit candidate species for consideration following the development of agreed criteria. The resulting prioritised list would be used to introduce new species to the program as existing species are phased down.

Proponent jurisdictions will be expected to contribute funding for the national assessment of their nominated candidate species. The Committee does not support reprioritising existing WoNS as their future will be determined as described in 1.3 above.

A timeline and process for this is summarised in chart 1.

### **Key Actions**

- AWC aims to implement a revised WONS determination process, nomination of candidate species and assessment with a view to NRMCC announcing additional WONS species in the later part of 2009.
- A workshop has been held with a risk assessment technical committee to re-examine previous criteria.
- Criteria including invasiveness, impact on social environmental and agricultural assets, current and potential distribution, feasibility of control within the context of the need for national collaboration and effort have been considered.
- A model is now being developed which will enable AWC to call for nominations by jurisdictions with a view to finalising the process early in the 2009/10 financial year.

### **Governance: Adding WoNS to the list of Key Threatening Processes**

**5. We recommend that DEWHA take early action to advise weed management groups of any requirements and procedures that may be preventing nomination of individual WoNS species as Key Threatening Processes.**

#### **AWC response:**

There is no restriction or procedure preventing nomination or assessment of individual weed species as key threatening processes (KTPs) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) is currently assessing two KTPs addressing groups of invasive weeds.

Due to the large number of identified and potential invasive species that could be nominated for assessment, the TSSC has recommended to the Minister that assessing individual weed and vertebrate species as KTPs may not be an efficient way of dealing with these threats. The TSSC noted that there would be greater conservation benefits for Australia's biodiversity at this time by addressing invasive weeds and vertebrate pests at a broad scale. Given this, the TSSC recommended that the impact of weed species and vertebrate pests be considered through the 'Introduction of novel biota and its impact on biodiversity' key threatening process which has been placed on the 2008 Finalised Priority Assessment List. The TSSC is due to complete its assessment of this KTP by 30 September 2010.

One of the first steps in assessing this KTP will be to explore its scope and the effectiveness of the KTP and Threat Abatement Plan tools in addressing the threats at this scale and possible opportunities or methods for assessing and listing the threat.

The TSSC will seek the views of relevant scientific experts and stakeholders about these matters and about the assessment of the KTP. The TSSC would welcome the views of any groups involved in working with Weeds of National Significance.

The WONS program has targeted biodiversity issues which are covered in the strategic plans, and the AWC is not convinced that designating WONS as a KTP will achieve additional outcomes or increase resourcing.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will await the findings of the TSSC review of 'Introduction of novel biota and its impact on biodiversity' key threatening process and will encourage stakeholders to contribute their views to this activity.

### ***Knowledge base: Analysis of costs and benefits of WoNs activities***

**6. We recommend additional attention to analysis of the costs and benefits of management in the revision and updating of strategic plans for each weed.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC recognises the importance of this information and requests jurisdictions to work with Coordinators to collect this data in order to make it available for each weed species.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will incorporate this requirement into the revised TOR and work plans for coordinators.

### ***Knowledge base: Costs of invasive weeds to stakeholders***

**7. We recommend attention to the urgent need for up-to-date information on the costs of invasive weeds to productive and environmental assets and that AWC promote this issue in appropriate Ministerial Councils and policy committees.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC agrees that this is important information and that there are a number of case studies that serve as small scale models and the WoNS National Management Groups will be actively encouraged to assemble cost profiles for

their species. It may prove to be most cost effective to combine species with similar impacts for assessment.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will request the Australian Weeds Research Centre (when it is formed) to consider undertaking this work.

### ***Knowledge base: Impacts on biodiversity***

**8. We recommend that the AWC promote increased effort to understand the impacts of weeds on biodiversity, but we suggest that the distinction drawn between weeds as either environmental or agricultural is generally unhelpful and recommend that these designations be used only in exceptional cases.**

#### **AWC response:**

The AWC agrees with the recommendation and considers that the new Australian Weed Research Centre could fund research to provide a better understanding of the biodiversity impacts. The AWC agrees that the WoNS species should not be considered as either environmental or agricultural weeds but there is a need to understand the impacts and the effects they are having on the various natural resource sectors. It notes that at times, for matters of convenience it has been necessary to segregate the species for resourcing and management purposes.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will request the Australian Weeds Research Centre (when it is formed) to consider undertaking this work.

### ***Knowledge base: Quality and direction of research effort***

**9. We recommend that the AWC take responsibility for promotion of research needs in appropriate national forums including the recently announced Australian Weeds Research Centre.**

#### **AWC response:**

The AWC notes the progress in developing the Weeds Research Centre and will request WoNS National Management Groups to provide advice on research and development gaps for each of their species. The AWC has a policy of encouraging members to present at national fora and participate in research and development policy setting. Most WoNS National Management Groups have a

mechanism in place for gathering research and development information and publicise gaps on their web pages.

### **Key Actions**

- A WoNS research priorities paper has now been submitted to the Australian Weeds Research Centre. The AWC will consider other research opportunities and encourage continued active pursuit of research solutions.

### ***Program management: Enabling, developing and retaining high performing coordinators***

**10. We recommend that the AWC address issues that impinge on the effectiveness of coordinators and ensure that, where necessary, these are resolved in specific terms of reference which ensure that**

- a) National Coordinators have, and are able to fully exercise, a national perspective on weed management priorities that conforms to specific Terms of Reference**
- b) the relevant states (host agencies) recognize that the National Coordinators exercise a national role and that they therefore need to provide additional human and financial resources for add-on activities**
- c) high priority is given to the development of skills required for networking and coordinating and the ability to delegate project management responsibilities**
- d) workloads and working arrangements do not militate against the retention of competent coordinators.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC recognises that WoNS coordinators are project based, non-tenured positions and that may have resulted in a lack of clarity in their role from time to time. The AWC have established a subcommittee to consider refining the terms of reference for coordinator positions to address the concerns of the review.

- a) The AWC considers that clarification of the national nature of the position particularly the requirement to travel and attend conferences and workshops is important. The terms of reference should allow sufficient flexibility to meet any special requirements that host agencies may require. It is also appropriate to introduce model selection criteria and job descriptions.
- b) The AWC agrees that the coordinators exercise national responsibility and notes that host agencies are matching the Australian Government contribution with in kind support and that the wider facilities of host agencies are available to coordinators, including training, graphic design, contributions from other staff and a general environment that enables them to be productive.

- c) The AWC agrees that WoNS coordinators training is a high priority and notes that coordinators have access to host agency staff training and one national training session per annum. The 2007 national training targeted reporting and evaluation with the proposed 2008 training intended to cover the MERI Framework and performance story reporting. The National Weeds Management Facilitator has worked with some coordinators to identify specific training needs which have been met in house or from external providers and these have included project management.

The AWC also recognises that additional orientation/induction training should be available and has implemented a process to provide such training to new appointments within two months of their commencement.

The AWC also agrees that the role of the coordinator is primarily to facilitate the implementation of the national strategy and it important that project management of individual weed projects can be delegated to allow the coordinator to focus on the national coordination of the program.

- d) The AWC recognises that different employment conditions occur in each jurisdiction. The contract conditions for Coordinators and improved job specifications will overcome any concerns. It is expected that workloads will be negotiated during project development and monitored by the Coordinator's line manager.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will develop standard model selection criteria and job descriptions combined with guidelines for hosting arrangements by jurisdictions.
- The AWC will reaffirm hosting arrangements with all jurisdictions in the light of these recommendations.
- The AWC has asked the Australian Government and National Weeds Management Facilitator to conduct orientation training for all new coordinators and to implement ongoing training activities for all coordinators.

### ***Program management: Human resource planning***

**11. We recommend that the AWC and Management Groups develop strategies for the continued high-quality staffing of the Facilitator and Coordinator positions so that operating programs are not compromised, and that membership of National Management Groups be regularly reviewed.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC agrees that strategies should be developed to ensure that high quality staff are attracted and retained. Security of tenure for these positions is critical to the success of the WoNS program and the AWS considers that short term funding arrangements are not conducive to retention of high quality staff. The AWC therefore recommends that consideration be given to a 5 year minimum

cost share arrangement commensurate with the initial review period of the strategy.

The AWC also considers that where high quality staff are employed in delivering a species strategy that may be retired to a watching brief under the proposed tiered approach, that they be retained to initiate the strategic planning for incoming species.

The AWC also agrees that there needs to be strategies to ensure that the composition of the National Management Groups being reviewed biannually or on the occurrence of a vacancy.

### **Key Actions**

- The AWC will be developing a model TOR for management groups which address this recommendation.
- The AWC is seeking a 5 year commitment to the WONS program from jurisdictions in order to provide some certainty of employment to coordinators.

### ***Monitoring and mapping: Improved information products***

**12. We recommend that:**

- a) the Prickle Bushes maps be used as exemplars of what is required for mapping the distribution, spread and management effort of all other WoNS and future maps be produced that show the impact of WoNS funding;**
- b) an achievement-focussed information product for each WoNS be provided to stakeholders on a regular basis.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC recognises that a number of WoNS National Management Groups have developed maps showing both distribution and management actions and will ensure that this is undertaken for all species. It would be beneficial to align the style and content of the WoNS maps to demonstrate achievements as a whole program. These could form the basis of future short summary stakeholder reports.

### **Key Actions**

- Maps have now been produced in a standardised format in light of this recommendation and are available at [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au).
- Publication of an achievement booklet is underway for release mid 2009.

## ***Monitoring and mapping: Collecting and maintaining information on impacts***

**13. We recommend that long term monitoring (5-10 years) of the impacts of management actions be given more prominence in strategic planning and that the AWC increase its commitment to the national data and information infrastructure to ensure that valuable data are properly recorded, managed and made accessible.**

### **AWC response:**

The AWC agrees with the recommendation and believes that the MERI reporting approach combined with the use of the Mapping Core Attributes will contribute strongly to meeting this recommendation.

The AWC also acknowledges that in the absence of a national data system the WoNS Coordinators represent the best source of accurate data on their species. The need for national scale mapping to inform policy and investment decisions is of high importance. The AWC encourages jurisdictions to utilise the coordinator network as a conduit to collate their species data at the national scale.

The AWC notes that the use of BioSIRT is under consideration as a way to significantly improve the ongoing maintenance of national weed distribution datasets.

### **Key Actions**

- Maps have been produced in a standardised format and are available at [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au).
- These maps capture management actions where possible to allow for long term monitoring of the impact of these actions. It is expected that containment lines and eradication zones will change over time as progress is made.
- AWC will continue to actively advocate ongoing updates of the data sets that inform these national maps.
- Publication of an achievement booklet is underway for release mid 2009.

### ***Communications: Access to data***

**14. We recommend that the AWC commission the development of a national weeds portal in collaboration with existing weeds website managers so as to improve access to WoNS and related weeds information.**

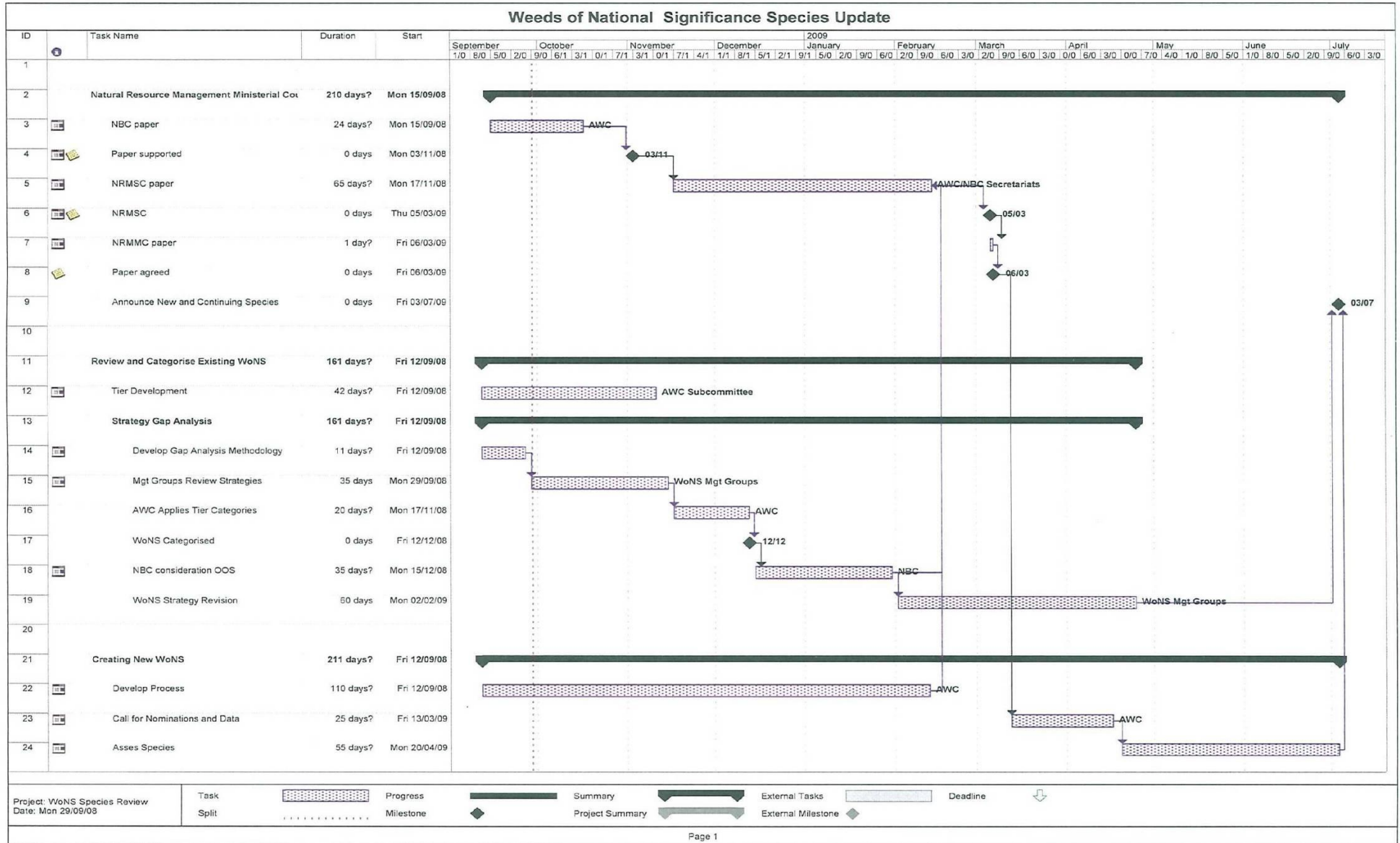
### **AWC response:**

The AWC notes that there is an existing primary web site for housing WoNS information which can be linked to by other sites. The future of national weeds

web sites is likely to be considered by the new Australian Weed Research Centre. However the WoNS internet presence needs to be managed as a whole in an integrated and coordinated manner.

**Key Actions**

- The AWC has revised the Weeds Australia web site to provide detailed information on all WONS in a consistent manner including linking to the Australian Government priorities under Caring for our Country.



<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.8</b>

### NATIONAL SIAM WEED ERADICATION PROGRAM

1. Siam weed has been the subject of a national cost-share eradication program since 1994. The program is managed by Biosecurity Queensland, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. The program is currently in the last year of a three year funding period (2006-2009).
2. Siam weed is dispersed over a control area of 150 hectares (area that is active or contains Siam plants) with an infestation area of 14,000 hectares (area includes the control area plus the prescribed dispersal buffer of 200 metres around the active control areas).
3. The total cost of the program to the end of 2008-09 is projected to be \$4.767 million, plus landholder, local government and other stakeholder expenditure. Expenditure between 1994-95 and 2001-02 was \$1.385 million (\$173,000 per annum). Expenditure between 2002-03 and 2008-09 (proposed) totals \$3.382 million (\$487,000 per annum). During 2007-08, the Queensland Government and other stakeholders (local government, Department of Defence, Ergon Energy and others) provided an additional \$361,000 in operational resources.

#### **Review of Siam Weed Eradication Program**

4. Roger Wickes (Roger Wickes Project Services) and John Burley (Australian Weeds Committee member, Victoria) recently completed a review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program for the Australian Weeds Committee. The reviewers noted that the containment program has been effective over the past five years while the extent of the infestation has been determined, and that this has been consistent with the approach taken by the FAO guidelines for pest eradication programs. However, additional investment is required if eradication of Siam weed is to be the objective.
5. The reviewers are also of the opinion that Australia should not let such a significant weed change the productive and conservation environments in northern Australia. They further recommended that funding agencies provide the extra resources required for a ten-year program of eradication.
6. The reviewers recommended that, if eradication is to be the objective, then the level of resourcing be significantly increased to \$1.35 million a year, with a review in three years to determine if eradication can be achieved in the proposed 10 year timeframe (that is, from inception of the increased funding).
7. They further recommended that if additional funding is not available then a containment program should be immediately mounted at the current level of resourcing.

8. The reviewers are of the opinion that eradication should continue as the goal of the program only if:
- (a) the resources for the program are significantly increased to remove flowering plants before they seed, given the greater number of infestations that have been found;
  - (b) the risk of movement of seed from properties is reduced by an improved compliance program that has legislative support; and
  - (c) the current complex distribution of responsibility is simplified by Biosecurity Queensland taking control of all aspects of the eradication program and by directing work of the various local government and natural resource committees that are involved.
9. An executive summary from the review report is at Annex A and also includes eleven recommendations for improvement of the eradication program.

#### **Cost:Benefit Analysis**

10. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries completed an economic assessment of the Siam Weed Eradication Program. According to Queensland's cost:benefit analysis of the Siam Weed Eradication Program to date, there are benefits to agriculture and the environment (in terms of loss to ecosystem services) of \$4.5 billion, with a benefit:cost ratio (BCR) of 700:1.

#### **Policy review of long term eradication programs**

11. The National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) has endorsed the proposal to continue funding for 2009-10, given that the cost sharing for funding the Siam Weed Eradication Program is lapsing at the end of June 2009 and is subject to consideration as part of the national policy review of long-term eradication programs. Ministerial Council will be provided with advice on this review in November 2009.
12. The cost sharing formula is currently based on an early potential distribution model. To minimise the changes until a decision is made on the implementation of the AusBIOSEC model, and until NBC has reviewed funding arrangements for long term programs, it is proposed to use an updated climate potential distribution model (McCall 2004) for 2009-10 funding. The updated climate model includes adjustments to reflect recent ecological modelling of the potential extent of the weed.
13. NBC has considered the advice of the reviewers of the program and recommends that consideration of continued funding should include a requirement for Biosecurity Queensland to implement the recommendations of the reviewers, in particular on options for long term eradication as the goal of the program, as outlined in paragraph 8.
14. NBC notes advice from Biosecurity Queensland that the proposed eradication plan accepts and incorporates the recommendations of the reviewers and provides for a significant increase in field operational capacity, communication, quarantine/weed spread prevention and research to achieve the objective of eradication.

**RESOLUTIONS**

## 15. Council:

- (a) **NOTED** the findings of the Review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program (2008);
- (b) **ENDORSED**, in principle, the continuation of the Siam Weed Eradication program for 2009-2012, subject to its policy consideration in November 2009 on long term eradication programs and to Biosecurity Queensland implementing recommendations from the Review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program; and
- (c) **ENDORSED** the 2009-2010 proposed budget subject to jurisdictions' budget approval processes, and apportioning of cost sharing, based on an updated Climate potential distribution model (McCall 2004), as follows:

Source	Apportionment		2009-10 \$
	Previous %	New %	
Australian Government	50	50	665,000
Queensland	25	28	372,400
Northern Territory	14	14	186,000
New South Wales	5	2	\$26,600
Western Australia	5	6	\$79,800
Victoria	1	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>1,330,000</b>

**ANNEX A: Review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program – Executive Summary and Recommendations**

## **Annex A: Review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program - Executive Summary and Recommendations**

### **Executive Summary**

This review is the second independent review of the Siam Weed Eradication Program. Siam weed is seen as one of the worst tropical weeds in the world as it can blanket out tropical pasture and agricultural land, compete with rainforests and, if livestock feed on it, they can die from nitrite poisoning.

The national eradication program began when Siam weed was discovered in 1994. A review of this program in 2003 recommended a number of strategies be introduced to better define the extent of the weed, improve communication, better organize stakeholder engagement and provide an increased level of management for the program.

For the current review the reviewers are of the opinion that the past five years have been an effective containment program while the extent of the infestation has been determined.

This is consistent with the approach taken by the FAO guidelines for pest eradication programs where the first step is to contain the pest, ensure its identification, its pathways of introduction, feasibility of eradication and the cost benefit of eradication. While there are a number of recommendations given in this review about improving the management of the control program, most components are now in place and the decision is now about whether to commit the resources needed for eradication or decide to maintain a containment/control program.

Since the delimiting survey, QDPI&F has identified 37 per cent more infestations but they are still in the general locations identified in the 2003 review. The eradication program has reduced the number of infestations in an active control phase by 5.4 per cent since 2003, indicating that eradication with the current methods employed may be possible. The environment in which Siam weed is found (rainforests and steep hills) provides challenges for the field operators to remove the plants but the Departmental officers are confident that they can eradicate the weed in these environments. The weed can be identified by trained staff from the air and from ground based survey. Seed longevity studies have shown that the seed loses viability within 7 years in high rainfall areas, (seed viability is being checked in the drier tropics before being confident in declaring eradication from these areas after 7 years).

It appears that landholders are a major risk to spreading the seed through the movement of livestock, other produce or machinery. Given that there is only limited ability to control the actions of private landholders and that there is a distributed responsibility between local and the state governments in managing weeds it is important that the State Government as the lead authority takes control and, with adequate resources and improved legislative backing, manages the movement of produce, machinery and vehicles from these properties. While the government owned properties seemed to have adequate controls and commitment to eradicate Siam weed, assurance is needed that bush walkers and campers do not move seed as it is suspected they have in the past. This may include prohibiting or limiting access to these areas.

The reviewers are of the opinion that eradication should continue as the goal of the program only if:-

1. the resources for the program are significantly increased to remove flowering plants before they seed, given the greater number of infestations that have been found
2. the risk of movement of seed from properties is reduced by an improved compliance program which has legislative support and
3. the current complex distribution of responsibility simplified by Biosecurity Queensland taking control of all aspects of the eradication program and directing the various local government and natural resource committees that are involved.

Given the significant environmental values of the world heritage listed tropical rainforests at risk, the high loss of cattle production that may occur if the weed was to spread and the potential impact on the horticultural industries, the reviewers are of the opinion that Australia has to mount a full eradication program over the next 10 years. The economic study undertaken by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries shows a significant benefit-cost ratio (at 2 per cent discount rate) for an eradication program of 714:1 compared with a benefit cost ratio for a containment program of 638:1. Both benefit cost ratios are very high but it confirms that eradication is the preferred economic option and should continue to be the aim of the Siam weed program. However if extra resources and attention to the risks of spread of the seed cannot be made then the reviewers are of the opinion that the current containment program needs to continue and control methods such as biological control introduced as a matter of urgency. The reviewers note that there is currently no national cost sharing mechanism for containment programs.

## **Recommendations**

***Recommendation 1: That the resourcing of the eradication program be significantly increased to \$1.35 million annually with a review in three years to determine if eradication can be achieved in the proposed 10 year timeframe (i.e. from inception of the increased funding). If the funding is not available then a containment program should be immediately mounted at the current level of resourcing. Tools such as biological control need to be investigated by the Queensland Government even if eradication progresses over the next three years as a risk management strategy in case eradication fails.***

The reviewers were impressed by the commitment of the staff and the various government agencies and local government to this program. However there are components of the eradication program which could be improved and the probability of success increased by pursuing the following recommendations:

***Recommendation 2: The delimiting survey approach continues to be rigorously applied from the commencement through to eradication and backed up with the comprehensive data base and a community targeted communication program.***

***Recommendation 3: That as a matter of urgency an audit of the hygiene procedures, both for staff and land owners be undertaken by a person trained in plant quarantine risk.***

***Recommendation 4: That an investigation into the movement of the seed by animals is undertaken and protocols developed and implemented to ensure seed is not spread by them.***

***Recommendation 5: That a research program be implemented that investigates methods of destroying seed banks quickly, investigates seed longevity in the low rainfall tropics and also investigates seed dispersal by livestock, water and wind.***

***Recommendation 6: That the program is resourced to allow Biosecurity Queensland to provide operational leadership for local government and others involved in this program.***

***Recommendation 7: That the program develops a strategic eradication plan based on appropriate plant population modelling to demonstrate that the population can be driven to extirpation and to monitor progress in achieving this outcome.***

***Recommendation 8: That the eradication program be kept under review at a senior level within Biosecurity Queensland to ensure a strategic focus and delivery on milestones towards eradication and independently reviewed every three years.***

***Recommendation 9: That the structure of the program be reviewed with the expressed aim to provide more clarity about responsibilities and accountabilities and that the State government through Biosecurity Queensland take overall control and eradication be undertaken by state and local government officers.***

***Recommendation 10: That the Queensland Government put in place compulsory and enforceable weed hygiene procedures to minimize the threat of weed spread.***

***Recommendation 11: That the cost sharing arrangements be adjusted to reflect the recent ecological modelling of the potential extent of the weed.***

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.9</b>

### REVISED STRATEGY FOR THE NATIONAL RESERVE SYSTEM

1. NRMCMC 13 (April 2008) directed the National Reserve System (NRS) Task Group, as a priority, to undertake a review of the 2005 NRS Directions Statement and to provide an updated draft for Council's consideration in November 2008. A consultation draft strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030, known as 'the strategy', was prepared by the NRS Task Group convened under the Natural Resource Policies and Program Committee (NRPPC).
2. NRMCMC 14 (November 2008) agreed to the release of the draft Strategy for consultation with key stakeholders. The Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, released the draft strategy on 25 November 2008 at the Australian Protected Areas Congress and invited interested persons to provide comments by 16 January 2009. A total of 38 submissions were received.
3. Comments on the document have been incorporated where feasible and the revised draft strategy has been clarified and significantly improved. The revised strategy prepared by the NRS Task Group is at [Annex A](#).
4. All jurisdictions have endorsed the strategy through internal consultation processes through the NRS Task Group and NRPPC. Key stakeholders are also now satisfied that the revised strategy eliminates the concerns raised in their submissions and strengthens prospects for accelerated expansion of the NRS.
5. In addressing these issues, the revised strategy provides more detail on Australian Government action to facilitate the development of five-year implementation plans by each jurisdiction by the end of 2009. These implementation plans will address the priority actions in the strategy while responding to regional variations in capacity, opportunities and challenges in delivering the NRS. This approach allows for practical consideration of whole of landscape conservation issues and the improved integration of NRS and natural resource management measures at the bioregional scale. Implementation of the strategy at this scale will also help focus attention on priority bioregions and opportunities for strategic acquisition to the NRS. Where feasible, the work programs of NRS partner organisations may also be linked to the strategy to ensure consistency in the private sector's contribution to NRS delivery.
6. Targets for delivering the NRS have also been tightened and made stronger with respect to the comprehensiveness, representativeness and adequacy. Links to the Convention on Biological Diversity Protected Areas Program of Work in the Australian context are also broadly recognised. Interim targets for 2010-2014 implementation plans are also specified to be consistent, as a minimum, with the Caring for our Country Program National Reserve System outcomes.

7. The revised strategy specifies that all jurisdictions will report on progress towards national targets and priority actions in the strategy every two years. This review will be made publicly available and overall outcomes reported to NRMMC.
8. The strategy acknowledges the legitimate role of NRS partners in the development and review of implementation plans and establishes an NRS partners forum every two years to ensure their formal engagement and participation in NRS delivery.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

9. Council:
  - (a) **AGREED** to endorse *Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030*; and
  - (b) **AGREED** to the public release of *Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030.*

**ANNEX A:** Revised draft: Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030  
*[Annex A is held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.10</b>

### **CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY – A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK**

1. Experience with the first year of implementation of Caring for our Country has highlighted the importance of effective communication and collaboration between the Commonwealth, other jurisdictions and regional communities and the optimisation of investments of Caring for our Country funding and state/territory funding.
2. The Commonwealth announced that it would allocate \$2.25 billion in funding for the first five years of Caring for our Country, over \$700 million of which will be allocated to the regional delivery of the initiative throughout Australia.
3. Caring for our Country Cooperative Agreements for 2009-2013 are currently being negotiated between the Commonwealth and state and territory jurisdictions. Regional investments or state/territory government delivered projects within a jurisdiction will be delivered under these Agreements.
4. In the draft Caring for our Country Agreements, the Commonwealth, states and territories will recognise their mutual interest to improve the condition of Australia's natural resources. The agreements will underpin a partnership approach to natural resource management.
5. The draft agreements acknowledge that while the Commonwealth and the states and territories may have differing priorities for investment, there is a need to ensure that a partnership is developed. The draft agreements also acknowledge that there is a need to communicate and work together where opportunities exist to ensure that investments complement each other, avoid duplication and achieve greater investment outcomes.
6. The draft agreements highlight that the states and the regional bodies play an essential role in assisting the Commonwealth to achieve its national priorities throughout Australia, and that the Commonwealth, states and territories will work in partnership to:
  - (a) encourage linkages between the implementation of the Commonwealth and state/territory priority investments;
  - (b) encourage aligned and complementary investments between Commonwealth and state/territory programs; and
  - (c) ensure that investments are efficiently and effectively delivered.

7. Caring for our Country is a Commonwealth program with all investment decisions the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. While there is no requirement for states and territories to provide matching funding, a collaborative, consultative approach to investment considerations and decisions will ensure that opportunities from complementary funding are realised. In addition, avoiding duplication of effort will result in enhanced outcomes for the total investment effort.
8. The Transitional Agreements in place for the delivery of Caring for our Country in 2008-09 agreed a partnership approach. The new Cooperative Agreements will incorporate learnings from the transition year in order to strengthen the agreements.
9. Some key elements regarding the partnership agreement between jurisdictions under Caring for our Country include:
  - (a) *Broad principles for cooperation:*  
Three principles guiding the cooperative partnership are: mutual benefit through co-operation, collaboration, co-investment and complementary investment; administrative simplicity and efficiency; and maintaining overall historic effort.
  - (b) *Alignment of priorities:*  
The Commonwealth and states and territories will:
    - (i) share information on their respective priorities, investments, knowledge and experience;
    - (ii) seek opportunities for complementary and targeted investment;
    - (iii) establish collaborative partnerships where this will avoid duplication and secure opportunities for integration and multiple outcomes at the landscape scale;
    - (iv) explore opportunities for aligning program delivery;
    - (v) jointly review each year, their respective priorities for investment and identifying potential opportunities for collaboration and joint investment; and
    - (vi) jointly review each year, progress towards program targets and opportunities for refining targets and learning from investment experience.
  - (c) *Consultation on areas for joint investment:*  
A Caring for our Country Co-operative Committee will be established for each jurisdiction. The Committee will provide an opportunity to:
    - (i) share information on respective investment priorities;
    - (ii) discuss individual investments and the impacts of the total sum of investments in the jurisdiction;
    - (iii) consider opportunities for co-investment where investment priorities align;
    - (iv) collaborate on and negotiate projects that target mutual priorities;
    - (v) update or build the necessary knowledge base and secure the knowledge legacy of the initiative; and
    - (vi) identify opportunities to collaborate on science and research.

- (d) *Investment approval*  
 The Commonwealth's responsibilities and priorities include: assessing proposals and making decisions on investment of Commonwealth funding; and approving all Caring for our Country investments.  
 The state/territory's responsibilities and priorities include: assessing proposals and making decisions on investments of state/territory funding; and approving all investments to be funded from state/territory resources.
- (e) *Aligned and rationalised reporting requirements*
- (i) Opportunities to simplify the administrative arrangements for regional investment will be identified;
  - (ii) The Commonwealth will use the annual Caring for our Country business plan as a single point of access to the majority of funding available for investment;
  - (iii) Parties will provide tools, templates and user-friendly guidelines to meet Caring for our Country reporting and evaluation requirements;
  - (iv) Parties will adopt practices that allow consistent reporting at multiple scales (national, state/territory, regional, project).
- (f) *Sharing of performance data*  
 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements will involve:
- (i) providing relevant data and information for reporting and evaluation at point of investment;
  - (ii) promoting consistency in monitoring and reporting program performance; and
  - (iii) Commonwealth preparation of an annual Caring for our Country Report Card.
- (g) *Dispute resolution*  
 Parties to the agreement will try to resolve any dispute through direct negotiation. If the dispute remains unresolved, it will be referred to the Commonwealth and state or territory Minister for resolution.

## RESOLUTIONS

### 10. Council:

- (a) **ENDORSED** the need for communication and collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions in implementation of Caring for our Country;
- (b) **NOTED** the key elements for collaboration and partnership under Caring for our Country as outlined in Paragraph 10;
- (c) **AGREED** that opportunities for cooperation and sharing priorities continue to be pursued by jurisdictions, including through the Caring for our Country Cooperative Agreements, for 2009-2013; and
- (d) **NOTED** that jurisdictions will consider the value of inviting representatives of local government associations to participate in the Caring for our Country Co-operative Committee to be established in each state and territory.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.11</b>

**CLIMATE CHANGE IN PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, NRM AND BIODIVERSITY  
– FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

1. NRMMC 14 (November 2008) agreed that the proposed 2009-2012 climate change priority actions be progressed, but that three of the actions required further development and that agreement would be sought on implementation and funding arrangements at the April 2009 meeting of Council.

**2009-12 Climate Change Future Directions – Finalisation of three outstanding actions**

2. The priority action: *Preliminary assessment of the vulnerability of Australian forests and plantations to the impacts of climate change* has now been finalised with the scope of the action remaining as that originally provided to NRMMC 14. The Australian Government (Climate Change Portfolio) is meeting 100 per cent of the direct funding requirements with in-kind contributions from NSW and Victoria. The assessment is to be undertaken by the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Centre. A Steering Group including representatives of at least the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of Climate Change, the Forestry and Forest Products Committee (an Advisory Committee to PISC), CSIRO and WA and Victoria will monitor the progress of the assessment.
3. Following NRMMC 14 consideration, the priority action: *Adaptation of fisheries and fisheries management to climate change in south-eastern Australia* was referred to the Marine and Coastal Committee (MACC) for further consideration given the then funding shortfall.
4. The lead agency for the *Adaptation of fisheries and fisheries management to climate change in south-eastern Australia* priority action is the Victorian Department of Primary Industries. The department has advised that while it has partners with promises of 92 per cent of the required funding for the developmental phase of the program, no funding commitments have been made by jurisdictions for the implementation phase. The department highlighted the importance of establishing a strategic framework for implementing such actions as they relate to the National Climate Change and Fisheries Action Plan and have sent a proposed framework to the Australian Fisheries Management Forum for consideration.
5. Finalisation of the priority action: *Review of the effectiveness of policy tools to determine to what extent they are encouraging or inhibiting biodiversity approaches in the face of climate change* remains outstanding. It is suggested that once finalised, an agreed way forward is cleared through the Natural Resource

Policies and Programs Committee (NRPPC) and NRMSC for out-of-session consideration by Council.

6. The scope of this project notes that it will form an important part of government responses to the revised National Biodiversity Strategy and the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment. It goes on to note that this initial project could include or form the basis for additional work under the broad project title, and that work could also be done on the possibilities of developing a market specifically aimed at conserving biodiversity.
7. Given the close relationship of this activity to both the National Biodiversity Strategy and the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment, and the very recent finalisation of the latter document (NRMMC resolution 15.12), it has not been possible to progress an agreed way forward since NRMMC 14. A rigorous consideration of the initial findings of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment will assist in ensuring that a finalised action in this regard will have both an appropriate scope, and the capacity to achieve its aims.

#### **Future role of the Climate Change in Agriculture and NRM Working Group**

8. NRPPC 20 (February 2009) agreed that given the recent changes in institutional arrangements to address climate change across jurisdictions, it was timely that the role of the Climate Change in Agriculture and NRM Working Group (CLAN) and future possibilities be examined at its May 2009 meeting. This would ensure that institutional changes and other developments, since CLAN's inception in 2004, are accounted for and that avenues of collaboration and consultation between jurisdictions on the impacts of climate change on natural resources and agriculture remain appropriate.

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

9. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** that of the three priority actions that were yet to be finalised prior to its previous meeting, the *Vulnerability assessment of Australia's forests and plantations* and the *Adaptation of fisheries and fisheries management in south-eastern Australia* projects have now been settled;
  - (b) **ENDORSED** the agreed scope and resourcing of the *Vulnerability assessment of Australia's forests and plantations* and the *development phase of the Adaptation of fisheries and fisheries management in south-eastern Australia* priority actions as originally advised in November 2008;
  - (c) **NOTED** that agreement will be sought on implementation and funding for the implementation phase of the *Adaptation of fisheries and fisheries management in south-eastern Australia* out of session;
  - (d) **NOTED** that the timing of its consideration of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment has significant implications for the progression of the *Review of the effectiveness of biodiversity policy tools* priority action;
  - (e) **AGREED** that the scope and resourcing of the *Review of the effectiveness of biodiversity policy tools* priority action be further considered by jurisdictions with reference to the findings of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment

and the revised National Biodiversity Strategy, with final resolution of this action to be agreed by NRMCM out of session; and

- (f) **NOTED** Standing Committee has agreed that the Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee consider the future role of the CLAN Working Group, given the recent changes in institutional arrangements to address climate change across jurisdictions.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.12</b>

**STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF THE VULNERABILITY OF AUSTRALIA'S  
BIODIVERSITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

1. The *Strategic Assessment Of The Vulnerability Of Australia's Biodiversity To Climate Change* (Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment) was a 2006 climate change priority action endorsed by NRMMC 11 (November 2006). It considers the implications of climate change for the conservation of Australia's biodiversity across terrestrial, freshwater and marine systems.
2. The Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment has been undertaken by the independent Biodiversity and Climate Change Expert Advisory Group. This group of prominent Australian scientists, chaired by Professor Will Steffen (ANU), has driven the shape and focus of the assessment and is the author of the products (Membership of the Advisory Group is at [Annex A](#)).
3. The Australian Government Department of Climate Change has, in consultation with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and state and territory jurisdictions, provided a steering role for the project.
4. In undertaking the assessment, the Expert Advisory Group has drawn on relevant climate change projects, some of which are elements of the *National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan* (2004-2007). A number of workshops were also held involving researchers, policy makers and environmental non-government organisations. The Expert Advisory Group also advised on and has drawn from results of an associated Honours Scholarship Program.
5. Close to final drafts of the Expert Advisory Group's products of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment are attached:
  - (a) a Summary for Policy Makers ([Annex B](#));
  - (b) a Technical Synthesis ([Annex C](#)); and
  - (c) a more detailed main report ([Annex D](#)).
6. All jurisdictions, other relevant Australian Government Departments and CSIRO have, through the CLAN Working Group, been engaged and consulted throughout the development of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment products. The products have been through an external scientific review process and are now ready for release.
7. It is intended that, once finalised and once publication is agreed to by NRMMC, all three Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment products will be made available in pre-publication form on the NRMMC and Department of Climate Change websites.

CSIRO Publishing will publish the main report as soon as possible after the publication has been approved by NRMCC.

8. The Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment products canvass the issues facing biodiversity managers as they grapple with the implications of climate change. The assessment does not provide a detailed consideration of climate change impacts at the species, ecosystem, biome or ecosystem processes levels. However, the assessment discusses the range of changes in management approaches that may be required to enhance the resilience of natural ecosystems in a changing climate.

#### **Major issues identified in the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment**

9. The Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the challenges climate change brings to Australian biodiversity conservation management.
10. The Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment clearly shows that Australia faces an enormous and complex challenge if it is to conserve already stressed biodiversity with the added, increasing threat of climate change. Even were rapid emissions mitigation to occur, a significant level of inevitable climate change is already entrained in the global system. It is vital that Australia moves quickly to develop and implement biodiversity and climate change adaptation plans.
11. The Expert Advisory Group emphasises that a ‘business as usual’ approach to biodiversity conservation planning and management will almost surely fall short of meeting the challenge presented by climate change.
12. A number of challenging issues are identified in the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment:
  - (a) There are observed changes at the species and ecosystem level (for example, coral reef bleaching) in Australia, which are consistent with a climate change ‘signal’;
  - (b) Areas of significant iconic or biological diversity values including the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland Wet Tropics, SW Western Australia, Kakadu wetlands and the Australian Alps are identified as highly vulnerable to climate change;
  - (c) Climate change will both exacerbate existing stressors (for example, fire, invasive species) as well as add additional stresses through changing climatic conditions (for example, reduced water availability);
  - (d) A more variable and increasingly different climate will drive change in natural systems. Biodiversity managers should focus on maintaining ecosystem function and regional biodiversity in these increasingly dynamic systems;
  - (e) Management approaches that seek to maintain the status quo with respect to species distribution and abundance that reflect past climatic conditions will restrict the flexibility needed for climate change adaptation;
  - (f) Implementing effective adaptation approaches for natural systems will be challenging because of the rapidity and magnitude of climate change, coupled

with the high vulnerability of natural systems to such change, and the challenges associated with developing the required management flexibility and pragmatism;

- (g) Because of variations in both biodiversity and climate change in different parts of the country, a more systematic regional approach to biodiversity conservation can build on existing and projected socio-economic trends characteristic of particular regions as a platform for improving biodiversity outcomes;
- (h) Adaptation responses will need to go beyond on-ground management activities and include reorientation of policy and legislative frameworks and of institutional roles and responsibilities; and
- (i) Managing public and sectoral expectations and resolving conflicts, as well as actively building public appreciation of and support for biodiversity, are challenging and important aspects of developing cost-effective adaptation responses.

13. The key messages from the Summary for Policy Makers include:

**Reform our management of biodiversity** We need to adapt the way we manage biodiversity to meet existing and new threats – some existing policy and management tools remain effective, others need a major rethink, and new approaches need to be developed in order to enhance the resilience of our ecosystems.

**Strengthen the national commitment to conserve Australia’s biodiversity** Climate change has radical implications for how we think about conservation. We need wide public discussion to agree on a new national vision for Australia’s biodiversity and on the resources and institutions needed to implement it.

**Invest in our life support system**

We are pushing the limits of our natural life support system. Our environment has suffered low levels of capital reinvestment for decades. We must renew public and private investment in this capital.

**Build innovative and flexible governance systems**

Our current governance arrangements for conserving biodiversity are not designed to deal with the challenges of climate change. We need to build agile and innovative structures and approaches.

**Meet the mitigation challenge**

Australia’s biodiversity has only so much capacity to adapt to climate change, and we are approaching that limit. Therefore, strong emissions mitigation action globally and in Australia is vital – but this must be carried out in ways that deliver both adaptation and mitigation benefits.

More details on each of these can be found on page 17 of the Summary for Policy Makers ([Annex B](#)).

### **Drawing on the biodiversity vulnerability assessment findings**

14. Conclusions of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment are expected to be an important reference as the project and activities set out in the proposed NRMCC 2009-2012 Climate Change Priority Actions are taken forward. In particular, the scoping of the proposed review of the *National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan* should consider these conclusions.
15. Insights from the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment have already informed the preparation of the draft revised *National Biodiversity Strategy*. The draft revised strategy identifies rapid climate change as a critical threat to biodiversity conservation. In recognising that climate change is one of the major challenges facing Australia biodiversity conservation planners and managers, the draft revised strategy incorporates activities to enhance the management of climate risk to Australia's biodiversity in addition to a range of other threatening processes. This policy document supports directions in climate change adaptation policy and it will be critical that other key biodiversity policies follow suit.
16. The Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment will also inform the development of some of activities identified in the COAG *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework*, for example the National Adaptation Research Plans for terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

17. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** the work of the independent Biodiversity and Climate Change Expert Advisory Group (Expert Advisory Group) on the *Strategic Assessment of the Vulnerability of Australia's Biodiversity to Climate Change* (Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment) and status of the preparation of three products (a main report, a technical synthesis and a summary for policy makers);
  - (b) **ACKNOWLEDGED** the key messages and the challenges they raise for policy makers;
  - (c) **AGREED** to the publication of the reports from the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment;
  - (d) **NOTED** that the biodiversity and climate change activities identified in the proposed NRMCC 2009-2012 climate change priorities address a number of key issues identified through the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment; and
  - (e) **DIRECTED** that advice be provided by Standing Committee as to how the findings of this report should be further integrated into relevant policy agendas being pursued within the Council, including its intersection with the draft National Biodiversity Strategy that is currently out for public comment.

**ANNEX A:** Expert Advisory Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity – Membership

**ANNEX B:** Australian Biodiversity and Climate Change – Summary for Policy Makers (draft)

**ANNEX C:** Australian Biodiversity and Climate Change – Technical Synthesis (draft)

**ANNEX D:** Australian Biodiversity and Climate Change – Main Report (draft)

*[Annexes B-D are held by the Secretariat]*

## *Expert Advisory Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity*

### **Membership**

Professor Will Steffen, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Australian National University (Chair)

Dr Andrew Burbidge, Research Fellow, Wildlife Research Centre, Dept Environment and Conservation and private Consulting Conservation Biologist.

Associate Professor Lesley Hughes, Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University

Professor Roger Kitching, Professor of Ecology, Centre for Innovative Conservation Strategies, Griffith University

Professor David Lindenmayer, the Fenner School for the Environment and Society, Australian National University

Professor Warren Musgrave, Consulting Economist and Emeritus Professor, University of New England, Distinguished Fellow of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society.

Dr Mark Stafford Smith, Research Scientist, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and Research Fellow, Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Other

### **Other:**

Professor Patricia Werner, the Fenner School, Australian National University (writer)

Secretariat: Department of Climate Change

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.13</b>

### DRAFT REVISED NATIONAL KOALA CONSERVATION STRATEGY

1. NRMMC 11 (November 2006) agreed to review the 1998 National Koala Conservation Strategy.
2. The review is being overseen by a Steering Committee, chaired by the Australian Government and comprising representatives from the koala's key range states (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia) and the Australian Koala Foundation.
3. As part of the review, the Australian Government engaged a consultant, Parsons Brinckerhoff Pty Ltd, to evaluate progress in implementing the objectives of the 1998 strategy and to provide recommendations for updating and improving the strategy. To determine the effectiveness of the strategy, Parsons Brinckerhoff Pty Ltd conducted interviews with governments, scientists and people with relevant expertise, and other responsible parties as designated by the strategy. Written submissions were received from conservation groups and other interested stakeholders.
4. The consultant's final report *Review of progress in implementing the 1998 National Koala Conservation Strategy* is on the DEWHA website at:  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/koala-strategy/index.html>
5. Under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, the koala is listed as vulnerable in the south-east Queensland Bioregion, and least concern (common) elsewhere in the state. In New South Wales, the koala is listed as vulnerable; however, the 'Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens' and the 'Pittwater Local Government Area' populations are listed as endangered under the New South Wales *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. The koala was listed as rare under the South Australian *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*; however, it was delisted in 2008. The koala is not listed under the Australian Capital Territory *Nature Conservation Act 1980* or the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
6. The koala has been placed on the Commonwealth's Finalised Priority Assessment List for the assessment period commencing 1 October 2008. It will be assessed by 30 September 2010 for possible listing as a threatened species under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
7. The consultant's report concludes that the strategy is a good framework for the conservation and management of koalas but that, due to a lack of implementation, it has not been effective in achieving its goal of maintaining viable populations of

koalas across their natural range. It notes that the Australian and state governments had not adequately provided the recognition, promotion, funding and leadership necessary to ensure that the objectives of the strategy were met.

8. Part 5 of the report recommends a number of changes to the strategy. Many stakeholders considered the strategy was best driven at the national level and, whilst the states are largely responsible for its implementation, it recommends that the Australian Government lead in coordinating implementation of the strategy.
9. A draft *National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014* is at Annex A. The strategy incorporates an implementation plan to address the issues raised in the report. The implementation plan, which is an Appendix to the strategy, includes clear, realistic actions with targets and timeframes. The draft strategy now clearly articulates measurable outcomes and will incorporate specific performance indicators. A reporting framework will ensure regular updates to NRMCC on progress. The implementation plan is intended to provide direction to stakeholders in meeting objectives under the strategy, and also provides for government accountability. A key feature of implementation would be regular engagement with stakeholders such as researchers, local governments, conservation groups and developers. It is proposed that a cross-jurisdictional group would oversee the strategy's implementation.
10. One of the outcomes of the NRPPC 20 (February 2009) regarding the draft koala strategy was a request that the Steering Committee clarify the funding breakdown in the strategy. The Steering Committee had previously agreed that costings should not be included in the draft to go out to public consultation. However, due to the request from NRPPC, the Australian Government prepared some costings separately to the draft strategy.
11. The costings were provided to the NRMSC 17 (March 2009) as an annex to the agenda paper, but one member of the NRMSC (Qld) had reservations about the costings and requested further detail be provided before committing to public consultation on the strategy. As per resolution (c) below, further work on the costings, along with the results of the public consultation, will be presented for consideration at the next Council meeting in November 2009.
12. Once NRMSC agrees out-of-session, it is intended that the draft strategy be made available for public exhibition and comment for approximately two months. The Australian Government will also coordinate targeted consultation with key stakeholders including state and local governments, conservation groups, koala carer groups, researchers, zoos, developers and indigenous groups, as part of the public consultation process.
13. Following public consultation and further revision, the draft strategy will be presented to NRMSC in September 2009, and the final draft of the revised strategy to NRMCC for endorsement in November 2009.
14. A majority of the Steering Committee supports the current progress draft, noting that further drafting is required in some areas. NRPPC 20 (February 2009) noted that one member of the Steering Committee (the Australian Koala Foundation) dissented from this view, making the following minority statement that represents its own viewpoint:

*'While the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) supports the overall principle of developing a National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy, it does not support the progress draft Strategy in its current form. There are sound elements in the progress draft, but the AKF has fundamental concerns about several areas, including:*

- (a) The structure and composition of the proposed Implementation Team (section 2.1) is not clear enough at present.
 
  - i. Prior to public consultation, the structure and names of the Implementation Team need to be identified and approved by all Steering Committee members.*
  - ii. The role of the NKCS Steering Committee and its future needs to be clearly articulated by the Federal Government.**
- (b) The descriptions of the current state of action in Queensland (section 4.3) is factually incorrect and should recognise the failure of current strategies and the inadequacy of the new measures announced in late 2008.*
- (c) The descriptions of koala populations in some parts of Victoria (particularly Snake Island) is factually incorrect and does not reflect the variety of pressures causing defoliation.*
- (d) Any maps of koala distribution for the Strategy document need to be sighted and approved by all Steering Committee members.*
- (e) In relation to the content of section 5.4 (Population) referring to the assessment of the koala as a threatened species under the EPBC Act, the names of any koala experts consulted need to be identified and approved by all Steering Committee members.*
- (f) The document cannot go on public consultation in this disorganised state.'*

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### 15. Council:

- (a) ENDORSED**, in-principle, the direction of the draft revised National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy (Annex A);
- (b) AGREED** that the strategy should be released for public comment in its present draft form;
- (c) AGREED** that the strategy should be revised following public consultation, and presented, along with the results of the public consultation and fully costed actions, for consideration at the next Council meeting in November 2009; and
- (d) AGREED** that the revised implementation plan should be brought back to Standing Committee for approval.

**ANNEX A:** Draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014  
*[Annex is held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.14</b>

**REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT  
AND MONITORING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIVE VEGETATION – PROGRESS  
REPORT**

1. The Native Vegetation Framework is a high level strategic document for native vegetation management in Australia. The Framework was first agreed by the former Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council in 1999 and adopted and republished by NRMMC 1 (August 2001).
2. NRMMC 6 (April 2004) directed NRMSC to review and update the Native Vegetation Framework, and at the end of 2004 the Natural Resources Policies and Programs Committee (NRPPC) established a multi-jurisdictional Native Vegetation Framework Review Task Group (Task Group). The Task Group worked to produce a draft revised Native Vegetation Framework. By 2006 a revised framework had been drafted but jurisdictions did not reach agreement on its content and the Task Group did not meet after July 2006.
3. NRMMC 13 (April 2008) confirmed the importance of the Native Vegetation Framework as the national policy document for achieving a reversal in the long-term decline of Australia's native vegetation and an improvement in the condition of existing native vegetation. Also at this meeting, Council directed NRMSC to finalise the review of the Native Vegetation Framework, taking into account the review of the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity* (National Biodiversity Strategy), and to report to Council in 2009.
4. Following that decision a Review Task Group was reconvened and commenced work in August 2008.
5. The Native Vegetation Framework has been an important driver for the development of native vegetation management policy and legislation in all jurisdictions. In 2005 the NRMMC Biodiversity Decline Working Group report identified the three major threats to biodiversity as: climate change, invasive species and loss of habitat. The conservation of native vegetation plays a critical part in Australia's management of these threats. A nationally agreed policy framework will be central to ensuring a harmonised and collaborative approach.
6. The 2006 draft revised Native Vegetation Framework has required substantial reworking to bring it up to date with policy developments over the previous two years. The Task Group has made significant progress towards a new national policy framework that will guide the ecologically sustainable management of Australia's native vegetation for landscape scale resilience and address the increasing challenges of climate change and landscape scale approaches to vegetation management.

7. The Task Group is also considering actions under the Native Vegetation Framework that provide opportunities to optimise benefits for native vegetation through measures that complement new emerging markets such as the carbon market.
8. While noting that the revised Native Vegetation Framework is not yet finalised, the framework's draft vision is that native vegetation across Australia's landscape is managed in an ecologically sustainable way in recognition of its environmental, cultural, spiritual, social and economic values in a changing climate. The framework identifies five specific goals to meet this vision. The draft descriptions of these goals are:
  - Goal 1 – Maintain and improve the condition of native vegetation.
  - Goal 2 – Increase the extent of native vegetation to build landscape scale resilience.
  - Goal 3 – Maximise the native vegetation benefits of carbon markets.
  - Goal 4 – Build capacity to understand, value and manage native vegetation.
  - Goal 5 – Foster the engagement of Indigenous peoples in management of native vegetation through respect, recognition of traditional knowledge, rights and aspirations.
9. The entire draft framework, including the goals, is still under active discussion and refinement by the Task Group.
10. It is anticipated the draft revised Native Vegetation Framework will go out for internal consultation within jurisdictions in May 2009 and an updated version will be presented to NRMSC in September 2009 and, if required, Council in November 2009, for endorsement for targeted stakeholder consultation. The current review timeline is at Annex A.

## RESOLUTION

11. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** the progress, key issues and future steps in the review of the *National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation* (Native Vegetation Framework).

**ANNEX A:** Timeline for the review of the Native Vegetation Framework

## ANNEX A

**Timeline for the review of the Native Vegetation Framework**

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Date</i>
NVF Task Group Meeting 15	Meeting to consider revised Native Vegetation Framework (NVF)	28 January 2009, Canberra
NVF Task Group Meeting 16	Review NVF draft	24 February 2009, Melbourne
NVF Task Group Meeting 17	Review NVF draft	26 March 2009, Canberra
	Drafting day with representatives of Indigenous peoples	3 April 2009, Canberra
NVF Task Group Meeting 18	NVF Task Group to discuss revised draft NVF	29 April 2009, Sydney
NRPPC 21	NRPPC progress report on the revised NVF	15 May 2009
NVF Task Group OOS	NVF Task Group to endorse draft revised NVF prior to going out for internal jurisdictional consultation.	20 May 2009
	Internal jurisdictional consultation.	20 May to 23 June 2009
NRMMC 15	NRMMC 15 to report on progress, key issues and future steps in the review of the NVF	21 May 2009
	NVF Task Group members email the Secretariat their jurisdiction's agreed response	30 June 2009
	Secretariat to incorporate jurisdictional comments.	July 2009
NVF Task Group Meeting 19	NVF Task Group to discuss incorporation of jurisdictional comments	15 July 2009, Canberra
NVF Task Group Meeting 20	Endorse revised NVF prior to NRMSC	August 2009, Canberra (date TBA)
NRPPC OOS	NRPPC OOS agreement to the revised NVF going to NRMSC for endorsement for targeted stakeholder consultation	
NRMSC 18	NRMSC endorses draft NVF for targeted stakeholder consultation (or refers to NRMMC)	25 September 2009
NRMMC 16	Note or, if required, endorse draft NVF for targeted stakeholder consultation	6 November 2009
	Undertake targeted stakeholder consultation with each jurisdiction.	November 2009 to January 2010
	Revision of the NVF following targeted stakeholder consultation.-	February 2010
NVF Task Group Meeting 21	Agree to the revised NVF following consultations	Late February 2010
NRPPC OOS	NRPPC (out of session) agreement of final NVF going to NRMMC (via NRMSC) for endorsement	March 2010
NRMSC 19 OOS	NRMSC (out of session) agreement of final NVF going to NRMMC for endorsement	March 2010
NRMMC 17	NRMMC endorses the final NVF	April 2010
	Design, printing and public distribution of NVF	May 2010

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.15</b>

## GEOPARKS

1. An announcement of the declaration of the listing of Kanawinka as a Geopark appeared on the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network website on 1 July 2008. Australia was listed on the website as a Member of the Network. The Kanawinka Geopark covers an area of about 23,000 square kilometers and encompasses volcanic sites in the Western District of Victoria and in south-eastern South Australia (see Kanawinka Geopark map at [Annex A](#)).
2. The implications of this UNESCO listing, unsupported by an international convention, needs to be considered by all jurisdictions to formulate an Australian governments' position on the geopark concept in Australia. Australia takes its international obligations and commitments seriously. A decision to commit to establishing and protecting geoparks, in addition to our existing World Heritage Areas, National Heritage places, national parks and other protected areas, cannot be made lightly and requires research and extensive consultation.
3. The Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) considered this matter on 7 November 2008 and Ministers voiced concern with the announcement by UNESCO to establish the Kanawinka Geopark without the formal endorsement of the Australian Government. As the management and other implications of geopark listings are potentially significant, such actions were seen to require careful prior consideration by all jurisdictions. Ministers requested officials to provide further advice on the implications of geoparks to enable a national position to be developed on this concept and its application in Australia, and, in particular, requested engagement with NRMSC and NRMMC to achieve this. A report back to the EPHC, via EPHSC, including advice from the NRMMC, is expected for EPHC's late 2009 meeting.
4. For further background detail see [Annex B](#).
5. The UNESCO declaration of Kanawinka as Australia's first geopark occurred despite a request that UNESCO await Australian Government endorsement. It is noted that the UNESCO Guidelines do not require such consent.
6. There is not yet a national position on geoparks.
7. The UNESCO Guidelines for Geoparks and a Draft Australian Geoparks Convention prepared by the Australian Geopark Network do not provide clarity for governments to protect and manage this and other proposed Australian geoparks. It is understood that there may be up to a further five geopark

applications under development in Australia (Source: Letter J McKnight to DEWR, 16 October 2007).

8. The Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP has made a commitment to consult with states and territories on the UNESCO Geoparks concept in Australia at the November EPHC meeting.
9. The geopark concept has implications for geotourism, sustainable tourism, regional development, mining, intra state and inter-state planning, and the protection and management of geoheritage (see, for example, news article at [Annex C](#)).
10. Considerable resources could be required to support Australia's involvement in geoparks.

## RESOLUTIONS

11. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** with concern that the Kanawinka Geopark was announced by UNESCO without formal endorsement by the Australian Government;
  - (b) **NOTED** that the management and other implications of geoparks listings are potentially significant and require careful prior consideration by all jurisdictions;
  - (c) **AGREED** to fully consider the implications of geoparks and refer this matter to NRMSC to advise Council out of session; and
  - (d) **AGREED** to provide its advice out-of-session to the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council (for their late 2009 meeting), once it has received advice from NRMSC, so that it informs the development of an agreed national position on this concept and its application in Australia, taking into account similar issues relating to biospheres.

**ANNEX A:** Kanawinka Geopark Map

**ANNEX B:** Kanawinka Geopark background detail

**ANNEX C:** 'Crunch Time' article *Warrnambool Standard*, 28 July 2008

*[Annexes A-C are held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.16</b>

**ADVANCING INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION IN PI AND NRM –  
EMPLOYMENT: KEY ACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

1. NRMSC 17/PISC 16 (March 2009):

- (b) REQUESTED the working group to develop a directional paper that clearly articulates the key actions and process for taking the action plan forward to COAG, to be cleared out of session by PISC/NRMSC:

AGREED to the draft Council agenda paper on the issue, which includes the following recommendations:

‘That Council:

- (a) ENDORSES the draft paper Invest: An action plan to increase the participation of Indigenous people in natural resource management and primary industries across Australia;
- (b) AGREES to forward the action plan to COAG for consideration; and
- (c) RECOMMENDS the establishment of a taskforce to oversee any further development of the action plan and its implementation.’
2. Following NRMSC 17, the Working Group for Advancing Reconciliation in PI and NRM (working group) reviewed the strategy in light of broader initiatives on Indigenous employment.
3. The working group considered that the initiative could be better integrated into the COAG ‘Closing the Gap process’. Subsequent to NRMSC 17/PISC 16, the working group made amendments to the draft Ministerial Council paper on the basis that a more appropriate pathway for progressing this work for consideration within the COAG ‘Closing the Gap’ reform agenda is through the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee for Indigenous Economic Development.
4. Ministerial Councils can also advise COAG on the considerable Indigenous employment and economic development potential in NRM and PI through a letter from the Ministerial Council Chairs to the Prime Minister. Indigenous people in paid work are proportionately represented in primary industries. No data is available on Indigenous employment in natural resource management. Indigenous people can readily be employed in these sectors, more so perhaps than other sectors, particularly where other positions require advanced tertiary training. Should jurisdictions agree,

these sectors have the potential to assist in addressing the Closing the Gap Strategy by employing proportionately more Indigenous people.

5. The letter should outline the steps that are being taken to progress this work including:
  - work on the implementation plan and the process to link with the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee for Indigenous Economic Development for consideration within the existing COAG ‘Closing the Gap’ process
  - work by jurisdictions to identify the most relevant Indigenous NRM and PI employment and economic development opportunities
  - opportunities that refocussed procurement provisions can provide for increased Indigenous employment and business through NRM and PI
  - opportunities and pathways for catalytic funding for the salary component of positions.
6. Jurisdictions may consider proposing to the Commonwealth a joint strategy for enhancing Indigenous employment within these sectors and to seek funding to achieve these ends.
7. Research will be required to scope the sectors’ capacity to absorb Indigenous employment and the resources necessary to achieve this end. Any approach to jurisdictions on this issue should include an in-principle request for resources to appropriately size the extent to which the sectors can advance the Closing the Gap Strategy.
8. All working group members have agreed to changes to the Ministerial Agenda Paper, and the Invest Action Plan. They also agree to withhold the Invest Action Plan and Directions paper from COAG until Council hears back from COAG.

## RESOLUTIONS

9. Council:
  - (a) **NOTED** that the natural resource management (NRM) sector and primary industries (PI) offer much potential for the development of widespread Indigenous employment, especially in rural and remote Australia;
  - (b) **ENDORSED** the principle that the primary industry and natural resource management sectors seek to exceed proportionally representative levels of Indigenous employment in their respective sectors;
  - (c) **NOTED** the range of strategies that could be deployed to enhance Indigenous employment, as outlined in the Invest Action Plan (Annex A) and the Directions Paper (Annex B);
  - (d) **AGREED** to write to the Prime Minister to advise COAG of the sectors’ capacity to exceed proportionally representative employment in their

respective sectors, as outlined in the Invest Action Plan, subject to the Commonwealth, State and Territories being able to identify and negotiate appropriate funds in tight financial times; and

- (e) **AGREED** to withhold release of the Invest Action Plan and Directions Paper to COAG until advised by the Prime Minister of COAG's intentions.

**ANNEX A:** Invest Action Plan: An action plan to increase the participation of Indigenous people in natural resource management and primary industries

**ANNEX B:** Invest Directional Paper

# **INVEST ACTION PLAN**

**An action plan to increase the participation of Indigenous people in natural resource management and primary industries.**

1 April 2009

## Introduction

The Australian Government has committed to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment outcomes by 2020<sup>1</sup>. This target was set in the knowledge that assisting Indigenous Australians to secure gainful, long-term employment will be a cornerstone in any attempt to seriously address the persistent poverty issues in Indigenous communities<sup>2</sup>.

The natural resource management (NRM) sector and primary industries (PI) have the potential for the development of widespread Indigenous employment, especially in rural and remote Australia (particularly where these opportunities exist close to or within community lands). Both NRM and PI can demonstrate strong employment outcomes delivered through Indigenous engagement programs. The benefits generated include turning the notion of welfare dependency to income independence and wealth creation, improvement of health factors, and building self-esteem and futures for Indigenous people.

This action plan provides an analysis of the current situation to inform future activity and program development.

## Background

Historically, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) has addressed some of the employment development needs of Indigenous people in rural and remote Australia. Many of its participants have moved a step closer to job readiness than might otherwise have been the case. CDEP participants have been the core Indigenous employment source for NRM and PI. CDEP Participants working in NRM have undertaken a wide range of training and completed multiple qualifications. They have also been involved in many short-term on ground works projects. Nonetheless, many individuals have been in CDEP for years but have not had the opportunity to put their skills and knowledge to use in full time sustainable work. Many CDEP participants have developed a work ethic and expressed an opportunity to put their skills to use, however, this will be dependent on the type of employment opportunities.

Indigenous communities across Australia have expressed a keen interest in the long-term sustainability of land and sea country. They have expressed a strong desire to be involved in managing natural and cultural landscapes, and many communities are interested in better understanding the enterprise opportunities based around natural resources.

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<sup>1</sup> O'Connor B (Minister for Employment Participation) (2008). *Reform of Employment Services in Australia: Speech*. House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, 2 September 2008 <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/AllReleases/2008/September/ReformofEmploymentServicesinAustralia.htm> (accessed 16 September 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Pearson, N (2008). 'Off Welfare, Upstairs to Work' in: *The Australian*, 4 August 2008 <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24122118-5013479,00.html> (accessed 16 September 2008).

To create opportunities for Indigenous people and communities, governments need to ensure investments are tailored to appropriate programs and services that make the participation and employment aspirations of Indigenous people in NRM and PI a reality. This requires an analysis of the current situation, the establishment of a current baseline, and targeted strategies to guide future investment and seize opportunities for Indigenous people.

Increasing Indigenous employment is a long-term commitment, as change within communities is a generational process.

### **Towards targets in NRM & PI**

Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment is a national priority and the Australian, state and territory governments are committed to halving that gap through Indigenous employment growth of 100 000 people over 10 years. Existing data shows that Indigenous people are under-represented across the workforce population of Australia by approximately 50%. However, they are proportionally represented in PIs such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

It may not be readily possible for some industries to achieve representative levels of Indigenous employment. Distinct employment gaps exist, for example, in professional services. Closing the Gap (CTG) in this sector would require a 300% increase in Indigenous people completing extensive tertiary level training and in-service development in areas such as accounting and medicine. Conversely, Indigenous people are over represented in sectors such as public administration and safety and health and social services.

NRM & PI provide an opportunity to advance real employment (and therefore economic development) for Indigenous people which are consistent with their existing pre-employment educational qualifications and personal ambitions.

Members are asked to consider whether in principle they support a strategy which would see PI & NRM exceed CTG proportional representation in their sectors and if so, to what extent. In endorsing such a principle, research is required within the respective sectors to scope the potential to exceed targets and to identify resources to support such a strategy. DEEWR and FaHCSIA advise that existing resources under CDEP and related programs are not available for diversion.

### **Sustainable employment**

The Working Group has defined 'sustainable employment' as positions that are filled on a continuing basis for more than 12 months, preferably five to 10 years to enable significant cultural and practical change to occur.

## **The benefits**

Creating sustainable employment in NRM and PI is a fundamental step in advancing reconciliation.

The benefits of identifying sustainable employment opportunities in NRM and PI are more widespread than just addressing unemployment issues. Work undertaken in these sectors assists the Closing the Gap economic participation target, and also supports other key Closing the Gap targets for health and education. Additional benefits result from the development of a workforce that can assist in achieving Government targets in NRM and can address emerging issues associated with climate change by tackling the long-term decline of public assets. It is also timely to ensure that Indigenous interests are included in the emerging 'green economy'.

## **The limitations**

The major limitations that have been identified are lack of funding, lack of opportunities for those that are work-ready, and lack of commitment across jurisdictions to take coordinated and strategic action to improve Indigenous employment in NRM and PI.

Indigenous employment in NRM and PI has historically been supported by access to CDEP. With its cessation in many areas and reform of CDEP, many community-driven NRM and PI agency partnerships are no longer sustainable, and many important NRM and PI programs that relied on these partnerships need to be redeveloped. Suitable funding sources need to be identified. It is suggested that members write to COAG expressing the sectors' capacity to exceed Closing the Gap proportional representation employment targets if suitable funds can be made available to assist with such a strategy. Should jurisdictions agree to provide such support, much can be learnt from existing programs to enable the effective use of such resources. Similarly, a range of strategies can be developed to identify where and how employment for Indigenous people can be achieved in these sectors.

## **Employment creation to date**

Many sustainable jobs employing Indigenous people have been created within programs and projects. The four case studies, outlined below, illustrate the ability of NRM and PI to create meaningful and skill-enhancing opportunities, especially in remote communities. Employment has been built around:

- increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in managing land and sea country
- building sustainable economic enterprises such as pastoral companies, which in turn create further employment opportunities
- delivering on the environmental outcomes for the Australian Government to meet its responsibility to protect and conserve the environment
- participating in the emerging green economy to undertake economically sustainable work.

Common elements in these employment-creating opportunities are:

- that public funding acts as the catalyst
- there is a developmental continuum that can create self-funding employment opportunities in NRM services and PI production
- partnerships are required, especially with key NRM and PI agencies and Indigenous communities.

Case Study 1 highlights how projects based on training, mentoring and business development can create self-funding jobs in the medium term.

#### **Case Study 1: Kimberly Indigenous Management Support Service**

The Kimberley Indigenous Management Support Service (KIMSS) is a joint initiative of the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). It is the first time that significant financial, human and infrastructure resources have been delivered to Aboriginal pastoral enterprises in a planned and comprehensive manner. This was a significant advance for Aboriginal pastoralists. It has allowed them to develop their own enterprises and subsequently achieve a variety of economic, social and employment outcomes. Of the eight KIMSS staff, five are Indigenous people from the Kimberley.

In 2008, the project facilitated the employment of 86 Indigenous Kimberley workers in the Indigenous pastoral industry (67 seasonal, 17 full-time). Additionally, a further 19 Indigenous people were trained in the Halls Creek area with 15 finding employment in the mining, local government and pastoral sectors. This training was assisted and supported by KIMSS officers and Lamboo Station. A further five men were employed in contract mustering camps outside of the Kimberley in a joint management agreement — setup by KIMSS — between an Indigenous corporation and a pastoral contractor. Another six Indigenous men worked on a property near Derby with no pay at all; they were simply happy to see their property being managed for the first time in 27 years.

#### **Future opportunities**

PI already have established and defined jobs within industries and existing enterprises. By assisting Indigenous communities to progress their own farming pursuits through training, mentoring and access to infrastructure assistance, enterprises are creating their own jobs and training people who could be employed by other enterprises. Many communities want to develop their own pastoral, horticultural or land-based business. They have land and access to water but are frustrated by not having access to skills training, start-up funding to cover wages, or money for infrastructure development. Many developing pastoral properties currently depend on CDEP funding to maintain their business. With skilling and business support, rural enterprises can thrive.

The employment opportunities in NRM are largely ranger or similar NRM-based positions undertaking a broad range of NRM activities, including weed and feral animal control, protection of water courses, and biosecurity. The establishment of 'Green Teams' — that can work across a range of tenures and land management sectors — provides a workforce that can respond to emergencies and recovery work (e.g. Victorian bushfire restoration works) and critical resource management issues (e.g. management of SA's Lower Lakes and protection of the Great Barrier Reef). Realising Indigenous connection to country is important and ranger or green team positions present these opportunities. NRM

employment opportunities are increasingly becoming a factor in negotiation of native title Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

The Australian Government is providing funding for Indigenous land and sea rangers through the Working on Country program. Consolidation of funded positions is taking place before there is any move to expand Indigenous land and sea management positions under this program. However, the opportunity to accelerate other programs that are already supporting initiatives such as Green Teams and Indigenous rangers should be considered (see case studies for further information).

An opportunity also exists to assist Indigenous people and communities to establish their own self-sufficient business enterprises to meet NRM and PI targets.

#### **Case Study 2: Maldhangilanna Traditional Owner River Restoration Team**

In NSW, a partnership between the Murrumbidgee CMA and the Wagga Wagga City Council supports several Green Teams in the area (around 25 individuals). The teams rely on government employment and training support, and the CMA and council play a supervisory and support role. The majority of the work undertaken by the teams is funded through CMA and council infrastructure funding and a range of small grants projects. To date, the Maldhangilanna River Restoration team has completed 13 km of river restoration along the Murrumbidgee. While undertaking this work, many landowners along the river have contracted the team to carry out fencing work on their properties. While the teams have been successful in their work, they are still reliant on short-term funding and limited by lack of a dedicated business support unit and broader recognition of their skills.

#### **Strategies which could be pursued**

- Jurisdictions to include specific consideration of Indigenous issues in regional labour markets and skills analysis to identify existing and future NRM and PI opportunities.
- Define the consequential targets at a regional scale including opportunities for employment by government agencies, private companies, regional NRM bodies and local government.
- Work with labour skilling and training organisations, regional development organisations, and industry to target Indigenous skills and labour strategies specific to NRM and PI.

#### **Case Study 3: Many Rivers Regional Partnership Agreement**

The Coffs Harbour Indigenous Coordination Centre has developed a business model (see Appendix) and negotiated financial investment with both the public and private sectors to set up an Indigenous Green Team Business Unit (IGTBU). The role of the IGTBU is to provide training and administrative support for 30 Indigenous Green Teams, equating to around 150 positions. The IGTBU will have responsibility for pursuing employment opportunities through tender processes and long-term contracts and promoting the Indigenous Green Teams as being a delivery mechanism of government NRM programs. This approach aims to have the IGTBU self-funded within two years, providing Indigenous Green Team members with a salary as soon as possible.

## **Engaging with Indigenous communities, individuals and families**

Engaging with Indigenous people and communities to determine their interests and needs for employment is essential in developing appropriate employment programs and economic opportunities.

Strategies which could be pursued

Undertake targeted consultation with Indigenous communities and organisations to assess the actual levels of interest, existing skills and other capacity needs.

- Assist Indigenous communities to prepare land and sea country plans to identify opportunities for financial and non-financial investment including the creation of long-term employment and enterprise opportunities.
- Assist Indigenous people to analyse and develop appropriate enterprise opportunities.

### **Case Study 4: Ngaanyatjarra Working on Country project**

Ngaanyatjarra lands cover an area of 98 000 square kilometres, including sections of the Gibson, Great Sandy and Great Victoria deserts. The 'Ngaanyatjarra Working on Country project helps to implement the 'Ngaanyatjarra Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management' and will move five Indigenous workers involved in land and culture management into real jobs. These Indigenous workers provide a range of essential environmental services in the region including management of threatened species such as rock wallaby, great desert skink and bilby populations; implementing fire management processes; cleaning and maintaining rock holes to provide clean, fresh water for a range of native fauna; managing the impact of feral pests such as foxes and camels; supporting traditional ecological knowledge and cultural activities; and developing tourist management strategies including interpretative works.

#### **Working on Country (Indigenous rangers)**

The Working on Country initiative commenced in May 2007 and provides funding for Indigenous people to deliver environmental outcomes to the Australian Government.

The Government committed \$90 million over five years from 1 July 2008 to expand Working on Country, incorporating two new features:

- the provision of training for Indigenous land and sea rangers, including a nationally accredited land management qualification
- encouraging partnerships between Indigenous organisations involved in land and sea management and private industry to enhance economic development and employment opportunities.

To date, Working on Country has funded 31 projects, employing approximately 206 rangers. An important element in the success of Working on Country projects is the identification and funding of a coordinator position to oversee day-to-day activities and training needs. The employment of rangers operates on a budget of approximately \$100 000 pa, covering salary, training, coordination, materials and equipment.

## **Engaging with industry sectors and enterprises**

Engage potential partners and enterprises within the PI and NRM sectors including:

- Indigenous communities and Traditional Owner Organisations
- Government agencies (Australian, state, territory and local governments)
- conservation groups and lands trusts (e.g. WWF, Greening Australia, Bush Heritage and Conservation Councils)

- regional NRM boards and catchment management authorities
- private PI peak bodies and industry groups
- national parks, state forests, vacant Crown land and public land managers
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- Indigenous Business Australia.

### **Strategies which could be pursued**

- Identify and engage potential regional or industry partners that are relevant to the local communities and their aspirations.
- Assess the level of capacity and interest to engage Indigenous people.
- Recognise and support existing Indigenous enterprises (as a model for new and emerging enterprises and to increase the potential for greater levels of employment).
- Develop a local reconciliation action group to identify jobs and employment pathways.
- Develop strategies to engage potential partners and develop cultural competency.
- NRM and PI agencies to link with existing labour market studies and strategies to ensure that the needs of Indigenous people employed in NRM and PI are captured.

#### **Case Study 5: Wild River Rangers Program (North Queensland)**

The Wild River Rangers program is a Queensland Government commitment to provide up to 100 Indigenous rangers to protect and promote the natural values of wild rivers declared under the Queensland *Wild Rivers Act 2005*. The program is part of the Looking After Country Together framework that aims to increase the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in managing their country.

There are currently 20 rangers employed full-time in the Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Mapoon, Chuulangun, Doomadgee, Burketown and Normanton communities across Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf of Carpentaria. The rangers are employed through contracts with councils or Indigenous community organisations.

The rangers ensure that the unique ecologies of wild rivers are better managed and preserved by managing weeds, feral animals, marine debris and other threats to river systems; undertaking fire management, fencing of wetlands, erosion mitigation, coastal management and protection of significant cultural sites; collecting information on local species and habitats; foreign fishing vessels and illegal activities; recording local knowledge; promoting and raising awareness of the natural values of wild rivers and NRM activities; and managing visitor activities.

The program is funded by the Department of Employment and Economic Development and is managed by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). DERM staff assist communities to develop business systems and support the rangers in their field operations.

Resources for training are provided directly to communities as part of the ranger employment contracts. Training is also provided by qualified DERM staff who

work with local coordinators to develop training plans and timetables that are relevant and specific to individual needs and ranger work plans.

### **Enhancing Indigenous capacity to participate**

Locations of jobs have been identified as an issue concerning employment. Therefore, to enhance the capacity of Indigenous people to participate in employment opportunities it is important to offer employment and training in suitable locations.

#### **Strategies which could be pursued**

- Identify employment assistance programs that are flexible, appropriate and targeted, and that complement each other, rather than compete.
- Identify regional employment and industry opportunities that are relevant to the local communities and their aspirations.
- Facilitate the creation of real, sustainable and diverse jobs in Indigenous communities.
- Ensure appropriate training is delivered in a variety of forms and locations to develop the capacity of Indigenous people.
- Promote and utilise the models of current successful initiatives such as KIMMS and Green Teams to build business and employment opportunities.

### **Reporting achievements to COAG**

Reporting by jurisdictions is required to determine if employment programs are successful. As there are differences in reporting methods and styles between jurisdictions, introduction of a standardised reporting system will facilitate comparison of performance between jurisdictions.

#### **Strategies which could be pursued**

- Establish a standardised reporting system for all jurisdictions, and an appropriate timeframe.
- Evaluate the outputs and outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the Action Plan.
- Link reporting by jurisdictions to the national Closing the Gap targets for economic participation.

## Conclusion

There is plenty of meaningful work to do in the NRM & PI sectors. Significant numbers of Indigenous people can be employed in these sectors. Indigenous people have expressed a strong desire to be able to establish enterprises and participate in caring for country, including through paid positions.

There are anecdotal stories and more recent research that draws connections between improved health, education and community wellbeing as a result of Indigenous people having increased access to and management of their country. The approach identified in this paper seeks to address an ambitious target for the gainful employment of Indigenous people across Australia by 2020. It requires an equally ambitious solution.

## Appendix — The Green Team Business Model

The Indigenous Green Team Business Model provides a structured framework to encourage Indigenous people to participate in the emerging green economy, through supporting existing Indigenous Green Teams that have been established as a part of the CDEP program and providing support for the development of new Indigenous Green Teams through training, infrastructure and micro-finance capability.

Indigenous unemployment is significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate, especially in regional Australia. Indigenous Green Teams, typically comprising four to six people, are an example of Indigenous people gaining the skills and knowledge to participate in sustainable employment.

In NSW, it is estimated that there over 50 Indigenous Green Teams undertaking land management work but to date there has been little engagement with industry and a low level of commercial work due to lack of capacity and business skills.

The role of the business model is to accelerate the establishment of Indigenous Green Teams as business-focused entities and to strengthen the potential of Indigenous Green Teams to initiate partnerships and projects that can generate Indigenous and NRM training, skills and knowledge.

Key issues for the establishment of Green Teams are listed below.

- Currently the teams rely on short-term funding and government employment support to remain viable. There is a lack of career path opportunities for participants to undertake economically sustainable work on country.
- The teams must have a business outcomes delivery focus, providing sustainable land use and environmental services.
- Any employment initiative will need to commit to long-term support and capacity building, and will need to work with communities that have an active desire to manage land, being respectful of Indigenous timeframes and culture.
- Assisting Indigenous communities to prepare land and sea country plans and participate in the delivery of NRM outcomes provides an opportunity to achieve long-term financial and non-financial investment including the creation of long-term employment opportunities.

Various partnership initiatives, support and funding could establish Indigenous NRM Business Units that eventually operate as self-sustaining business entities. These units will coordinate and employ a number of Indigenous Green Teams to undertake on-ground work.

Initially, there will be a requirement for government funding for core employment and training levels, and to develop business plans, models and partnerships. The level of funding would be reviewed regularly and would gradually diminish, the objective being to establish viable long-term business arrangements.

A level of support and contribution to regional NRM outcomes through regional bodies or separate community organisations would be part of the arrangements. Australian Government funding would be predicated on leveraging a minimum of matching cash and in-kind contributions from other levels of government, business and the community.

The development of Indigenous NRM Business Units could be coordinated through local Indigenous Coordination Centres to ensure a whole-of-government approach to funding and outcomes.

## **INVEST**

An action plan to increase the participation of Indigenous people in natural resource management and primary industries.

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### **Directional Paper**

This paper identifies key actions from the 'Invest Action Plan' (Annex A) that can be progressed to gain whole-of-government and cross government support to tap the considerable Indigenous employment and economic development potential in natural resource management (NRM) and primary industries (PI), recognising the priority that COAG places on closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

#### ***Invest and the NRM and PI sectors***

The 'Invest Action Plan' identifies employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous people in NRM and PI sectors that will support and complement the objectives and targets of the National Indigenous Reform Agreement and the National Indigenous Economic Development Strategy.

The action plan also recognises that:

- Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage requires long-term generational commitment
- Realising opportunities available in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors requires an approach similar to that embodied in the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP): ie. a mix of capacity building of both workers and employers to support Indigenous employment in established industries, and the facilitation of Indigenous business opportunities, economic independence and wealth creation
- The number of jobs in NRM sector is largely determined by the quantum of funding made available; NRM has the potential to provide many indigenous people with jobs.

With PIMC's and NRMMC's direction further work will be done to highlight Indigenous employment opportunities in Australia's NRM and PI industries.

#### ***Background – relevant current initiatives***

In December 2007, COAG agreed to a partnership between all levels of government to work with Indigenous communities to improve life outcomes for Indigenous people through the identification of a range of 'Closing the Gap' targets. The National Indigenous Reform Agreement sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators and performance benchmarks. It also links National Agreements and National Partnership agreements across COAG, including elements aimed at closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

COAG recognises that overcoming Indigenous disadvantage requires long-term generational commitment directed across the 'building blocks' that support the 'Closing the Gap' reforms.

In July 2008, COAG leaders reaffirmed their commitment to halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade. COAG also agreed to sustained engagement and effort by all governments over the next decade and beyond to achieve 'Closing the Gap' targets.

The gap in the Indigenous employment rate in *Census 2006* was around 24 percentage points. To reduce this gap to 12 percentage points by 2018, Indigenous employment growth of around 100 000 over 10 years would be needed.

The 2008 National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation will assist up to 13 000 Indigenous people into employment over a five year period.

In December 2008, the Australian Government committed \$764 million over five years to its IEP, broadly focussing on encouraging Indigenous workers into established industries, and the encouragement of Indigenous enterprises.

Finally, the Australian Employment Covenant is a private sector initiative to rally employers to commit to providing opportunities for 50 000 Indigenous Australians.

### ***Developing the Business Case***

Several models exist that can guide the approach that each jurisdiction can take to identify employment and business development opportunities (a number of these models are outlined in case studies in Annex A). While these models have had some success, they have largely relied upon short-term and intermittent funding such as grants and have been dependent on CDEP for Indigenous participation.

A business case developed by each jurisdiction can provide the rationale and identify the key success factors for employment and business development opportunities seeking investment from the Australian Government IEP or other appropriate funding sources.

For NRM, where funding models recognise that public good outcomes require public funding, an indicative budget of \$122 million pa was developed by South Australia, based around 3,000 positions per year ranging from students to administrative staff (i.e. an average annual cost of \$40 670). It was envisaged that most of this budget would be funded from redirected CDEP funds. Some support would also come from existing State and Territory programs or appropriations in collaboration with other investments, including from Australian Government and regional NRM programs, the Indigenous Land Corporation, local government and the private sector, as well as through working with support and delivery agents, such as the Indigenous coordination centres, land and sea councils, and non-government organisations such as land trusts (e.g. Bush Heritage) and land management organisations (e.g. Greening Australia).

Refocussing government procurement policies, consistent with the objectives of the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation provides a further opportunity for improving employment and business development for Indigenous people in the NRM and PI sectors.

### ***Implementation Plan***

On 19 March 2009, PISC and NRMSC endorsed the principle of establishing employment targets to close the gap in Indigenous employment in PI and NRM, but requested that further work was required on the initiative's implementation plan. In keeping with the Commonwealth's 'Closing the Gap' announcement, PISC and NRMSC have requested that a more vigorous and rigorous approach be taken to improving the socio-economic well being of Indigenous people. This would leverage on what works and improve what does not, consistent with the 'Invest Action Plan'.

To this end, the Working Group is tasked with developing an implementation plan that will provide an assessment of current Indigenous employment in PI and NRM, an analysis of what works and what can be done to progress the achievement of real and substantial job gains for Indigenous people and the development of achievable targets and strategies to guide future investment that contains well defined, measurable and time-specific goals.

The implementation plan will be guided by the results of a project that is being funded under DAFF's Community Networks and Capacity Building program to ascertain

opportunities and approaches for improving Indigenous employment outcomes in primary industries. The project will undertake six tasks as follows:

- Examine baseline data on the participation of Indigenous people in employment preparation programs (e.g. CDEP) related to PI. It is envisaged that this outcome will be achieved through analysis secured from Centrelink with DAFF's assistance
- Identify lessons that can be learnt in these areas from the research and evaluation already conducted by departments such as DEEWR and FaHCSIA
- Record insights from key informants in the field
- Map barriers and enablers underpinning Indigenous peoples effective transition from welfare to work (including the welfare payments context), particularly in Australian PI
- Assess how specific elements of existing or proposed employment development programs (e.g. training programs such as employer/employee expectations and/or cultural awareness and differing models of *on-the-job mentoring*) contribute to sustainable employment outcomes for Indigenous people working in PI, and
- Review data and advise on mandatory and aspirational employment targets.

A steering committee is overseeing this project. The steering committee consists of:

- the Manager Social Policy and Coordination, DAFF
- a representative from the Indigenous Land Corporation
- a representative from Indigenous Employment Branch, DEEWR
- a representative from Indigenous Affairs, FaHCSIA
- a representative from DEWHA, and
- a representative of the PISC and NRMSC Indigenous Working Group.

The project will be conducted in 2009 commencing in May.

### **COAG process**

Since the Closing the Gap targets were agreed, all governments have been working together to develop fundamental reforms to address these targets. Governments have acknowledged that this is an extremely significant undertaking that will require substantial investment, a need for an integration of policy, and an agreed approach to address the six tasks.

COAG agreed to convene a dedicated meeting in 2009 on closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, and we suggest that Indigenous job creation in NRM and PI be discussed at this meeting. It is anticipated that this will take place in mid-2009. COAG has asked for advice on how the National Partnership agreements and National Agreements will collectively lead to a closing of the gap and what further reforms are needed.

PISC and NRMSC have also requested that the initiative report into the COAG 'Closing the Gap process'. At the Commonwealth level, Indigenous economic well-being is the focus of the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee for Indigenous Economic Development jointly chaired by DEEWR (responsible for Indigenous employment) and FaHCSIA (responsible for Indigenous Affairs). It is appropriate that the results of the Implementation Development Project be reported into this committee as a potential conduit to the COAG 'Closing the Gap' process.

Ministerial Councils can also advise COAG on the considerable Indigenous employment and economic development potential in NRM and PI through a letter from the Ministerial Council Chairs to the Prime Minister. The letter should outline the steps that are being taken to progress this work including:

- work on the implementation plan and the process to link with the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee for Indigenous Economic Development
- work by jurisdictions to identify the most relevant Indigenous NRM and PI employment and economic development opportunities
- opportunities that refocussed procurement provisions can provide for increased Indigenous employment and business through NRM and PI
- opportunities and pathways for catalytic funding for the salary component of positions.

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.17</b>

### PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

1. NRMCMC 5 (October 2003) endorsed the Framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM Framework). Jurisdictions, including the Australian Local Government Association, developed an Implementation Plan for the Framework, which the NRM Ministerial Council endorsed out-of-session in May 2006. This is the third annual progress report on implementation, as required in Priority Area 7 of the Implementation Plan.
2. The NRM Ministerial Council Climate Change Action Plan requires that as part of the annual progress report on the implementation of the ICZM Framework the Marine and Coastal Committee (MACC) would;
  - (a) provide a stocktake of actions supporting integrated coastal planning; and
  - (b) consider the outcomes of the stocktake and the findings of the current House of Representatives Inquiry into climate and environmental impacts on coastal communities to determine whether further actions are required to address climate change in the coastal zone.
3. Highlights of actions progressed since the last annual report include:
  - (a) agreement on estuarine, coastal and marine indicators for State of the Environment reporting;
  - (b) implementation of the National Water Quality Management Strategy;
  - (c) improved understanding of the implications of climate change on the coastal zone, through the 'First Pass' National Coastal Zone Vulnerability Assessment;
  - (d) implementation of the NatCASS (National Committee for Acid Sulfate Soils) strategy; and
  - (e) substantial progress towards the implementation of the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions.
4. Progress has been more difficult or limited in relation to a number of other actions within the implementation plan. The most significant of these are:
  - (a) planning for population change (Priority area 5);
  - (b) investigating the impact of freshwater flows on coastal processes and habitats, and incorporating coastal and estuarine considerations into the COAG water reform process (Actions 1.2.1 to 1.2.3);
  - (c) improving the management of waste from vessels, where several actions (2.4.1, 2.5.1, and 2.5.3) have not been advanced perceptibly; and
  - (d) capacity building (Priority Area 6) through cooperation between governments and relevant institutions, assessing coastal information gaps and priorities,

and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coastal communities.

5. It is important to note that the implementation plan was intended to be progressed largely within existing resources and overall resource constraints have presented a significant impediment to comprehensive implementation of the framework. Areas where actions have been progressed satisfactorily have purpose-built organisations and inter-jurisdictional fora, as well as funding, while areas where limited progress has been made typically do not have dedicated resources, coordination, or a driving mechanism.

#### **Review of adequacy of the ICZM Framework for addressing climate change**

6. In the current framework, a single action defines intended activities (3.2.1 – Develop information, guidelines and tools for coastal zone managers and planners on climate change risks, liability and adaptation options and ‘share’ the outcomes). This has not been progressed significantly at the cross-jurisdiction level. Climate change will need to be a continued focus for Intergovernmental Coastal Advisory Group (ICAG) in 2008-09.
7. MACC, in its workplan on integrated coastal zone management, intends to provide a stocktake of actions supporting integrated coastal planning.
8. The NRM Ministerial Council Climate Change Action Plan for 2009-2012 proposes that Council consider the outcomes of the stocktake, and the findings of the current House of Representatives inquiry into *Climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities* to determine whether further actions are required to address climate risk in the coastal zone.
9. The inquiry into *Climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities* has scheduled public hearings until May 2009 and its report is expected in the fourth quarter of 2009. It is therefore intended that further advice on the ICZM Framework in this regard will be provided subsequent to that report.

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

10. Council:
  - (a) **ENDORSED** the draft 2007-08 Progress report on the Implementation plan for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at Annex A;
  - (b) **NOTED** that the report of the current House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts inquiry into *Climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities* will consider some of the key challenges for ICZM; and
  - (c) **NOTED** that advice on the application of the ICZM framework to address climate change, as required under the 2009-2012 NRMCC climate change priorities for land and marine systems (endorsed at NRMCC 14), will be prepared following the report of the inquiry into *Climate change and*

*environmental impacts on coastal communities*, which is expected to be released in the 4th quarter of 2009.

**ANNEX A:** Implementation Plan for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management – Draft 2007-08 Progress Report  
*[Annex A is held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.18</b>

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF  
WILD AND FARMED AUSTRALIAN CROCODILES**

1. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA), in consultation with relevant state and territory agencies, has prepared a draft Code of Practice for the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles. DEWHA is involved in crocodile management through its implementation of the trade provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Under the EPBC Act animal welfare considerations must be taken into account.
2. This Code recommends minimum standards for the humane treatment of crocodiles based on current knowledge and practice. Having a Code that has been endorsed by the Australian, state and territory governments would ensure that standards are consistently applied throughout Australia and are readily available to industry and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). The draft Code of Practice is limited to the taking of crocodiles from the wild and the farming of crocodiles. It does not cover the public display of crocodiles in zoos and animal parks, which have different (lower density) requirements. The taking of crocodiles from the wild includes capturing or killing crocodiles and harvesting eggs.
3. The draft Code has undergone an extensive consultation process. In early 2004, the Code was placed on the DEWHA website and letters written to key stakeholders including industry, NGOs, state and territory government agencies, Aboriginal groups, the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare and the Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG). The AWWG reports to the Animal Health Committee of the Primary Industries Standing Committee.
4. Comments were analysed and where appropriate incorporated into the Code. A revised draft was then provided to those who had provided comment so they could be further consulted and provide comments on the revised draft.
5. The Animal Welfare Committee reviewed the Code, requested a number of minor editorial amendments and endorsed the amended Code for progression to the Animal Welfare and Product Integrity Taskforce. The Animal Welfare and Product Integrity Taskforce endorsed the Code on 29 January 2009. The endorsement included amendments to the definition of 'euthanasia' and minor grammatical and clarifying changes throughout to improve the document.
6. Standing Committee endorsed the Code on 20 March 2009. The endorsement included further clarifying amendments proposed by Queensland and Western

Australia, relating to the use of chemicals, traps and snares, and satellite tagging. The Northern Territory agreed to the changes subject to some amendment of paragraphs 39 and 41 to ensure that the proposed actions are compatible with their state legislation. Western Australia and Queensland support the amendments proposed by the Northern Territory.

7. The Code is intended primarily for use by individuals or companies licensed by relevant state or territory authorities to:
  - (a) capture and/or take crocodiles and crocodile eggs from the wild;
  - (b) keep crocodiles for commercial raising or captive breeding;
  - (c) kill crocodiles; or to
  - (d) incubate eggs in controlled conditions.
 In addition, wildlife officers/rangers removing crocodiles for public safety will also need to comply with the Code.
  
8. Crocodile farming currently occurs in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. The commercial harvest of crocodiles and crocodile eggs from the wild is limited to the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Compliance with the draft Code is required in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Queensland, whilst involved in the development of the draft Code, has also produced its own codes of practice. These codes either meet or exceed the draft national code.
  
9. It is important that the draft Code is endorsed as the Northern Territory and Western Australian crocodile industries are using the draft Code and some NGOs have expressed concern that the Code is still in draft form.

## **RESOLUTION**

10. Council **ENDORSED** the draft Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles (Annex A).

**ANNEX A:** Draft Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles.

*[Annex A is held by the Secretariat]*

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.19</b>

### FINANCIAL REPORT

1. Standing Committee is required to report to Council on all expenditures agreed within its limit of \$1 million in any one instance
  - decisions on expenditure above \$1 million are taken by Council.
2. A summary of the financial items considered by NRMSC 17 and for consideration by NRMCMC 15 is at Annex A.

### RESOLUTION

3. Council **NOTED** the financial expenditure agreed by Standing Committee.

**ANNEX A:** Summary of expenditure items

**SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE ITEMS****AGREED BY NRMSC 17 IN-SESSION**

National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions – Interim Cost Sharing for Emergency Responses

Standing Committee **AGREED** that for cost sharing for emergency responses when one or more jurisdictions decline to contribute funding, the combat jurisdiction will bear the cost of non-contributing jurisdictions (Option B), and **NOTED** that this is an interim measure, is not to act as a precedent, will not be included in the National Biosecurity Agreement (NBA) and will be regularly reviewed.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Option (a)</b>	<b>Option (b)</b>
Australian Government	\$13 050.00	\$13 050.00
Western Australia	\$1 996.78	\$5 676.27
Victoria	\$4 926.12	\$3 286.27
Queensland	\$3 959.72	\$2 641.58
South Australia	\$1 497.23	\$998.82
Tasmania	\$466.09	\$310.93
Northern Territory	\$204.06	\$136.13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 26 100.00</b>	<b>\$26 100.00</b>

**AGREED BY NRMSC 17 OUT-OF-SESSION****OOS 03 National NRM Regional Chairs' Forum 2009**

Standing Committee **AGREED** to fund the forum costs, and delegates travel and accommodation expenses, based on an estimated budget of \$121,176, to be shared among jurisdictions according to the pro rata formula outlined below:

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>COAG pro rata formula (%)</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Australian Government	50.0	\$60,588
New South Wales	16.9	\$20,479
Victoria	12.4	\$15,026
Queensland	9.4	\$11,391
Western Australia	4.9	\$ 5,938
South Australia	3.9	\$ 4,726
Tasmania	1.2	\$ 1,454
Northern Territory	0.5	\$ 606
Australian Capital Territory	0.8	\$ 969
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>\$121,176</b>

Agreed out-of-session on 27 January 2009.

**AGREED BY NRMMC 15 IN-SESSION****National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Funding for 2009-2010**

Council **AGREED** to funding of \$15 million in 2009-10, subject to jurisdiction budget processes, for NFAEP operations (\$13.95 million), development of remote sensing technologies (up to \$1 million) and an independent review of the program (\$50,000), with funding shares for each jurisdiction based on previous funding formulas (Annex A):

	<b>Share</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>
Australian Government	50.0%	\$7,500,000
New South Wales	16.9%	\$2,535,000
Victoria	12.4%	\$1,860,000
Queensland	9.4%	\$1,410,000
Western Australia	4.9%	\$735,000
South Australia	3.9%	\$585,000
Tasmania	1.2%	\$180,000
Northern Territory	0.5%	\$75,000
Australian Capital Territory	0.8%	\$120,000

**National Siam Weed Eradication Program**

The proposed 2009-2010 budget is subject to jurisdictions' budget approval processes, and apportioning of cost sharing, based on an updated Climate potential distribution model (McCall 2004), as follows:

Source	Apportionment		2009-10 \$
	Previous %	New %	
Australian Government	50	50	665,000
Queensland	25	28	372,400
Northern Territory	14	14	186,000
New South Wales	5	2	26,600
Western Australia	5	6	79,800
Victoria	1	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>1,330,000</b>

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.20</b>

### NEXT MEETINGS

1. Dates for meetings of the Natural Resource Management, Primary Industries Ministerial and Environment Protection and Heritage Councils (PIMC, NRMMC and EPHC) in November 2009 were agreed by the relevant Councils in November 2008.
2. To provide host jurisdictions with sufficient time to arrange venues for future meetings, dates and locations for the early 2010 Standing Committee and Ministerial Council meetings and locations for the late 2010 meetings need to be agreed.
3. The proposed locations reflect the decision in 2002 to rotate Council meetings between all non Australian Government members and to rotate Standing Committee meetings between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia (with costs for Standing Committee meetings to be shared by all Australian jurisdictions).
4. The EPHC will meet in conjunction with PIMC and NRMMC in Perth on 5 and 6 November 2009.
5. The Northern Territory will host the April 2010 Council meetings. The Northern Territory was originally proposed to host the April 2009 Council meetings. However, in April 2008 the Northern Territory sought to reschedule its hosting and Tasmania agreed to host the April 2009 Council meetings instead.
6. Under the agreed rotation arrangements, Victoria was scheduled to host the Standing Committee meetings in the second half of 2010. However, as an election is likely round that time in Victoria, South Australia has agreed to host those meetings instead.
7. In setting possible dates in 2010, as in previous years, periods have been selected in April and November that minimise the risk of significant clashes for Ministerial Council meetings with parliamentary sitting schedules in member jurisdictions.
8. Dates remain subject to parliamentary sitting schedules.

**RESOLUTION**

9. Council **AGREED** to meeting arrangements in 2009 and 2010 as follows:

<b>2009</b> Standing Committee Ministerial Council	24/25 September 5/6 November	South Australia Western Australia
<b>2010</b> Standing Committee Ministerial Council	18/19 March 22/23 April	New South Wales Northern Territory
<b>2010</b> Standing Committee Ministerial Council	September October/November	South Australia New South Wales

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED OUT-OF-SESSION**

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.21</b>

*Agreed out-of-session 13 March 2009*

### **REVISED NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY – CONSULTATION DRAFT**

1. NRMMC 10 (September 2006) set up the National Biodiversity Strategy Review Task Group (Task Group) to undertake the second five-yearly review of the National Biodiversity Strategy. The Task Group is chaired by Allan Holmes, Chief Executive, South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage. The Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts provides the Secretariat to the Task Group.
2. The Task Group developed a draft National Biodiversity Strategy that was considered at NRMMC 14 on 7 November 2008. Ministers agreed to return the draft National Biodiversity Strategy to the Review Task Group for revision and resubmission to NRMMC by February 2009 for out-of-session endorsement to release the redrafted document for public consultation.
3. A revised document incorporating changes requested by Ministers was provided to the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee and to Task Group members in December 2008. Standing Committee, members agreed to forward the revised draft strategy to Council to seek its approval for the release of the strategy for public consultation.
4. The document at Annex A has also been copy edited – minor wording changes for clarity, grammar and punctuation.
5. As requested by Ministers, the document has been restructured. A new Call to Action section has been included and some sections have been rewritten. The Call to Action at the front of the document emphasises the urgency of the task of protecting our biodiversity.
6. To demonstrate the commitment of jurisdictions to implement the strategy, and to increase collective accountability, the document has been made stronger by:
  - (a) including in the Call to Action section those actions that will be undertaken in the short-term and indicating responsibility for those actions by sector;
  - (b) bringing the implementation section to the front of the document;
  - (c) specifying that jurisdictions will report to Council annually on implementation;
  - (d) including provision for independent interim reviews of national implementation of the strategy, to be commissioned by Council; and
  - (e) redrafting the sub-heading of Priority Area 6 (Measuring Success).
7. To give examples of how governments can deliver on the National Biodiversity Strategy, case studies have been included that provide best practice examples of conservation action that is already underway.

8. A minor clarifying change has been made to Action 1.1.5.
9. All jurisdictions agreed to the release of the revised document for public consultation in the NRMSC out-of-session consideration in December 2008-January 2009 with the following comments:
  - Queensland and Tasmanian have expressed concern that some amendments to the Strategy may not be practical to implement. Of particular concern are actions that have been identified as requiring short-term implementation and the additional requirement for annual reporting.
  - New South Wales made a number of suggestions for minor wording changes in the Call to Action section. These have all either been made as submitted or negotiated and agreed at officer level.
11. It is proposed that the public consultation on the draft revised National Biodiversity Strategy will be conducted between February and May 2009.
12. The Australian Government has some limited resources to conduct the public consultation on the draft revised National Biodiversity Strategy. It is proposed these funds will be directed to newspaper advertisements, web release, a limited circulation of hard copies and state/territory based workshops. A separate Indigenous component may be included, subject to funding and resources.
13. The Australian Government will manage consultation with peak national organisations. Further details of the proposed consultation arrangements are in the Communication Plan at Annex B.
14. The Australian Government will resource the national public consultation process as outlined in Annex B, with in-kind contributions from state and territory jurisdictions, subject to the expenditure being able to be made in this financial year. Funding in next financial year would be subject to budget processes.

## RESOLUTIONS

15. Council:
  - (a) **AGREED** to the release of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (National Biodiversity Strategy) at Annex A for public consultation from February to May 2009; and
  - (b) **ENDORSED** the attached Communication Plan at Annex B and Timeline at Annex C for the release of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy for public consultation.

**ANNEX A:** Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020 – Consultation Draft

*[Annex A is held by the Secretariat]*

**ANNEX B:** Draft Communication Plan for the Public Release of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

**ANNEX C:** Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy Review

## **DRAFT COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE PUBLIC RELEASE OF AUSTRALIA'S BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

### **1. AIMS OF THE PLAN**

The aims of this Plan are to:

- Outline the respective responsibilities of the Australian Government (AG) and the states and territories in the consultation process.
- Outline a process to create awareness of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy and the review process.
- Ensure information about the draft National Biodiversity Strategy reaches a broad audience but is also targeted to stakeholders identified as essential for delivery of the National Biodiversity Strategy.
- Ensure handling of the public consultation on the draft National Biodiversity Strategy is coordinated with other related government consultation processes, such as the review of the Native Vegetation Framework.

### **2. JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The AG (via the Secretariat) will:

- Develop a media release template that can be jointly issued by each jurisdiction's Minister/s and the AG Ministers to launch the consultation draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy.
- Organise and resource the development of the online, and hard copy versions of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy and associated websites and online facilities.
- Provide information on the consultation process via email to key state or territory based non-government organisations and interest groups.
- Organise and resource, in collaboration with state and territory governments, the facilitation and administration of the state and territory based information sessions.
- Organise the national distribution of the consultation draft to peak national Indigenous organisations and provide information sessions for relevant Indigenous fora.
- Organise and resource presentations, information sessions, bilateral briefings and roundtable discussions for scientists, industry and environmental groups as appropriate.
- Collate comments received and provide feedback to the National Biodiversity Strategy Review Task Group (Task Group).
- Evaluate the success of the consultation process.

The state and territory governments will:

- Provide venues and technical resources (projectors/screens etc) for information sessions in capital cities and where possible (subject to funding and demand) in regional centres.
- Contribute to information sessions by providing context for how state or territory policies and approaches align with the draft National Biodiversity Strategy.
- Provide contact information to the Secretariat on relevant key state or territory based non-government organisations and interest groups.

### 3. TARGET AUDIENCES

- Environmentally engaged community members, environment-related non-government organisations and other community groups active in natural resource management, including Landcare, marine, coastal and freshwater networks and groups in urban/peri-urban areas.
- Natural resource managers and planners (including land and sea managers, farmers, fishers, forestry, mining and regional natural resource management groups)
- Indigenous peoples especially organisations involved in land management activities
- Business and industry (including industry associations and bodies, and multinational companies)
- Research and university (including research agencies, universities and cooperative research centres).

#### Audiences with special communication needs

The consultation process will consider the needs of audiences from a non-English speaking background, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, and sight and hearing impaired people and will meet government guidelines on accessibility.

### 4. PROPOSED COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND MECHANISMS

Following endorsement by NRMMC of the consultation draft it is proposed to run a consultation process between February and May 2009. A detailed description of the consultation process is below. A detailed timeline is at Attachment A.

Activity	Descriptions	Timing
National advertisement of review process.	The AG will place advertisements in national newspapers promoting the consultation process and directing readers to the draft National Biodiversity Strategy and online comment submission facility.	February 2009
Web version of draft National Biodiversity Strategy released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft National Biodiversity Strategy will be put on the DEWHA web site at: <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au">http://www.environment.gov.au</a>.</li> <li>• The website will have a link to an online facility for public submissions. This facility for public submissions will include instructions and a questionnaire to guide input.</li> <li>• The tool will be developed and administered by a consultant contracted by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).</li> <li>• The DEWHA website will display submissions put forward.</li> <li>• All jurisdictions will be encouraged to provide a link to the DEWHA website from their websites.</li> </ul>	February to May 2009

Activity	Descriptions	Timing
Distribution of consultation draft National Biodiversity Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hardcopy version of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy will be distributed to key stakeholders with an invitation to make a submission during the consultation period.</li> <li>• A CD version of the National Biodiversity Strategy<sup>1</sup> will be available for rural and remote stakeholders who may have slow internet access.</li> <li>• Information and links to the DEWHA website will be emailed to relevant national organisations and networks and key State and Territory based organisations inviting feedback.</li> </ul>	February 2009
State and territory based information sessions	The AG will contract a consultant to organise and facilitate a series of state and territory based information sessions early in the consultation process. The information sessions will be held in all state and territory capitals and, subject to funding and demand, in targeted regional centres. States and territories will be consulted on arrangements for information sessions in their jurisdictions and will be asked to make in-kind contributions such as providing venues and assisting with presentations and technical resources (e.g. projectors/screens etc).	February to May 2009
Indigenous information sessions	Subject to funding, the AG will organise and facilitate a series of presentations at relevant Indigenous fora. At a minimum, the Indigenous Advisory Committee will be consulted on the draft National Biodiversity Strategy.	February to May 2009
Scientists, industry and environmental advocacy group sessions	The AG will arrange presentations, information sessions, bilateral briefings and roundtable discussions for these stakeholder groups as appropriate.	March to May 2009

## 5. EVALUATION

For this consultation process the AG will make an assessment of the number of submissions, their source and the nature and quality of the feedback provided and report back to the Task Group.

## 6. BUDGET

AG funds available for the consultation process are \$200,000.

## 7. BACKGROUND

### Market Research

In 2006/2007 the then AG Department of the Environment and Heritage commissioned research on stakeholders' views and awareness of the existing National Biodiversity Strategy and their preferred consultation/communication channels (Consultant: Open Mind Research Group).

The research found:

<sup>1</sup> This will also include copies of the National Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity Decline reports.

- The original National Biodiversity Strategy is generally viewed as positive in terms of setting a national vision but it wasn't obvious what effects it had on on-the-ground natural resource management activities.
- In any future consultation on a revised National Biodiversity Strategy stakeholders input should be valued and enough time should be allowed to provide useful feedback.
- Overall the preferred mode of consultation on a new National Biodiversity Strategy was by responding to a consultation draft and questionnaire and the organisation of specialised meetings and information sessions.
- Special efforts should be made to consult with Indigenous Australians.
- Industry stakeholders preferred one-on-one consultation.

### **Preliminary Consultation**

In December 2006, the Task Group distributed a background paper to approximately 150 peak organisations and met directly with approximately 20 environmental and industry non-government organisations (see [Attachment B](#) for the list of organisations previously consulted on the review of the National Biodiversity Strategy).

A follow up letter was sent to organisations that provided feedback requesting additional comments on a possible set of priorities for a revised National Biodiversity Strategy.

All relevant NRMCC committees were also asked to provide feedback on the priorities that could be covered in a revised National Biodiversity Strategy.

The Task Group has also held workshops with Indigenous representatives to gain feedback on earlier versions of the revised National Biodiversity Strategy.

## **8. ATTACHMENTS**

[Attachment A](#): Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy review Consultation Process.

[Attachment B](#): List of organisations previously consulted on the review of the National Biodiversity Strategy

<b>Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy Review Consultation Process</b>
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<b>Meeting/Who</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>NRMMC 15</b>	Endorse draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> OOS for public consultation.	24 February 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Arrange production of print copies of the draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i>	24–27 February 2009
<b>DEWHA/Consultant</b>	Draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> loaded onto DEWHA website	27 February 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Advertisements run in national weekend newspapers promoting consultation period	28 February 2009
<b>Consultant</b>	Mail/email draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> and covering letter to groups targeted	2 -6 March 2009
<b>Consultant</b>	Information sessions convened.	2 March to May 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Bi-laterals with peak organisations undertaken	2 March to May 2009
<b>NRMSC 18</b>	Consider summary of feedback from consultation process OOS and provide direction on major issues.	June 2009
<b>Task Group</b>	Revise draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> —a series of working groups may be needed to complete the revision process.	June to July 2009
<b>NRPPC 22</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRPPC for endorsement.	7 August 2009
<b>NRMSC 19</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMSC for endorsement.	25 September 2009
<b>NRMMC 16</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMMC for endorsement and launch.	6 November 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Distribute and market <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> .	November 2009 (ongoing)

**List of organisations consulted to date on the review of the Strategy**

- AgForce Queensland
- AusBiotech
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Industry Group
- Australian Landcare Council
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Marine Conservation Society
- Australian Marine Sciences Association
- Australian Meat Council
- Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association
- Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council
- Australian Shipowners Association
- Australian Water Association
- Australian Wool Innovation Limited
- Business Council Australia
- Cattle Council of Australia
- Commonwealth Fisheries Association
- Cotton Australia
- Dairy Australia
- Ecotourism Association of Australia
- Environment Business Australia
- Environmental CRCs (e.g. Invasive Animals)
- Financial Services Institute of Australia (Finsia)
- Grains Council Australia
- Greenpeace
- Growcom
- Horticulture Australian Limited
- Housing Industry Association
- Humane Society International – Australia
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Minerals Council of Australia
- National Association of Forest Industries
- National Farmers Federation
- New South Wales Farmers' Association
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc
- Nursery and Garden Industry Australia
- OceanWatch Australia Ltd
- Pastoralists & Graziers Association of WA
- Property Council of Australia
- Queensland Farmers' Federation
- R&D Corporations and Companies (e.g. Land and Water Australia)
- Ricegrowers Association of Australia
- South Australian Farmers' Federation
- Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association
- The Australian Pipeline Industry Association

- The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc.)
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Wine Grape Growers Australia
- Winemakers' Federation of Australia
- World Wildlife Fund – Australia
- Chairs and CEOs of NRM Regional Bodies
- Members of the National Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Indigenous representatives from a range of national, state and local groups
- Members of the National Biological Diversity Advisory Committee

## National Biodiversity Strategy Review Task Group

### Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy Review

Meeting /Who	Task	Due date
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Provide revised draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMSC OOS.	December 2008
<b>NRMSC 17</b>	Endorse draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> OOS to go to NRMSC.	27 January 2009
<b>NRMSC/MC Secretariat</b>	Provide revised draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMSC OOS.	4 February 2009
<b>NRMSC 15</b>	Endorse draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> OOS for public consultation.	24 February 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Receive endorsement from NRMSC. Prepare draft <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> for public release.	24-27 February 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat and Task Group</b>	Manage consultation period.	27 February to May 2009
<b>NRMSC 18</b>	Consider summary of feedback from consultation process OOS and provide direction on major issues.	June 2009
<b>Task Group</b>	Revise Strategy—a series of working groups may be needed to complete the revision process.	June to July 2009
<b>NRPPC 22</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRPPC for endorsement.	7 August 2009
<b>NRMSC 19</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMSC for endorsement.	25 September 2009
<b>NRMSC 16</b>	Submit revised <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> to NRMSC for endorsement and launch.	6 November 2009
<b>NBS Secretariat</b>	Distribute and market <i>Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy</i> .	November 2009 (ongoing)

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.22</b>

*Agreed out-of-session 5 May 2009*

### MCKELL MEDAL 2008 AWARD

1. The McKell Medal publicly recognises excellence and achievement in natural resource management in Australia, and is open to land managers, scientists and public office holders. The award commemorates the outstanding contribution made by Sir William McKell, a former Governor-General of Australia and Premier of NSW, in the fields of soil and land conservation. As a broad-based award for recognising efforts to address the issues of water, land and soil degradation, it is unique.
2. The presentation function for the McKell Medal is normally held in conjunction with an appropriate high-profile national event. The 18th (2007) Medal was awarded by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at the NRM Regional Chairs' Forum, held in conjunction with the NRMCMC meeting in April 2008.
3. The McKell Medal Advisory Panel (the panel) manages the selection process and reports to the Standing Committee. Nominations are sought each year from individuals or individuals in partnership, by advertising widely through a broad range of government and non-government agencies and organisations. A total of 15 nominations were received for the 19th Medal.
4. The panel determines which nominee has demonstrated the most outstanding achievement in changing land use practices and community attitudes towards more sustainable management of natural resources. Nominees should demonstrate self motivation and, preferably, still be practicing in their field. The nominee should be able to promote the ethic of sound natural resource management through their award.
5. Nominees must demonstrate their achievements against the following selection criteria:
  - (a) Has the nominee shown community leadership in ethical land stewardship at local, regional, state or national level?
  - (b) Has the nominee developed and implemented highly effective and innovative educational and promotional programs?
  - (c) Has the nominee been involved in or promoted research activities or the application of research findings that have a significant contribution to natural resource management?
8. In considering the nominations for the 19th Medal, the panel noted both the considerable contribution of all the nominees to natural resource management, and the high standard of nominations in relation to the selection criteria.

10. The panel met in early December 2008. However, it was unable to select a clear winner between Mr John Ive of Yass, NSW and Mr Kevin Knight and Ms Alice Knight of Pittong, Victoria.
11. Two members of the panel were then authorised to conduct site visits during December at the properties of the shortlisted nominees. These visits allowed the panel to finalise its recommendation for the Medal, as the reports from the site visits were highly instructive in determining the recommended nominee.
12. The panel's further deliberations in January 2009 (based on the outcomes of the site visits) culminated in the recommendation that the 19th McKell Medal be awarded to Mr Kevin Knight and Ms Alice Knight of Pittong, Victoria.
13. The Knights, a brother and sister team, have been combating land degradation for more than 40 years. They have planned, promoted and implemented a sustained large-scale program, including their farm and the catchment, to enhance the landscape and improve productivity. They have welcomed researchers and students to their property and supported trials and applied research. Importantly, they have a record of influencing the practices of other natural resource managers. A summary of the Knight's background and achievements is at Annex A.
14. The presentation function is proposed to be held in conjunction with the NRM Regional Chairs' Forum and NRMCC meeting in Hobart on 21 May 2009.
15. The winners' names should be embargoed until the presentation.

## **RESOLUTION**

16. Council **ENDORSED** the recommendation of the McKell Medal Advisory Panel that the 19th (2008) Medal be awarded to Mr Kevin Knight and Ms Alice Knight of Pittong, Victoria.

**ANNEX A:** Nomination Summary of Mr Kevin Knight and Ms Alice Knight

**NOMINATION SUMMARY OF Mr KEVIN KNIGHT AND Ms ALICE KNIGHT**

Kevin and Alice Knight are fourth generation farmers at Pittong, 30 km west of Ballarat. The brother and sister team farm 1,700 hectares, with their property spanning the headwaters of both the Woody Yaloak and Mt Emu Creek catchments.

The potential impact of previous land clearing was not fully appreciated when Kevin and Alice returned to the farm in the 1950s. Only small patches of salinity were visible – salinity now affects 6 per cent of the landscape and continues to expand, albeit at a slower rate. Over the past 40 years, combating land degradation has become their main focus as salt and soil loss threatened their farm.

Their foundation for four decades of activity was to consider their land and surrounding landscape as interlinked. The Knights applied what is now recognised as whole farm and catchment planning. Their plan formed the basis for a sustained large-scale program to enhance the landscape and lift productivity. Demonstrating their commitment to this philosophy, Kevin and Alice planted more than 70,000 indigenous trees, including extensive woodlot planting (220 ha). Approximately 80 ha has been removed from grazing and planted to trees for the purposes of salinity control, preventing wind erosion and timber. Many patches of remnant vegetation have been fenced.

Pasture improvement has also been an annual program with most of the farm sown to deep rooted perennial species, replacing annual grasses; minimum tillage cropping is also practiced. Problem weeds such as spiny rush, an indicator of salinity, are not attacked until the recharge areas have been treated either through revegetation or shallow interceptor drains. Regular, extensive fox and rabbit control programs are undertaken. Three major wetlands have been created by the placement of soil banks, and creeks on the property have been fenced to prevent stock access.

Despite the challenges of tackling salinity and erosion, the Knights carry 12,000 sheep at well above the district average. This has increased from 5 DSE/ha in the 1960s to more than 12 DSE/ha today, with crop yields equal to more traditional cropping areas.

Kevin and Alice undoubtedly influence the wider community's involvement in NRM, hosting many tours, including visits from Government Ministers and the US Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary. They have spoken at conferences in cities across Australia, conducted numerous media interviews, and regularly addressed local community groups.

The Knights have encouraged research both on their own property and in the wider environmental context, being leaders in experimenting with seeding techniques, interceptor drains, and a control program for Redlegged earthmite. Several studies on the groundwater processes that drive salinity have been carried out on the property, including extensive groundwater monitoring, a VIC-DPI trial using sub surface drainage, and several University of Ballarat student projects.

Kevin's environmental commitment shows in his positions on environmental committees with various local organisations. He has received an Order of Australia Medal for his contribution to local government and natural resource management, while Alice was awarded the Golden Plains Shire Citizen of the Year in 2007.

The Knights have always believed the responsibility of every landholder is to leave the land in a better condition than when they received it. The qualities of the Knights are best summarised by Alice's comment, "If we are prepared to support our local communities in the way they wish to be supported, we can create a spirit and momentum that can solve any problem."

<b>Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council</b>	MEETING NUMBER: 15
	LOCATION: HOBART
	DATE: 21 MAY 2009
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	No. <b>15.23</b>

*Circulated for information on 1 June 2009*

**GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08**

1. The primary role of the Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee (GABCC) is to provide advice from community organisations and agencies to ministers on efficient, effective and sustainable whole-of-resource management and to coordinate activity between stakeholders in relation to the basin. GABCC's Operating Arrangements require the Chair to prepare an annual report for submission to the NRMCC.
2. The main achievements of the GABCC in 2007-08 are outlined in the Annual Report and include:
  - (a) Finalisation, production and distribution of the *Water Down Under - the Great Artesian Basin story* DVD and analysis of, and strategic planning for, other GAB related information materials;
  - (b) Preparation of a response to ministers on the recommendations from the mid-term review of the GAB Strategic Management Plan, including development of two companion documents, the SMP Progress and Achievements to 2007, and SMP Focus and Prospects 2007-15, which provides a basis to assess and report on progress and achievements;
  - (c) Submissions on the NSW Water Sharing Plan for the GAB, and the Australian Government's draft recovery plan for the GAB springs community;
  - (d) Input into development of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative phase 3;
  - (e) Finalisation of a Research Prospectus for the GAB, and development of promotional initiatives to encourage research; and
  - (f) Strategic consideration of cross-jurisdictional issues for attention in the next generation of state water plans.
3. The Annual Report was completed in January 2009 when information about the achievements of the GAB Sustainability Initiative was finalised.

**RESOLUTION**

4. Council **NOTED** the Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee Annual Report 2007-08 at Annex A.

**ANNEX A:** Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee Annual Report 2007-08  
*[Annex A is held by the Secretariat]*

# NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

## Communiqué

**NRMMC 15**

**21 May 2009**

Primary Industries, Natural Resources, and Environment Ministers from across Australia met in Hobart on Thursday 21 May 2009. This was the fifteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Specific issues dealt with by Council are detailed below.

### **McKell Medal**

Council presented the 19th (2008) McKell Medal to Kevin and Alice Knight from Pittong, Victoria to acknowledge their lifetime of achievement and commitment to sustainable farm management. The Knights are pioneers of whole farm and catchment planning and over the past 40 years have provided leadership in engaging others in applying these principles as the basis for sustained large scale landscape enhancement, and productivity increases. Their personal commitment is demonstrated through the establishment of over 70,000 indigenous trees on their property, and the removal of significant areas of their farm from production to control salinity and prevent wind erosion. Both Kevin and Alice have been separately awarded the Order of Australia Medal for their contributions to natural resource management and support for local communities.

### **A Collaborative Approach to Managing the Negative Impacts of Feral Camels across Australia**

Council agreed that feral camels are causing significant damage across Australia's rangelands, which will increase as the camel population increases unless concerted action is taken. Council agreed that affected jurisdictions and the Australian Government will prepare an action plan in the next three months and build on existing work to ensure management strategies are coordinated across jurisdictions and follow the principles set out in the Australian Pest Animal Strategy, including coordination across all levels of government in partnership with industry, land and water managers and all the community regardless of land tenure.

### **National Water Quality Management Strategy – Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling Phase 2**

Council endorsed new national guidelines for recycled water as part of the National Water Quality Management Strategy. The new guidelines cover the use of aquifers for water storage and recharge, and stormwater harvesting and reuse for non-drinking water purposes. The proposed new guidelines are also being considered by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council, and will be released when these processes are finalised.

### **Water Trading: Service Standards for Permanent Trade Processing Times**

Council agreed to a consistent service standard across the Murray-Darling Basin for approving permanent water trades as follows:

- approval times – 90 per cent within 20 days
- registration times – 90 per cent within 10 days.

This will improve confidence and transparency in the water market and facilitate greater efficiency. It builds on the previously agreed service standard for temporary water trades.

### **Australian Biosecurity System Reform – Beale Review Implementation**

Council noted the commitment made through primary industries ministers to strengthen the working partnership on biosecurity between governments through the development of a new national agreement on biosecurity. Council also noted that the agreement would be developed under the Primary Industries Standing Committee and Ministerial Council, in close consultation with the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee and Ministerial Council.

### **National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Funding and Review**

Council agreed that funding of \$15 million for 2009-10 was necessary for the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication program, pending completion of an independent review that will inform development of a longer term program. Funding remains subject to jurisdictional budgetary outcomes. The focus remains firmly on eradication of the Red Imported Fire Ant and the next year of the program will focus on retaining this option, as research into new detection methods for nests in rural areas progresses.

### **Weeds of National Significance Program – Continuation and Enhancement**

Council endorsed the continuation of the Weeds of National Significance program, including the national coordinator network, with revisions to the program to take into account findings of a recently completed independent review. Funding remains subject to budget processes.

### **National Siam Weed Eradication Program**

Council endorsed in principle the continuation of the Siam Weed Eradication program, based on the recommendations of the 2008 program review. Council endorsed the proposed budget and cost sharing. The program would be included in consideration of policy issues associated with long term eradication programs in November 2009. Continuation of the program will enable ongoing protection for primary industries and the environment.

### **Strategy for the National Reserve System**

Council agreed Australia's Strategy for Australia's National Reserve System, which identifies priority actions for the ongoing development of a national system of protected areas and reserves for the next 20 years. Council noted the National Reserve System as the cornerstone of national efforts to protect terrestrial biodiversity. Council also noted that the National Reserve System is one of the world's great conservation partnerships and that the strategy will provide national guidance for improved collaboration across government and with all stakeholders, to enhance the ongoing development and effective management of the National Reserve System.

### **Caring for our Country – A Partnership Framework**

Council agreed that opportunities for cooperation between jurisdictions and sharing of priorities in natural resource management continue to be pursued by jurisdictions. Council endorsed ongoing communication and collaboration in natural resource management, including in the delivery of Caring for our Country. As part of that communication, Council met with representatives of the chairs of the 56 regional natural resource management organisations. Discussion focused on the key strategic issues the regional organisations identified for the future, including a national planning framework, enhancing volunteerism in natural resource management and improving monitoring and reporting.

### **Climate Change in Primary Industries, NRM and Biodiversity – Future Directions**

Council acknowledged the linkages of the Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment study with its agreed climate change priority actions for 2009-12 and noted progress towards completion of the climate change priority actions.

### **Strategic Assessment of the Vulnerability of Australia’s Biodiversity to Climate Change**

Council agreed to publication of *The Strategic Assessment of the Vulnerability of Australia’s Biodiversity to Climate Change*, a set of independent reports prepared by an Expert Advisory Group made up of prominent Australian scientists. Council acknowledged the significant contribution the reports make to understanding of the challenges for Australian biodiversity conservation in a changing climate. Council requested advice from officials on integrating the findings into policy, including the current reviews of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia’s Biological Diversity and the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia’s Native Vegetation.

### **Draft Revised National Koala Conservation Strategy**

Council agreed to release the draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy for public comment and agreed to consider the revised strategy for final endorsement in November 2009.

### **Review of the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia’s Native Vegetation – Progress Report**

Council noted the progress, key issues and future steps in the review of the Native Vegetation Framework.

### **Geoparks**

Council voiced concern at the announcement by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to establish the Kanawinka Geopark without the formal endorsement of the Australian Government. As the management and other implications of Geopark listings are potentially significant, such actions require careful prior consideration by all jurisdictions. Council requested officials to provide further advice on the implications of Geoparks to assist Environment and Heritage ministers to develop a national position.

**Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation in PI and NRM – Employment: Key Actions and Partnerships**

Council agreed that more Indigenous people should be employed in the natural resource management and primary industries sectors, more so perhaps than other sectors, with the potential to assist in addressing the Closing the Gap strategy. Jurisdictions will consider the range of strategies that can be best progressed within their state or territory to act on this, including joint strategies with the Australian Government.

**Progress on Implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework**

Council endorsed the 2007-08 progress report on the Implementation Plan for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). Council also noted that the inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities will consider some of the key challenges for ICZM. Council will consider the application of the ICZM framework in addressing climate change issues following the release of the inquiry's report.

**Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles**

Council endorsed the Code of Practice for the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles. The Code is limited to the taking of crocodiles from the wild and the farming of crocodiles. It does not cover the public display of crocodiles in zoos and animals parks.

