



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

**Sixteenth Meeting
Perth
5 November 2009**

RECORD AND RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

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

SIXTEENTH MEETING
PERTH, 5 NOVEMBER 2009

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NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**SIXTEENTH MEETING
PERTH, 5 NOVEMBER 2009**

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NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

**SIXTEENTH MEETING
PERTH, 5 NOVEMBER 2009**

COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The Hon. Tony Burke MP (Chair)

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. John Robertson MLC

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment

VICTORIA

The Hon. Joe Helper MP

Minister for Agriculture

The Hon. Tim Holding MLA

Minister for Water

QUEENSLAND

The Hon. Tim Mulherin MP

Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland

The Hon. Michael Choi MP
(representing the Hon. Stephen Robertson MP)

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Natural resources, Water and Energy

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Hon. Terry Redman MLA

Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry

The Hon. Norman Moore MLC

Minister for Fisheries; Mines and Petroleum; Electoral Affairs

The Hon. Donna Faragher MLC

Minister for the Environment; Youth

The Hon. Dr Graham Jacobs MLA

Minister for Water; Mental Health

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. Jay Weatherill MP

Minister for Environment and Conservation

TASMANIA

The Hon. Lisa Singh MP
(representing the Hon. David Llewellyn MP)

Minister assisting the Premier on Climate Change

NORTHERN TERRITORY

The Hon. Karl Hampton MLA

Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Mr Simon Corbell MLA

Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change

NEW ZEALAND

Dr Paul Reynolds
(representing the Hon. Dr Nick Smith MP)

Ministry for the Environment

**AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATION**

Cr Bill Mitchell

Councillor

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

**Denotes member of the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee*

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Dr Conall O'Connell* Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr Daryl Quinlivan
Mr Tom Aldred

Ms Robyn Kruk* Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and
Mr Gerard Early the Arts

Mr Ian Cresswell CSIRO

Dr Greg Ayers* Bureau of Meteorology

NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms Lisa Corbyn* Department of Environment, Climate Change and
Mr Tim Rogers Water

Ms Wendy Stamp Industry and Investment NSW

VICTORIA

Mr Kevin Love Department of Sustainability and Environment

Dr Hugh Millar Biosecurity Victoria

QUEENSLAND

Mr Robert Setter* Department of Employment, Economic Development
Mr Bruce Turner and Innovation

Mr John Bradley* Department of Environment and Resource
Mr Tony Roberts Management

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Mr Rob Delane * Department of Agriculture and Food
Mr Eric Wright
Dr Debby Cousins

Mr Stuart Smith* Department of Fisheries

Mr Keiran McNamara* Department of Environment and Conservation

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr Geoff Knight* Primary Industries and Resources SA
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*

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr Richard Galton*

Mr Rod Gobbey

Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources

Dr Diana Leeder

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Mr Robert Neil

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

ALGA

Mr John Pritchard

Australian Local Government Association

SECRETARIAT

Ms Kate Woffenden

Ms Jennifer Medway

Mrs Leah Kaminski

Ms Jane Leslie

Ms Rachael Woods

Ms Cassie Browne

Ms Lesley Cornwall

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

**SIXTEENTH MEETING
PERTH, 5 NOVEMBER 2009**

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NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**SIXTEENTH MEETING
PERTH, 5 NOVEMBER 2009**

The Hon. Tony Burke MP, the meeting chair, welcomed all ministers to the sixteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Minister Burke acknowledged the traditional owners of the area, the Noongar people, and thanked the Western Australian hosts, The Hon. Terry Redman MLA, The Hon. Donna Faragher MLC, The Hon. Norman Moore MLC and The Hon. Graham Jacobs MLA.

Minister Burke welcomed The Hon. John Robertson MLC, New South Wales Minister of Climate Change and the Environment, as a new member of council.

Apologies were received from:

- The Hon. David Llewellyn MHA, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Tasmania
- The Hon. Phillip Costa MP, Minister for Water, NSW
- The Hon. Ian Macdonald MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, NSW
- The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Victoria
- The Hon. Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources Mines and Energy, Queensland
- The Hon. Paul Caica MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and Minister for Forestries, South Australia
- The Hon. Karlene Maywald MP, Minister for Water Security and Minister for River Murray, South Australia
- The Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MHA, Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Tasmania
- The Hon. Kon Vatskalis MLA, Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources, Northern Territory
- The Hon. Nick Smith MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister Responsible for Climate Change Issues, New Zealand
- The Hon. Tim Groser MP, Minister of Conservation, New Zealand.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.1

AQUACULTURE IN COMMONWEALTH WATERS

1. Work has been undertaken on aquaculture in Commonwealth waters since 1999. This work has focused on identifying the issues surrounding the development of a regulatory framework.
2. In June 2005, the Australian Fisheries Management Forum, which is a committee of the Marine and Coastal Committee of the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee, agreed in-principle for the state and NT governments to manage the day-to-day regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters.
3. A program to develop the necessary regulatory framework to facilitate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters has been a low priority because there has been little commercial interest in offshore aquaculture investment to date.
4. In April 2009 the Western Australian Aquaculture Development Council sought permission for a pilot aquaculture project in Commonwealth waters off WA. Some existing impediments could be overcome by utilising an existing Offshore Constitutional Settlement to allow the pilot to proceed. However, an assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and some amendments to the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (WA)* would have likely been required. The proponent for the project has subsequently withdrawn.
5. The Australian government would like to continue to work with state and territory governments to remove impediments to aquaculture investment in Commonwealth waters by progressing the attached workplan (Annex A) through the sub committees of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council.
6. While demand for offshore aquaculture is currently limited, it is likely to increase due to rising demand for seafood, limits to wild stocks, limited suitable coastal locations and as a potential method to adapt to the effects of climate change on current aquaculture practice.
7. There are currently no provisions for the regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters within the Commonwealth *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (FMA). Rather, the Australian Government Solicitor has advised without amendment, section 95(1) of the FMA would technically prevent the 'unauthorised removal of fish' from aquaculture facilities. In addition, section

10(2) of the FMA prevents the application of state or NT fisheries legislation in Commonwealth waters.

8. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), and state and NT fisheries agencies are developing options to amend the legislative framework for the regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters. Subject to further consultation, amendment of the FMA to allow state and NT legislation to apply extraterritorially is considered the most practical approach to achieve this.
9. Based on experience in WA, it is likely that other state and NT legislation will also need to be amended to apply beyond state waters. This may include legislation on aquaculture lease allocation and tenure, veterinary medicines, and livestock.
10. DAFF is advised that any aquaculture taking place in Commonwealth waters may need to be referred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for consideration as a matter of National Environmental Significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. There is a need to ensure that environmental assessments can address Commonwealth, state and NT environmental approval needs.
11. Legal advice has been sought from the Australian Government Solicitor on a number of legislative options to facilitate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters.
12. DAFF consulted with the WA Aquaculture Development Council, the Department of Fisheries WA, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, and DEWHA to develop a temporary approach for a pilot project in Commonwealth waters off WA. The same agencies have also been involved with development of options for a legislative framework more broadly.
13. The workplan anticipates formal consultations with state/NT governments to decide the appropriate regulatory framework. Actions to progress the most appropriate framework will first be referred to the Aquaculture sub-Committee of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority for consideration.
14. The National Aquaculture Council has indicated its support for the proposed approach to establishing a regulatory framework for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters.

RESOLUTIONS

15. Council:
 - (a) **NOTED** the current impediments to development of offshore aquaculture in Commonwealth waters
 - (b) **NOTED** the attached workplan aimed toward a legislative framework that will allow state and Northern Territory governments to manage and regulate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters
 - (c) **REQUESTED** that following further planned work, a progress report be provided to council at its meeting in April 2010.

ANNEX A: Workplan to develop a regulatory framework for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters

WORKPLAN

TO DEVELOP A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR AQUACULTURE IN COMMONWEALTH WATERS

The purpose of this Workplan is to document the steps necessary to develop a regulatory framework for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters.

Several legislative options for the regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters have been identified in legal advice obtained from the Australian Government Solicitor. The most appropriate option will depend largely on how regulatory responsibilities are decided between the States and the Commonwealth.

The development of a regulatory framework for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters can be divided into two phases. The first phase involves determining the appropriate division of responsibilities between state/NT and Commonwealth governments. The second phase involves providing for this arrangement in legislation or legislative amendments.

PHASE I—DETERMINING JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The regulation of aquaculture involves the administration of leasing, licensing, fees, penalties, environmental impacts, and possibly zoning arrangements. Currently all these aspects of aquaculture regulation in near-shore waters are undertaken by the state and the NT governments.

A paper outlining options for regulation is currently being developed in conjunction with the WA government, which has been tasked to represent the states/NT in the development of the paper. In early October 2009, the Aquaculture sub-Committee of the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) will review this paper and recommend an approach to the AFMF and Marine and Coastal Committee. Prior to this, Minister Burke has requested that an update on the issue of Aquaculture in Commonwealth waters be added to the agenda for the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council meeting in November.

The state and NT agencies, through the Australian Fisheries Management Forum in June 2005, agreed in principle to undertake day-to-day regulation of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters. This is also the Australian government's preferred position.

Environmental approval for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters falls under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Currently, aquaculture developments in Commonwealth waters would be referred to the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for consideration as a matter of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act. A policy statement on offshore aquaculture was developed by DEWHA in 2006. DEWHA is currently reviewing this policy.

Milestone	Date	Outcome
1.	September 2009	Options paper presented to the Aquaculture sub-Committee of AFMF out of session
2.	October 2009	Aquaculture sub-Committee meet and develop a recommended approach to the division of responsibilities ¹
3.	October 2009	Consultation with DEWHA on proposed approach and possible arrangements under EPBC Act
4.	November 2009	Update provided to Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (As per Ministers request of 11/08/09)
5.	February 2010	Options paper and recommended approach presented to AFMF for endorsement
6.	July 2010	Option paper and recommended approach presented to MACC for endorsement.
7.	September 2010	Options paper and recommended approach presented to NRMMCSC for endorsement
8.	October 2010	Options paper and recommended approach presented to NRMMC for endorsement

PHASE II—PROVIDING FOR THE REGULATION OF AQUACULTURE IN COMMONWEALTH WATERS IN LEGISLATION

Depending on the agreed division of responsibilities, the provisions for the regulation of aquaculture can be included in Commonwealth legislation, and/or state legislation. The intent would be to enable existing state regulatory provisions to apply extra-territorially.

In all legislative arrangements, with the possible exception of a new Commonwealth Act, the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (FMA) will need to be amended, as the FMA currently prevents the removal of fish from Commonwealth waters other than by licensed fishers, and prevents the application of state/NT legislation.

States already regulate aquaculture and some have provisions in their legislation. For these states, the solution could be as simple as amending the FMA. However, state and NT agencies will need to review their respective legislation to ensure all regulatory elements for aquaculture (veterinary medicines and feedstuffs etc) are covered.

The timelines, milestones and Workplan for phase II will depend on outcomes of Phase I.

¹ Following the recommendation of a preferred option, the Aquaculture sub-Committee has agreed to form a working group including DEWHA to develop implementation plans for the preferred option. (Aquaculture Sub-Committee recommendation, March 2009)

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.2

**CSIRO AQUACULTURE LAND USE MAPPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT**

RESOLUTION

1. Council **NOTED** a presentation from Dr Nigel Preston, Food Futures National Research Flagship, CSIRO, on recent advances in aquaculture land use mapping and environmental management.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.3

**PRESENTATION FROM THE BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY AND THE
AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ON THEIR ACTIVITIES IN
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

RESOLUTION

1. Council **NOTED** a joint presentation from Dr Rob Vertessy, Deputy Director (Water), Bureau of Meteorology and from Peter Harper, Deputy Australian Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics, on an update on national environmental information activities of the Bureau of Meteorology's Australian Water Resources Information System (AWRIS) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Agriculture and Environmental Program.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.4

**EVALUATING OPTIONS FOR WATER SENSITIVE URBAN
DESIGN—A NATIONAL GUIDE**

1. The guide has been developed by the inter-jurisdictional Joint Steering Committee for Water Sensitive Cities (JSCWSC) to meet the National Water Initiative (NWI) paragraph 92(ii) commitment to ‘develop national guidelines for evaluating options for water sensitive urban developments, both in new sub-divisions and high rise buildings by 2006’. The National Water Commission (NWC) funded the guide through its Raising National Water Standards program, with a funding contribution from the New South Wales government.
2. The guide is aimed at facilitating the uptake of water sensitive urban design (WSUD). It promotes a nationally consistent approach to WSUD development assessment and encourages governments and other stakeholders to consider the adoption of the principles and techniques it presents. The JSCWSC, the COAG Water Sub Group and NRMSC 18 (September 2009) have approved the guide for forwarding to council for public release. The Royal Australian Institute of Architects has offered to disseminate the guide as they feel it will be useful to their members. Other stakeholder groups may do the same.
3. The NWC is satisfied that the guide fulfills the NWI paragraph 92(ii) commitment (although the initial timeframe was that it would be completed by 2006).
4. Use of the guide is voluntary and it is expected to be well received by stakeholders as a valuable tool supporting implementation of WSUD.
5. It is recommended that council endorse and release the guide due to its national application and that it will benefit a large group of stakeholders, including land developers and land development assessment authorities/local governments.
6. To facilitate broad dissemination and national uptake it is recommended that council make the guide available from its website, as well as enable jurisdictions to make the guide available from their relevant websites.
7. The liability disclaimer to the guide covers all member governments of council and their respective ministers in order to support this cooperative approach.
8. Targeted consultation was undertaken on the guide by the JSCWSC (a list of stakeholders consulted is at [Annex C](#)). Stakeholder feedback was supportive.

RESOLUTIONS

9. Council:

- (a) **ENDORSED** *Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design—A National Guide* ('the guide' at Annexes A and B); and
- (b) **AGREED** to the guide's public release on the NRMCC website and to enable jurisdictions to make the guide available from their relevant websites, as appropriate.

ANNEX A: *Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design—A National Guide*

ANNEX B: *Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design—A National Guide: Appendices*
[Annexes A and B are held by the secretariat]

ANNEX C: Stakeholders consulted on the guide

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED ON THE GUIDE:

- National Water Commission Urban Water Advisory Group;
- Australian Local Government Association;
- Urban Development Institute of Australia;
- Master Builders Australia;
- Planning Institute of Australia;
- Property Council of Australia;
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects; and
- Stormwater Industry Association and the Planning Officials Group (Senior Officials Committee established under the Local Government and Planning Minister's Council).

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.5

**NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR RAMSAR WETLANDS—MODULE FOR
NOTIFYING CHANGES IN ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF
AUSTRALIAN RAMSAR SITES UNDER ARTICLE 3.2 OF THE
RAMSAR CONVENTION**

1. NRMSC 12 (October 2006) agreed to the development and proposed content of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands. These are being developed as a series of modules, to facilitate improved management of Ramsar sites and maintenance of ecological character, in line with government commitments under the Ramsar Convention and responsibilities under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
2. NRMMC 13 (OOS, June 2008) endorsed the first two modules for public release: Mapping Specifications for Australian Ramsar Wetlands, and National Framework and Guidance for Describing the Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands.
3. Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention (the Convention) requires parties to maintain the ecological character of their Ramsar sites and to notify the Ramsar Secretariat, without delay, if the ecological character of their sites has changed, is changing, or is likely to change, as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. The notifications are a mandatory administrative process managed by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) as the Administrative Authority for the Convention in Australia. To date, three Article 3.2 notifications have been made for Australian sites.
4. There is increasing public pressure for Australia to make Article 3.2 notifications for a number of its Ramsar sites, with the community's attention focused in particular on sites within the Murray-Darling Basin.
5. An assessment to determine whether or not a notification needs to be made for a site requires a good understanding of the ecological character of the site and of the natural variability that can be expected at a site—thereby allowing a determination to be made as to whether or not a recorded change (once it has been ascertained that it is human induced), goes beyond the limits of acceptable change.
6. A process has been established to better understand the condition and threats to Australia's sites, including the preparation of detailed ecological character descriptions for each site (guidance for which was established through the second module of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands) and the establishment of a

Rolling Review for Ramsar sites (with the trial scheduled for completion by May 2010).

7. While these activities will provide a robust information base and a consistent reporting process to support early detection of possible change at Ramsar sites, the Convention's requirement for notification 'without delay', and the increasing volume of scientifically robust information emerging for different sites as a result of other processes, has required early work on formalising the process to be used for Article 3.2 notifications in Australia.
8. The draft *National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands (Article 3.2) Module 3 of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands—Implementing the Ramsar Convention in Australia* (the draft guidelines) ([Annex A](#)) specifies the nature and standard of the evidence that is required to support an assessment of change in ecological character, noting the need to distinguish between sites that 'have changed', 'are changing', or are 'likely to change'; and the need to ensure that a case has been made that the change is outside the limits of normal variability for that site.
9. The recent assessment and subsequent Article 3.2 notification of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar site has served as an effective trial of thinking on the matters which needed to be addressed in the draft guidelines, as well as identifying several practical considerations that could usefully be incorporated into the draft guidelines.
10. A set of principles, based on broader Convention guidance, has been established to inform the development of Article 3.2 notifications in the Australian context. These principles, which underpin the draft guidelines, are as follows:
 - (a) Assessment of change will be undertaken with respect to *critical* components, processes and benefits/services of the ecological character of the site.
 - (b) An assessment of change to support a notification must be based on best available science
 - (c) The fact that a site was undergoing human-induced ecological character change at the time of listing does not preclude the need for an assessment, and possible notification of change, if there is evidence of significant ongoing adverse ecological change (this will require consideration on a case-by-case basis).
 - (d) Where the natural variability of a site cannot reasonably be established for the critical component (process, benefit or service) against which change is being assessed, a notification, if made, will only be on the basis of '*is likely to*' change.
 - (e) A notification will not be made where the apparent character change has been identified as arising from the use of inadequate data sets at the time of listing.

- (f) a notification will not be made where climate change is the *principal* cause of identified ecological character change.
11. The draft guidelines also define roles and responsibilities. Making an Article 3.2 notification is a collaborative process between the Australian administrative authority (DEWHA), the relevant state or territory government management agency and the site manager/landowner. Any costs associated with assessing the need for, preparing and responding to a notification will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 12. Convention guidance requires parties with Ramsar sites for which a formal notification under Article 3.2 has been made to advise, at the earliest opportunity, of steps taken to address the change in ecological character. The draft guidelines specify the development of a response strategy for a site for which a notification is made. This is not intended to replace existing management plans; rather it is a succinct overview of the management goals and objectives agreed for the site following notification, the activities being undertaken to achieve these objectives, the different roles and responsibilities of the participants, and any monitoring and reporting arrangements.
 13. The response strategy is also the vehicle which is used to agree to the mechanisms to address those changes in ecological character which result from actions over which Australia has no control – such as destruction of migratory bird habitat in another country, leading to reduced migratory bird numbers at an Australian site. In such a case, it may be that the agreed action is the making of representations under an international migratory bird agreement.
 14. While the draft guidelines will ensure a consistent approach to making an Article 3.2 notification under the Convention, they will also serve to increase public and landholder understanding and awareness of our obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and of the levels of evidence that are necessary to support such notifications. The latter is a significant issue in the context of Australia's complex natural variability.
 15. The draft guidelines will be refined over time, both as new issues emerge and our understanding of the issues increases.
 16. As has been the case with previous Ramsar guidance modules produced by Australia, it is anticipated that this work will be of international interest and the completed guideline module will be forwarded to the Ramsar Secretariat's Scientific and Technical Review Panel.
 17. The costs of developing and producing the draft guidelines has been met by the Australian Government. The Australian Government will also cover the primary cost of assessing the need for, and preparing, Article 3.2 notifications.
 18. Any additional costs associated with responding to a notification will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, as responsibility for the costs will depend on the site and the actions required. In some cases the notification may not trigger additional action, other than the preparation of a new Regulation Impact Statement, or an action may fall under the existing responsibilities of a site manager, for

instance where the sites falls within a national park. In other instances, where additional action is needed, a case may be made for contributions by other parties, including the Australian Government. Until any required actions are properly understood, however, costs and responsibilities cannot be determined. This position is reflected in paragraph 13 above.

RESOLUTIONS

19. Council:

- (a) **ENDORSED** the draft *National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands (Article 3.2) Module 3 of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands—Implementing the Ramsar Convention in Australia (Annex A)*
- (b) **NOTED** that the Australian Government will cover the primary cost of assessment for the purpose of an Article 3.2 notification and that where actions are required following notification, any additional costs will be considered by parties on a case-by-case basis.

ANNEX A: Draft *National Guidance on Notifying Change in Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar Wetlands (Article 3.2) Module 3 of the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetland— Implementing the Ramsar Convention in Australia*
[Annex A is held by the secretariat]

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.6

**REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
AUSTRALIA'S BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY—THE REVISED DRAFT
AUSTRALIA'S BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

1. NRMMC 10 (September 2006) agreed to the second five-yearly review of the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity 1996*.
2. In March 2009, NRMMC 15 agreed, out-of-session, to release *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2020* (consultation draft) for public comment from 23 March to 5 June 2009. The consultation included public submissions, information sessions and discussions with peak industry and environment bodies. The National Biodiversity Strategy Review Secretariat also commissioned six independent expert reviews of the consultation draft.
3. NRMSC 18 considered the revised draft *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2030* (revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy) at its meeting on 25 September 2009. NRMSC agreed that following further revision to the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy a revised version be forwarded to NRMMC 16 for discussion and endorsement of the strategic framework with any issues raised by NRMMC to be addressed by NRMSC by the end of 2009. NRMMC would then endorse the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy out-of-session by the end of January 2010 for whole-of-government clearances by jurisdictions in February–March 2010. Final endorsement of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy would be sought at the first NRMMC meeting in April 2010.

Revisions to the Consultation Draft

4. The National Biodiversity Strategy Review Task Group, Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee and NRMSC have revised the consultation draft to take account of the significant feedback from the public consultation process.
5. The consultation draft received clear support for the proposed new directions outlined, including the need to shift conservation efforts towards integration at landscape and seascape scale. There was also support for building ecological resilience to address risks from climate change and for improved monitoring and reporting on progress. However, the consultation draft was consistently criticised for its lack of specific targets, and a perceived lack of urgency and commitment by governments to fund and implement it. This criticism was also consistently and strongly made by the six independent reviewers.

6. Changes to the consultation draft in response to the feedback included: converting the six priorities for change to three priorities for action; adding national level targets for each outcome under the priorities for action; and strengthening the treatment of threats.
7. NRMSC 18 instructed that the targets and actions be focused around continuous improvement and should not contain timeframes.
8. The actions now appear in the implementation section of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. They are an indicative set, serving to provide sufficient guidance to address particular targets and also providing the necessary flexibility for jurisdictions to address the different circumstances and priorities that exist across Australia. It is important that the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy allows space for innovation, as new approaches to help achieve the targets are likely to develop over time.
9. Advice on promotion of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and a short companion brochure will be provided to the first NRMCC meeting in April 2010.

Policy alignment and implementation

10. The revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is an important national policy document that provides a high-level framework to guide how governments, the community, industry and scientists manage and protect Australia's plants, animals and ecosystems over the next 20 years.
11. As such, Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will operate as a national policy umbrella over other NRMCC national strategies. It will facilitate progressive alignment between issue-specific strategies, including the *Strategy for Australia's National Reserve System 2009–2030*, the *National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation*, the Australian Weeds Strategy, the Australian Pest Animal Strategy and the National Koala Strategy.
12. Governments are already making significant investments in biodiversity conservation. As many of these frameworks already include content in line with the key themes of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, progression to this updated version is an evolutionary step.
13. The role of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is to provide a clear framework within which all governments can align and prioritise their current and future policies and programs, and to provide an effective mechanism for aligning those efforts.
14. Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will also help identify where existing efforts are insufficient and to ensure that, whenever feasible, jurisdictions work collaboratively to address emerging issues around agreed strategic outcomes. Precisely how this is done will always be determined by the particular priorities and available resources of each government.
15. It is proposed that the timeframe for the strategy be 2010–2030 to reflect the long timeframes involved and to align with the *Strategy for Australia's National Reserve System 2009–2030*.

16. Findings from Australia's biodiversity and climate change, a strategic assessment of the vulnerability of Australia's biodiversity (2009) have been incorporated into the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The key messages have been incorporated into the introductory text and the targets and the actions.

Implementation and Reporting

17. The revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy outlines reporting and review arrangements. A future paper will be provided to NRMMC for endorsement of ongoing monitoring and reporting arrangements.
18. Public consultation has been extensive and is outlined above.

Jurisdictional endorsement

19. Some jurisdictions have indicated that they will need to submit the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy to their Cabinets to seek approval prior to final endorsement by NRMMC. An indicative timeline for the review is at [Annex B](#).
20. Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be a high-level, direction-setting framework that will guide individual jurisdiction investment in biodiversity conservation. Specific resourcing decisions will be the responsibility of each jurisdiction.
21. The Australian Government will fund the printing, distribution and promotion of the Strategy.

RESOLUTIONS

22. Council:
- (a) **DISCUSSED** the revised draft *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2030* (revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy) at [Annex A](#) and instructs standing committee to address any issues raised by council by the end of 2009
 - (b) **AGREED** to endorse out-of-session by the end of January 2010 the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for whole-of-government clearances by jurisdictions
 - (c) **AGREED** that jurisdictions will seek whole-of-government clearance of the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy during February–March 2010
 - (d) **AGREED** that following whole-of-government clearance processes, the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be submitted to council for final endorsement in session at the first council meeting in 2010

- (e) **ENDORSED** the strategic framework of the draft strategy, as set out in the first two columns of Figure 5 in Part B
- (f) **AGREED** that the strategy should contain measurable targets
- (g) **AGREED** that jurisdictions will report to council on progress in the second year and on actions and targets in the fourth year of the five year review cycle
- (h) **REQUESTED** standing committee to revise the strategy in line with these resolutions, including further work on the targets for consideration by council at its next meeting
- (i) **REQUESTED** that standing committee establish arrangements for reporting on progress as outlined in (g), including opportunities for streamlining of reporting with existing jurisdictional arrangements, and report to council's second meeting in 2010
- (j) **REQUESTED** that the costs of any additional monitoring needed to measure targets, and responsibility for funding any additional measurement, be presented at the next meeting.

ANNEX A: Revised draft *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2030*
[Annex A is held by the secretariat]

ANNEX B: Indicative Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy Review

Review of National Biodiversity Strategy

Indicative Timeline for the National Biodiversity Strategy Review

Meeting /Who	Task	Due date
NBS Secretariat	Submit draft revised Strategy to NRMMC Secretariat.	21 October 2009
NRMMC 16	Discuss Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and provide advice to NRMSC on further work required.	5 November 2009
NRMSC and Secretariat	Resolve outstanding issues raised by NRMMC.	6 November to 3 December 2009
DEWHA Editor/designer Secretariat	Produce print-ready final revised Strategy.	3–11 December 2009
Secretariat	Provide print-ready final revised Strategy to NRMSC for OOS endorsement.	11 December 2009
NRMSC	Endorse print-ready final revised Strategy for submission to NRMMC.	18 December 2009
NBS Secretariat	Provide print-ready final revised Strategy to NRMMC for endorsement OOS.	18 December 2009
NRMMC	Endorse print-ready final revised Strategy subject to Whole of Government/Cabinet approval in jurisdictions (as required).	29 January 2010
Jurisdictions	Obtain Whole of Government/Cabinet approval (as required).	February to March 2010
NBS Secretariat	Provide print-ready final revised Strategy to NRMMC Secretariat.	March–April 2010
NRMMC 17	Endorse Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and launch arrangements.	April 2010
NBS Secretariat	Print, distribute and market Strategy.	May 2010 (ongoing)

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.7

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIVE VEGETATION

1. *The National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation* (1999 NVF) was first agreed by the former Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council in 1999, and adopted and republished by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) in August 2001.
2. The 1999 NVF has been an important driver for the development of native vegetation management policy and legislation in all jurisdictions. NRMMC 6 (April 2004) directed the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC) to review and update the 1999 NVF. At the end of 2004 the Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee (NRPPC) established a multi-jurisdictional Native Vegetation Framework Review Task Group (task group) to produce a draft revised NVF. In 2006 work on revising the NVF was suspended by NRMSC and the task group did not meet between July 2006 and mid-2008.
3. NRMMC 13 (April 2008) confirmed the importance of the draft revised NVF 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 that meeting, council directed NRMSC to 'finalise the review of the framework, taking into account the review of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, and to report to council in 2009'.
4. Since the task group reconvened in August 2008, the revised draft NVF has required substantial reworking to bring it up-to-date.
5. The draft NVF's vision is that 'native vegetation across the Australian landscape is managed in an ecologically sustainable way in recognition of its enduring environmental, cultural, spiritual, social and economic values in a changing climate'.
6. There are five specific goals to meet this vision. These are:
 - (a) Goal 1—Increase the national extent of native vegetation to build ecosystem resilience
 - (b) Goal 2—Maintain and improve the condition of native vegetation
 - (c) Goal 3—Maximise the native vegetation benefits of carbon markets
 - (d) Goal 4—Build capacity to understand, value and manage native vegetation

- (e) Goal 5—Progress the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in management of native vegetation.
7. As part of the review of the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity*, council released Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020 (consultation draft) for public comment from March–June 2009. A clear outcome of the public consultation on the consultation draft was a public and expert call for setting targets and for strengthening arrangements for implementation. Consistent with council's request to take the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity* review into account, the draft revised NVF now includes targets for each goal, as well as being consistent in structure, priorities, key elements and language.
 8. In line with the structure of the revised draft *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030* (revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy), the actions appear in the implementation section of the draft revised NVF. This is an indicative set of actions, serving to provide sufficient guidance to address particular targets and also providing the necessary flexibility for jurisdictions to address the different circumstances and priorities that exist across Australia.
 9. Also consistent with council's request, new approaches to biodiversity conservation are reflected in the draft revised NVF, such as supporting ecologically sustainable management of Australia's native vegetation for landscape scale resilience and addressing the increasing challenges of climate change. These align with the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and *Australia's Biodiversity and Climate Change: A Strategic Assessment of the Vulnerability of Australia's Biodiversity to Climate Change*.
 10. NRMSC 18 on 25 September 2009 considered the scheduling of when the revised versions of both the NVF and revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy should be endorsed by council in 2010, and agreed that the NVF should follow after the revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. Council endorsement of the final revised draft Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be sought at NRMMC 17 in April 2010 and endorsement of the final NVF sought at NRMMC 18 in November 2010.
 11. Some jurisdictions may require whole-of-government consent before endorsement of the final NVF. This is not needed prior to the consultation draft being released.
 12. Indigenous consultation through the Indigenous Advisory Committee (a statutory body constituted under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) has been ongoing, particularly in regards to Goal 5.
 13. The communication plan for the public release of the draft revised NVF (Annex B) was endorsed at NRMSC 18 for progression to council.
 14. The Australian Government is providing funds for the public consultations and for the professional editing, layout and design work. In line with the agreed communication plan, any expenditure by other jurisdictions on public consultations with states or territory stakeholders is in the discretion of each jurisdiction.

RESOLUTIONS

15. Council:

- (a) **ENDORSED** the release of the draft revised *Australia's Native Vegetation Framework* (NVF) at Annex A for public consultation in February–March 2010
- (b) **NOTED** that the NVF will be professionally designed prior to its release
- (c) **ENDORSED** the communication plan for public consultation at Annex B
- (d) **ENDORSED** the NVF review timeline at Annex C
- (e) **AGREED** that the revised goals and targets will be included in the consultation draft prior to engaging in public consultation.

ANNEX A: *Australia's Native Vegetation Framework* (Draft 12 October 2009)

ANNEX B: Communication Plan for the Public Release of Australia's Native Vegetation Framework (NVF)
[Annexes A and B are held by the secretariat]

ANNEX C: Native Vegetation Framework (NVF) Review Timeline

Native Vegetation Framework (NVF) Review Timeline

Meeting	Action	Date
NRPPC OOS	NRPPC receives copy of NRMSC 18 papers, for info.	17 September 2009
NVF Task Group Meeting 21	Task Group endorsement of draft revised NVF	22 September 2009, Teleconference
NRMSC 18	NRMSC notes progress of draft revised NVF	25 September 2009
NVF Secretariat	Revise NVF in line with recommendations from task group. Send NRPPC OOS papers for endorsement of draft revised NVF for public consultation.	7 October 2009
NRPPC OOS	NRPPC endorse the draft revised NVF going to NRMSC for endorsement for public consultation	9 October 2009
NVF Secretariat	Revise NVF in line with recommendations from NRPPC. Send NRMSC OOS papers for endorsement of draft revised NVF for public consultation.	12 October 2009
NRMSC OOS	NRMSC endorse revised NVF going to NRMMC for endorsement for public consultation	19 October 2009
NRMMC 16	Endorse draft NVF for public consultation	5 November 2009
	Undertake public consultations	February - March 2010
NVF Task Group and Secretariat	Revision following public consultation	April – May 2010
NVF Task Group Meeting 22	Agree to revised NVF following public consultation and revision	May 2010
NRPPC	Agreement to final NVF going to NRMMC (via NRMSC) for endorsement	May 2010
NRMSC 20	Agreement to final NVF going to NRMMC for endorsement	September 2010
NRMMC 18	Endorse the final NVF	November 2010
NVF Secretariat	Design, printing and public distribution of NVF	Late 2010

OOS=Out-of-session

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.8

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL KOALA CONSERVATION STRATEGY

1. NRMMC 11 (November 2006) agreed to review the National Koala Conservation Strategy (1998) (1998 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. As part of the review, the Australian Government engaged a consultancy to evaluate progress on implementation of the objectives of the 1998 strategy and to provide recommendations for updating and improving the 1998 strategy.
3. 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 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
4. The review concluded that the 1998 strategy was a good framework for the conservation and management of koalas but that, due to a lack of implementation, it was not effective in achieving its goal of maintaining viable populations of koalas across their natural range. It noted that the Australian Government and state governments had not adequately provided the recognition, promotion, funding and leadership necessary to ensure that the objectives were met.
5. The review recommended a number of changes to the 1998 strategy. Many stakeholders considered that a national koala strategy was best driven at the national level and, while the states are largely responsible for its implementation, it recommended that the Australian Government lead in coordinating implementation of the strategy.
6. NRMMC 15 (May 2009) agreed to make a draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009–2014 (the draft strategy) available for public comment for two months from 6 June to 5 August 2009. The Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts coordinated 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.
7. A total of 53 submissions were received in response to the invitation for comment. Of those, the overwhelming majority of respondents were from Queensland (35) and

New South Wales (13). Of the 53 submissions, 27 generally supported the direction and content of the draft strategy, and five generally did not support the draft strategy. Twenty submissions did not comment on whether they supported the draft strategy overall.

8. The biggest concerns raised in the submissions were:
 - (a) lack of funding
 - (b) lack of enforcement or legislation for the strategy
 - (c) concerns about the failure of koala protection and management in South East Queensland Bioregion
 - (d) prioritise action over research
 - (e) need to address disease.

9. Further details can be found in the summary of submissions at [Annex B](#).

10. The draft strategy has been revised in response to submissions. The key changes made to the draft strategy since it was last presented to Council in May 2009 are:
 - (a) clear articulation of the relationship between the revised draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy (the revised draft strategy) and other national strategies, and state and local government planning and policy frameworks
 - (b) stronger references to the role of the strategy in informing and encouraging involvement and investment in koala conservation by business, community and philanthropic groups
 - (c) specific performance measures for the key outcomes
 - (d) additional references to involvement of local government and koala care groups in relevant actions and better recognition of current local initiatives
 - (e) additional scope in the implementation team to involve representatives from veterinarian and koala care groups.

11. The revised draft strategy ([Annex A](#)) incorporates an implementation plan to address the issues raised in the report. The implementation plan, which is an appendix to the revised draft strategy, includes clear, realistic actions with targets and timeframes. The revised draft strategy now clearly articulates measurable outcomes and incorporates specific performance indicators. A reporting framework will ensure regular updates to NRMMC on progress.

12. The implementation plan is intended to provide direction to stakeholders in meeting objectives under the revised draft strategy, and also provides for the Australian Government and state 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.

RESOLUTIONS

13. Council:

- (a) **ENDORSED** the revised draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009–2014 (Annex A) for public release; and
- (b) **REQUESTED** standing committee to provide an update on progress to council at its next meeting in April 2010.

ANNEX A: Revised Draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014

[Annex A is held by the secretariat]

ANNEX B: Draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy: Summary of Submissions received during public consultation period
6 June–5 August 2009

Draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy

Summary of Submissions Received during Public Consultation Period 6 June – 5 August 2009

As at 17 August 2009 (there were two late submissions), a total of 53 submissions were received in response to the invitation to comment on the draft National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy.

Respondents were mostly from Queensland or NSW:

Qld = 35

NSW = 13

ACT = 4 (3 researchers from ANU and CSIRO, 1 from Defence Dept)

SA = 1

Respondents identified themselves as:

- Individual = 14
- Koala carer group = 13
- Non-government organisation / conservation group = 10
- Local government = 5
- Researcher = 4
- State government affiliated (advisory group or regional body) = 2
- Other = 5
 - Commonwealth agency - Dept of Defence
 - Council of Mayors (local government advocacy organisation);
 - FAIR GO Committee;
 - Vet;
 - 'wildlife writers';

Several people made submission as an individual as well as on behalf of an organisation – these were similar submissions.

Key points

Of the 53 submissions, 27 generally supported the direction and content of the strategy (one of limited support), five generally did not support the strategy. Twenty submissions did not comment on whether they supported the strategy overall.

The biggest concerns raised in the submissions were:

- Lack of funding—many called for clear funding commitments from national and state governments, stating that they lacked faith in the outcomes of the strategy without any further funding commitments. Commitments should be identified in the strategy.
- Lack of enforcement or legislation for the strategy—many also called for listing of the koala under the EPBC Act which was seen as a way to provide legislative teeth.
- Concerns about the failure of koala protection and management in South East Queensland Bioregion and issues regarding development within local areas—there was significant criticism of the Queensland government's failure to prevent loss of koala habitat

- Prioritise action over research—many felt that enough research had been done, and that urgent implementation of a number of actions was required, including habitat protection.
- Disease—some called for more research into retrovirus and vaccine for koala diseases.

Other major points:

- More support for koala carer groups—include in decision-making, and provide direct funding.
- Local governments to be included in mapping and decision-making, especially regarding priority areas.
- Establishment of a national database of mapping data / base level data with follow-up monitoring—need for an accepted standard or integration between methods.
- Need to prioritise suitable habitat.
- Inclusion of carbon offset programs relating to maintenance/recovery of threatened species into proposed Emissions Trading Scheme.

Full list of submissions

Australian Government Department of Defence
 Australian Koala Foundation
 Australian Rescue and Rehabilitation of Wildlife (ARROW)
 Australian Wildlife Hospital
 Birkdale Progress Association Inc
 Conservation of North Ocean Shores Inc
 Council of Mayors (SEQ)
 CSIRO
 Department of Defence
 Sunshine Coast Regional Council
 FAIR GO Committee
 Far South Coast Advisory Committee, NPWG, NSW DECCW
 Friends of the Koala Inc
 Gold Coast City Council
 Hunter Koala Preservation Society Inc
 Ipswich City Council
 Ipswich Koala Protection Society
 Kangaroo Island NRM region
 Koala Action Group Qld Inc
 Koala Action Pine Rivers Inc.
 Koalas in Care Inc
 Logan and Albert Conservation Association Inc
 Moggill Koala Hospital Association (Inc.)
 Moreton Bay Koala Rescue Inc
 National Farmers Federation
 Pine Rivers Koala Care Association Inc
 Redlands City Council
 Moreton Bay Regional Council
 Stradbroke Island Management Organisation
 Sunshine Coast Environment Council
 Tea Trees Nature Refuge
 The Myall Koala and Environment Group Inc
 Wildcare Australia Inc
 Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
 Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld - Pine Rivers Branch

Submissions were made by several researchers at the Australian National University, Central Queensland University, University of Queensland

14 submissions were from individuals

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.9

DRAFT FERAL CAMEL ACTION PLAN

1. At NRMMC 15 (May 2009) in Hobart, council considered a paper provided by the Northern Territory Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage seeking agreement on the seriousness of the current camel situation. NRMMC agreed that a Feral Camel Action Plan covering the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland be developed.
2. At its last meeting (30 June to 1 July 2009) the Vertebrate Pests Committee (VPC) agreed to develop the draft Feral Camel Action Plan (the draft plan) via a Feral Camel Working Group. The Feral Camel Working Group has a member from each of the affected jurisdictions and the Australian Government. Subsequently the VPC, the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) and the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC) considered the draft Feral Camel Action Plan (Annex A) and agreed that:
 - (a) It is an appropriate plan under its Goal 3, Objective 3.3 of the APAS ('To coordinate the management of established pest animals across Australia') and has been prepared in accordance with the principles of the Australian Pest Animal Strategy
 - (b) The implementation of the draft Feral Camel Action Plan will require funding from the affected jurisdictions
 - (c) The draft Feral Camel Action Plan should be subject to a public consultation process.

Australian Pest Animal Strategy (APAS) Principles

3. The Feral Camel Working Group was asked to develop the Feral Camel Action Plan in accordance with the APAS principles. The Vertebrate Pests Committee (VPC) has endorsed the draft plan as doing so. A reconciliation of the approach to the APAS principles is at Annex B.

Funding

4. The draft plan has been developed without any commitment from affected governments to fund its implementation. The Australian Government has provided \$19 million over four years under the Caring for our Country as its contribution. This funding is largely involved in the delivery of Goal 2 of the draft plan—to remove the over-abundance of feral camels from the landscape.
5. In order for the Feral Camel Action Plan to be implemented other resources will need to be committed to the actions outlined in the plan. This issue will need to be discussed by ministers at NRMMC 16 in November 2009.

Public Consultation

6. No public consultation has been undertaken on the draft plan. Section 4.2 of the draft plan notes the potential for NRMMC to approve the draft plan for public comment for a three month period. It also notes that any public comments would be assessed by the VPC's Feral Camel Action Working Group and the draft plan modified as appropriate before being returned to NRMMC for endorsement.
7. The Feral Camel Working Group contains members from the affected jurisdictions and the Australian Government. All jurisdictions have been consulted on the draft plan via their representatives on the VPC, NBC and NRMSC.
8. There is no requirement for a Regulation Impact Statement and consequently the Office of Best Practice Regulation has not been consulted.
9. There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this paper, although the issue of funding for implementation of the draft Feral Camel Action Plan is raised for NRMMC to discuss.

RESOLUTIONS

10. Council:
 - (a) **AGREED** that the draft Feral Camel Action Plan (Annex A) be subject to a two month public comment period with any comments being collated and assessed by the Vertebrate Pests Committee's Feral Camel Working Group
 - (b) **NOTED** that the affected jurisdictions will explore the means to and quantum for funding of the Feral Camel Action Plan during the consultation period
 - (c) **ENDORSED** the draft Feral Camel Action Plan for public comment
 - (d) **NOTED** that the draft Feral Camel Action Plan has been agreed by the Vertebrate Pests Committee as an appropriate plan under Goal 3, Objective 3.3 ('To coordinate the management of established pest animals across Australia') of the Australian Pest Animal Strategy (APAS) and has been prepared in accordance with the principles of the APAS
 - (e) **REQUESTED** that as soon as the consultation period has concluded and comments have been collated and assessed, a report on the outcome be provided to Council.

ANNEX A: Draft Feral Camel Action Plan

[Annex A is held by the secretariat]

ANNEX B: Australian Pest Animal Strategy—Key Principles

AUSTRALIAN PEST ANIMAL STRATEGY—KEY PRINCIPLES

The Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council directed that the 12 key principles of the Australian Pest Animal Strategy be used to underpin the Feral Camel Action Plan. The 12 principles are set out below with annotations as to how these were incorporated in the Feral Camel Action Plan.

1. **Pest animal management is an integral part of the sustainable management of natural resources for the benefit of the economy, the environment, human health and amenity.**
 - The environmental, economic, social, and cultural values of the rangelands and the impacts that feral camels are having on these are clearly stated in the Feral Camel Action Plan.
 - It is noted under the need for a national plan that camel management to date has failed to provide a strategic risk-based approach upon which local, regional and state based management can be undertaken and that this can only be achieved by providing a framework at the national level.
 - Goal 3—Adoption of a platform for ongoing long-term management of camels directly addresses this principle.
2. **Combating pest animal problems is a shared responsibility that requires all parties to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.**
 - Under the section on Challenges, the document states—‘reducing the current feral camel population requires immediate effort by all—governments, industries, land managers and the various rangeland communities’
 - The Feral Camel Action Plan details responsibilities across tenures and jurisdictions both in the body of the document and in the table of goals and objectives.
3. **The development, monitoring and review of integrated pest animal management strategies need to be underpinned by good science.**
 - The Feral Camel Action Plan draws extensively on the camel research undertaken by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, the state based natural resource agencies and others.
 - The Feral Camel Action Plan also notes the need to draw on field reports and other expert opinion in the implementation of the plan.
4. **Setting priorities for, and investment in, pest animal management must be informed by a risk management approach.**
 - The approach to be used to meet Goal 2—The negative impacts of the over-abundance of feral camels have been mitigated is that which was developed by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre. This approach is based on a risk management approach.
 - As part of the Caring for our Country project, Ninti 1, the commercial arm of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, has been asked to identify risks to the implementation of the project and the ways that these risks will be mitigated.
5. **Prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective techniques for managing pest animals.**
 - The current feral camel population, at over a million and estimated to double in 8 to 10 years, is well beyond prevention and early intervention. The problem is now at

the stage where a lack of large scale intervention will lead to an uncontrollable situation.

- The investment envisaged in the Feral Camel Action Plan and the Caring for our Country project are to bring the feral camel population back to a manageable level and to put in place the ongoing platform for continuing management, including the building of capacities and partnerships amongst stakeholders.
- 6. Pest animal management requires coordination among all levels of government in partnership with industry, land and water managers and the community, regardless of land tenure.**
 - The need to develop partnership approaches and to gain coordinated efforts across jurisdictions, land tenures and communities is acknowledged in the section of the Feral Camel Action Plan dealing with Challenges, the need for a national plan and stakeholders.
 - Further addressed in the tables of Goals, in particular Goal 4—Partnerships and social capacity for camel management are in place.
 - 7. Effective pest animal management requires capacity-building across government, industry, land and water managers and the community.**
 - Addressed in all the Goals, in particular Goal 4—Partnerships and social capacity for camel management are in place.
 - 8. Management of established pests should aim to address actual rather than perceived problems, and to reduce impacts rather than simply pest animal numbers.**
 - Directly addressed under the section ‘Why a national plan?’
 - Will be addressed directly in the parameters of the Caring for our Country Project.
 - 9. Management should be strategic in terms of determining where management should occur, timing of management, being proactive and using appropriate techniques.**
 - This principle is substantially addressed in the goal tables.
 - 10. Where there is a choice of methods, there needs to be a balance between efficacy, humaneness, community perception, feasibility and emergency needs.**
 - The need to complete, or harmonise the Codes of Practice and Standard Operating procedures is addressed in the goal tables.
 - The Feral Camel Plan states unequivocally that animal welfare is the highest priority for the plan.
 - The Action Plan also addresses the need to meet community perceptions or educate the public where these perceptions are incorrect.
 - The Action Plan specifically addresses the need to keep all processes transparent.
 - 11. The benefits of management should exceed the costs of implementing control.**
 - The information on the economic costs and benefits of feral camel management that were compiled by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre clearly show that the benefits of managing feral camels will outweigh the costs.
 - 12. As part of an integrated pest animal management program, commercial harvesting may offset management costs.**
 - Commercial harvesting is addressed in the Feral Camel Action Plan with government responsibilities sitting around reducing unnecessary regulation and

commercial interests responsibilities sitting around the development of all commercial issues (markets, infrastructure, and so on).

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.10

**PROGRESS ON NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON BIOSECURITY AND
IMPLEMENTING OTHER BEALE RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The independent review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements (the Beale review) and the preliminary government response agreeing in-principle to all 84 recommendations, were released on 18 December 2008. Reform activities are currently underway but it will take some time, and will be subject to budget processes.
2. At the 4th Primary Industries Ministerial Forum in February 2009, primary industries ministers endorsed the principle of a strengthened partnership approach for managing biosecurity, including environmental biosecurity as outlined in the Beale review. Ministers also agreed to negotiate a National Agreement on Biosecurity and establish a working group to prepare a draft. The Working Group on a National Agreement on Biosecurity (the working group), comprising representatives from Australian, state and territory governments, was established in April 2009. The working group has met several times and has developed a draft National Agreement on Biosecurity (the Agreement).

National Agreement on Biosecurity

3. The working group has been developing the content of the principle-level Agreement, including the national goals and objectives, key features and attributes of the national biosecurity system and the plan for implementation. However, on 24 September 2009, the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC 17), considered that further work was required to make the Agreement more ambitious and identify foundation steps that would enhance the national biosecurity system. The Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC) supported this approach.
4. At the request of PISC (subsequently supported by NRMSC), the Commonwealth has redrafted the Agreement, without prejudice, (Annex A) to clearly emphasise priority reform areas for ministerial guidance in negotiating a final draft Agreement. The redrafted Agreement does not represent the position of any jurisdiction.
5. In the current draft of the Agreement, the proposed priority commitments that should form the basis of the Agreement include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) consulting with the states and territories on a range of key issues, in particular, Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection and the Import Risk Analysis guidelines
 - (b) agreeing a process for relevant jurisdictions to undertake prior to the Commonwealth's use of any legislative authority to override inappropriate state and territory controls on interstate trade in domestic products

- (c) working collaboratively in pursuing and investing in a range of national biosecurity reforms in priority areas, possibly including the investigation of improved funding arrangements and the development of a national biosecurity information framework
 - (d) supporting the use and maintenance of the Commonwealth's national emergency management powers in specific circumstances
 - (e) incorporating commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding on Animal and Plant Quarantine Measures and including the Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents (once signed).
6. It is proposed that eight schedules be included with the Agreement at the time of signing:
 - (a) seven schedules outlining the individual priority reform areas that will improve the national biosecurity system, broad outcomes and system features
 - (b) a governance and administration schedule (to be drafted).
 7. PISC and NRMSC also noted the working group's proposal to have the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) sign the Agreement. To achieve this, the working group will be aiming to complete negotiations and finalise the draft National Agreement on Biosecurity by the end of 2009. NRMSC and PIMC would then be asked to endorse the Agreement in early 2010, prior to submitting it to COAG to ratify.
 8. Once the Agreement is signed, it is proposed that it be managed by the PIMC and PISC, in close consultation with NRMSC and NRMSC, and that the National Biosecurity Committee play a role in administering the Agreement, through its workplan and sub-committees. These workplans will outline timelines and processes for implementing the priority reform areas. PISC will report to the PIMC on progress against the Agreement.

Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents

9. There is a need to finalise the Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents (Annex B) as soon as possible and to include it as a schedule to the National Agreement on Biosecurity once the Agreement is considered by COAG. PISC proposed (and NRMSC noted) that the Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents be considered and finalised in a separate process to the National Agreement on Biosecurity.
10. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents will fill a gap for managing and responding to biosecurity emergencies, particularly in environment and marine areas. As such, we need to make sure the finalisation of the emergency response arrangements is not hindered, so that governments can respond to incidents immediately.

General Beale implementation update

11. New legislation to replace the *Quarantine Act 1908* is being developed in line with the Beale review's recommendations. A briefing session on the proposed new biosecurity

legislation was attended by state and territory government representatives on 26 and 27 August 2009.

12. As at 1 July 2009, the biosecurity functions and responsibilities of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), Biosecurity Australia and the Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health Division and Quarantine and Biosecurity Policy Unit were consolidated into the Biosecurity Services Group within Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The Biosecurity Services Group is an interim step towards the establishment of the new statutory authority as recommended by the Beale review.
13. In addition, two new roles came into effect on 1 July 2009. An economist, Mr Roger Rose, was appointed to the Eminent Scientists Group and an interim Inspector General of Biosecurity, Dr Kevin Dunn, was appointed, subsuming the role of the interim Inspector General of Horse Importation.
14. A new Biosecurity Advisory Council will be created to replace the Quarantine and Export Advisory Council later in 2009. In May 2009 states and territories were invited to nominate individuals for consideration for the Biosecurity Advisory Council.
15. The National Biosecurity Commission, which will be an independent, expert decision making and advisory body, will be enacted under the new biosecurity legislation and, as such, will have no interim arrangements.
16. The working group has met eight times from 21 April to 27 August 2009. As part of the working group's terms of reference, individual members are required to consult with relevant agencies in their jurisdictions, such as health and environment, to ensure that all relevant policy issues are addressed in the National Agreement on Biosecurity.

RESOLUTIONS

17. Council:
 - (a) **AGREED** that the draft National Agreement on Biosecurity (Annex A) (which has recently been revised by the Commonwealth, without prejudice) be used as the basis for negotiating a final draft Agreement by early 2010, for consideration by ministers, noting that it does not present the position of any particular jurisdiction
 - (b) **AGREED** to pursue signature of the National Agreement on Biosecurity at a Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) meeting in the first half of 2010
 - (c) **AGREED** to finalise jurisdictional endorsement for the Intergovernmental Agreement on Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents (Annex B) as soon as possible and to include it as a schedule to the National Agreement on Biosecurity once the agreement is considered by COAG.
18. Council **NOTED** decisions will be referred to Primary Industries Ministerial Council for final endorsement.

- ANNEX A:** National Agreement on Biosecurity—draft without prejudice
- ANNEX B:** Intergovernmental Agreement for Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents—Version 6.0—draft without prejudice
[Annexes A and B are held by the secretariat]

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.11

ERADICATION PROGRAMS OVERARCHING POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. In November 2008, the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) requested the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) to review the fundamental policy issues requiring consideration to implement a consistent approach to several ongoing eradication programs that were being managed outside of the formal response and cost sharing arrangements. The NBC was to report back to PIMC 16 in November 2009.
2. The eradication programs to be included in the review were red imported fire ants, European House Borer, Branched Broomrape, Four Tropical Weeds (koster's curse, limnocharis, mikania vine and some miconia species) and Siam Weed. At their 30 July 2009 meeting, the NBC agreed to include the recent Asian Honey Bee incursion and electric ants in the review because they too are not covered by formalised arrangements.
3. The review included consideration of a range of policy issues and operational matters under the NBC work plan. In particular, the further development of agreed governance and cost sharing arrangements for responding to biosecurity incidents that primarily impact the environment and social amenity through a draft Intergovernmental Agreement (the draft Intergovernmental Agreement for Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents¹) (IGA).
4. The draft IGA is expected to be finalised in conjunction with the National Agreement on Biosecurity and is intended to be applied to:
 - (a) responses to biosecurity incidents primarily impacting the environment and/or social amenity (that is, the response is for the public good)
 - (b) biosecurity incidents that impact a non-primary production commercial sector, on an exceptions basis and only as agreed by ministers.
5. PIMC has previously agreed that responses to biosecurity incidents affecting commercial sectors should be managed through either the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) or the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) (as relevant).
6. This paper draws several elements of the NBC work together to propose consistent

¹ The title of this intergovernmental agreement has not been determined. It is in the final stages of development and is expected to be provided to Ministers for signature, in conjunction with the National Agreement on Biosecurity. The IGA may form a schedule to the National Agreement on Biosecurity and therefore may not require a title.

governance arrangements, consideration of long term funding implications across the programs and possible transition or ‘exit’ strategies where appropriate.

7. Issues that vary between the eradication programs include:
 - (a) governance and management of the programs
 - (b) analysis of risk, cost/benefit, technical feasibility of eradication and national significance
 - (c) program milestones, trigger and review points
 - (d) period/timing of funding for the programs
 - (e) basis for cost sharing (modelling, apportionment)
 - (f) beneficiary contributions
 - (g) independent reviews and implementation of recommendations.

8. Where other responses are covered under one of the deeds—EADRA for responding to biosecurity incidents affecting animal production industries; or EPPRD for responding to biosecurity incidents affecting plant production industries—these areas are subject to more formal and consistent arrangements.

9. PIMC and Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) endorsement is being sought to treat the existing ad hoc programs consistent with either the deeds or the draft IGA as detailed below:
 - (a) the following eradication program be managed in accordance with the EPPRD:
 - (i) Asian Honey Bee Incursion;
 - (ii) Branched Broomrape (subject to legal advice); and
 - (b) the following eradication programs be managed in accordance with the draft IGA:
 - (i) National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program
 - (ii) Electric Ant Eradication Program
 - (iii) European House Borer Incursion in Western Australia
 - (iv) Siam Weed Eradication Program
 - (v) National Four Tropical Weed Eradication Program.

10. In implementing this approach, each eradication program will be managed and critically reviewed by a newly established ‘National Management Group (NMG)’ equivalent to align it with either the deed or draft IGA arrangements. This review will consider the national significance of the pest, the risk the pest poses, the technical feasibility and cost/benefit of eradication, the presence of project milestones and review triggers, the cost sharing apportionment and beneficiary contributions and implementation of recommendations from previous reviews of the program.

11. A significant feature of the proposed approach is that the programs would not be considered by either the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) or the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC) and would only be brought forward to councils where a relevant NMG had determined the program should continue and is seeking funding authority.

12. Ministerial council endorsement is also being sought to treat any future program in accordance with a deed or the draft IGA, as appropriate, as this will provide a nationally consistent framework for decision making regarding eradication programs.

13. The draft IGA integrates the former Marine Pest IGA to provide consistency in arrangements across all sectors. Some marine pest issues have arisen that are not covered by the former Marine Pest IGA (for example, an appeal process for NMG decisions) or that are inconsistent with other response arrangements but would be covered in the future by the draft IGA. Therefore, it has been proposed that marine pest incursions be managed in accordance with the draft IGA until the IGA is finalised through the National Agreement on Biosecurity.
14. The review of programs also identified two key areas for future work—the need for a consistent risk-based decision making and investment framework for biosecurity and the potential development of a national capacity for economic analysis of biosecurity issues. This work will be progressed through discussion on the National Agreement of Biosecurity and through the NBC.
15. All jurisdictions have been involved in the development of these recommendations.
16. Industry beneficiaries and therefore potential contributors to cost sharing the response under the new arrangements have not been consulted as this will occur as required through the approach being proposed.
17. There are direct financial implications resulting from this paper associated with the change in governance arrangements and undertaking the work required to inform decision making.
18. Cost sharing apportionment under the recommended arrangements cannot be determined at this stage as the appropriate modelling of pest distribution has not been undertaken. This is one of the first tasks that the relevant NMG would need to undertake for each pest.
19. Under the draft IGA arrangements, and for those programs not formally covered by the EPPRD or EADRA, the relevant NMG does not have a financial authority to approve investments in a national response plan, as would occur under the deed arrangements. As such, financial authority would need to be sought from PIMC and NRMMC for the continuation of each program.
20. The funding commitment currently being sought for the eradication programs is shown in the table below.

	2010/2011	2011/2012
Asian Honey Bee	\$545 510	Not estimated
Branched Broomrape	\$2 527 100	\$2 595 200
RIFA	Not determined, but preliminary estimates indicate that future funding could be considerable	
Electric Ant	Not estimated as it has not been planned that the program extend beyond 2009/2010. However the National Tramp Ant Committee has agreed to carry over funds from the 2009/2010 year for expenditure in 2010/2011	
European House Borer	\$3 688 000	\$3 465 600
Siam Weed	\$1 322 000	\$1 420 000
Four Tropical Weeds	\$476 500	\$476 500
Total	\$8 559 110	\$7 957 300

RESOLUTIONS

21. Council:

- (a) **NOTED** that the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) has undertaken a review of the long term eradication programs that sit outside the animal and plant health deed arrangements, as requested by ministerial council in November 2008 and **NOTED** the proposed recommendations to implement consistency in approach across these programs
- (b) **AGREED** to treat the existing ad hoc programs in a manner consistent with either the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD), the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) or the draft Intergovernmental Agreement for Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents¹ (IGA) and that any future eradication program would be treated in accordance with a deed or the draft IGA
- (c) **AGREED** to manage Marine Pest Incursions in accordance with the draft Intergovernmental Agreement for Emergency Responses to Nationally Significant Biosecurity Incidents pending its finalisation
- (d) **AGREED** to the continuation of current cost sharing apportionments for each eradication program which are subject to this review, until such time that the work has been completed and a decision is made by the relevant National Management Group (NMG) or ministerial council (as appropriate) on the future of the program [*this was subsequently amended in PIMC 16 to include 'subject to jurisdictions' whole of government approval processes'*]
- (e) **AGREED** to manage the eradication program for Asian Honey Bee in accordance with the EPPRD
- (f) **AGREED** to manage the eradication programs for the following in accordance with the draft IGA:
 - (i) Red Imported Fire Ants
 - (ii) Electric Ants
 - (iii) European House Borer
 - (iv) Siam Weed
 - (v) Four Tropical Weeds (koster's curse, limnocharis, mikania vine and some miconia species)
 - (vi) Branched Broomrape
- (g) **NOTED** that any ministerial or other reviews currently being conducted on one of the long term eradication programs will be considered by the 'NMG' equivalent in their deliberations on the relevant program.

¹ The title of this intergovernmental agreement has not been determined. It is in the final stages of development and is expected to be provided to Ministers for signature, in conjunction with the National Agreement on Biosecurity. The IGA may form a schedule to the National Agreement on Biosecurity and therefore may not require a title.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.12

ADVANCING INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION IN PI & NRM—ANNUAL REPORT

1. Both the Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Primary Industries (PI) Ministerial Councils are required to report annually on progress made toward advancing reconciliation. This is in response to commitments made by COAG (2001, 2004) to advance reconciliation and the identification of three priority areas:
 - (a) investing in community initiatives
 - (b) reviewing and reengineering programs and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families and young communities
 - (c) forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

2. NRM and PI provide a wide range of opportunities for Indigenous employment, health and wellbeing outcomes. The 2008–09 Annual Report ([Annex A](#)) provides a range of examples of projects and programs being undertaken across jurisdictions, highlighting the many participation and employment opportunities for Indigenous people and communities in NRM and PI.

4. The projects and programs presented in the 2008–09 Annual Report reflect the diversity of approaches and activities being used by governments to engage Indigenous people and communities in NRM and PI. Some programs have been operating for a number of years and over this time they have matured and advanced, providing valuable learnings for natural resources managers and policy developers.

5. The key learnings from the projects and programs presented in the 2008–09 Annual Report include the importance of:
 - (a) Providing long-term investment, both financial and non-financial, for the creation of long-term employment
 - (b) Providing mentoring and counselling services
 - (c) Engaging and developing partnerships with multiple stakeholders
 - (d) Fostering ownership of programs by Indigenous communities
 - (e) Providing work experience opportunities
 - (f) Developing and enhancing cultural competency of government and employers
 - (g) Developing and applying appropriate processes to engage with Indigenous people and communities.

6. These messages reinforce the critical success factors identified by the Indigenous Reconciliation Working Group (the working group) in 2006. Over the past 18 months the working group has discussed the critical success factors with elders and community groups and has confirmed that the factors are still relevant and

meaningful. However, in the interest of general clarity, the 2006 Critical Success Factors for Indigenous Engagement (Annex B) have been revised into a more concise format.

7. The promotion of the Critical Success Factors for Indigenous Engagement should assist stakeholders to enhance Indigenous participation in Australia's PI and NRM sectors.
8. The working group has identified that promotion and adoption of the critical success factors may be facilitated by the creation of a promotional brochure outlining successful programs and projects which demonstrate the relevance of addressing the critical success factors.
9. The changing demographic of Indigenous communities provides a unique opportunity to increase participation in NRM and PI. While the majority of farmers and NRM workers are aging, there is a growing youth employment pool within Indigenous communities.
10. Employment in NRM and PI brings much more than economic opportunities for communities. Recent research and anecdotal stories also indicate a positive effect on health, self-esteem and community social well-being.

RESOLUTIONS

11. Council:
 - (a) **ENDORSED** the draft *Indigenous Reconciliation in Primary Industries and Natural Resource Management: Annual Report 2008–09* (Annex A)
 - (b) **AGREED** to adopt the revised Critical Success Factors for Indigenous Engagement—2009 (Annex B) as a platform for engagement in natural resource management and primary industries
 - (c) **ENDORSED** the release of a promotional brochure to reinforce the critical success factors by providing examples of the work being done by jurisdictions to increase Indigenous participation in natural resource management and primary industries and **NOTED** the Australian Government will fund the design and print costs of the brochure.

ANNEX A: Indigenous Reconciliation in PI and NRM: Annual Report 2008–09

ANNEX B: Critical Success Factors for Indigenous Engagement —2009
[Annexes A and B are held by the secretariat]

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.13

NEXT MEETINGS

1. Dates for meetings of the Natural Resource Management and Primary Industries Ministerial Councils (NRMMC and PIMC) in April 2010 were agreed by the relevant councils in May 2009.
2. To provide host jurisdictions with sufficient time to arrange venues for future meetings, dates and locations for the late 2010 standing committee and ministerial council meetings and locations for the early 2011 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 Environment Protection and Heritage Council will not meet in conjunction with NRMMC and PIMC in Darwin in April 2010.
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. In setting possible dates in 2010, as in previous years, periods have been selected in November that minimise the risk of significant clashes for ministerial council meetings with parliamentary sitting schedules in member jurisdictions.
7. Dates remain subject to parliamentary sitting schedules.

RESOLUTION

8. Council **AGREED** to meeting arrangements in 2010 and 2011 as follows:

2010 Standing Committee Ministerial Council	18/19 March 22/23 April	New South Wales Northern Territory
2010 Standing Committee Ministerial Council	23/24 September 4/5 November	South Australia New South Wales
2011 Standing Committee Ministerial Council	March April	Victoria New Zealand (TBC)

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	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.14

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 18 is at Annex A. There are no financial items proposed for consideration at NRMSC.

RESOLUTION

3. Council **NOTED** the financial expenditure agreed by standing committee.

ANNEX A: Summary of expenditure items

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE ITEMS**AGREED BY NRMSC 18 IN-SESSION****Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation in PI & NRM—Annual Report**

1. It was proposed to NRMSC 18 that jurisdictions would contribute to the design and print of the promotional brochure, through the agreed COAG cost sharing arrangements, of an approximate cost of \$10 000.
2. NRMSC 18 considered this item and NOTED that the Australian Government would fund the design and printing costs of the brochure.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.15

EUROPEAN SEAFOOD EXPOSITION 2010

1. The European Seafood Exposition (ESE), which takes place annually in Brussels and is reputedly the largest seafood trade event in the world, is one of the most important annual opportunities for Australian seafood exporters to market their products.
2. Although the organisers of Australia's participation at the ESE in 2009 did an excellent job with very limited funds, their efforts there do not match our world-class seafood industry.
3. More will need to be done if Australian seafood exports are to remain competitive. What is required is more financial support from around Australia so that a more significant Australian presence and pavilion are possible.
4. Western Australia has underwritten Australia's involvement at ESE over the last eight years.
5. Based on an assessment of what other countries have done, Australia needs approximately \$1 million to \$1.5 million annually to develop a credible pavilion and presence at ESE.
6. Western Australia is unable to fund this on its own and financial support is sought from other jurisdictions.
7. The Western Australian Government will continue to make a significant commitment to Australia's participation at ESE and will commit \$100 000 to the event in 2010 on the basis that other states and territories make comparable financial commitments, with the Australian Government making a matching commitment to that contributed by the states and territories.
8. Ideally, this should be an annual commitment for three years, after which Australia's involvement should be reviewed.
9. Earlier this year the Western Australian Minister for Fisheries wrote to his counterparts in all state and territories and also the Australian Government asking for their support for a united approach to supporting Australian seafood exporters at the annual European Seafood Exposition in Brussels.
10. An annual commitment by each of the states and territories of \$100 000 each for three years with the Australian Government making a matching commitment to that contributed by the states and territories.

RESOLUTION

11. Council **DID NOT AGREE** that states, territories and the Australian Government financially support Australia's involvement at the annual European Seafood Exposition in Brussels.

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.16

MARINE DEBRIS THREAT ABATEMENT PLAN

RESOLUTION

1. Council **NOTED** the update provided and that a plan to implement the Marine Debris Threat Abatement Plan would be provided to council.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED OUT-OF-SESSION

Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	MEETING NUMBER: 16
	LOCATION: PERTH
	DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2009
RESOLUTIONS	ITEM: 16.17

Agreed out-of-session on 16 October 2009

GEOPARKS

1. The Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) has requested engagement with NRMSC and NRMMC to assist in its preparation of a national position on the implications of the concept of geoparks and its application in Australia. A report back to the EPHC, via EPHSC, is expected for EPHC's late 2009 meeting.
2. At NRMMC 15 (May 2009), 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; and
 - (c) AGREED to fully consider the implications of geoparks and refer this matter to NRMSC to advise council out of session.
3. Standing committee members were asked on 6 August 2009 to provide out-of-session advice to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) on the implications of geoparks, 'on the concept and its application in Australia, taking into account similar issues relating to biospheres', prior to NRMSC 18. Comments were received from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.
4. Jurisdictions were requested to consider and comment on the information provided in the geoparks papers to NRMMC 15, as well as the following key issues, including (but not limited to):
 - (a) Resource management
 - community expectations of resource protection in a geopark?
 - clarity of which resource use may conflict with the draft Australian National Network of Geoparks Convention?
 - (b) Geopark governance and financial management responsibility
 - respective roles of the different levels of government participating in geoheritage protection, planning, and management?
 - sources of government funding for geopark activities and infrastructure?
 - (c) Heritage
 - capacity for existing heritage and other mechanisms to mechanisms to protect geoheritage?
 - do certain types of heritage warrant their own convention and approach outside of the existing statutory and institutional arrangements?

- (d) Overall benefits versus disadvantages?
5. The results of this consultation were then provided back to members out-of session on 18 August 2009 with a recommendation for decision including a draft out-of session paper for council. From this process, additional responses were received from South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory.
 6. Through both standing committee processes, responding jurisdictions have all agreed with the recommendation and provided comments. All comments received have been incorporated into this council paper, including a change to the recommendation to include reference to potential impacts on resource development, as requested by Tasmania (see paragraph 10(b)).
 7. There is a parallel process for seeking comments through the EPH Standing Committee. The comments received from NRMSC members reflect a summary of broader comments provided through the EPH process.
 8. Responses to the initial request for comment from NRMSC members:
 - (a) The Australian Bureau of Meteorology and the Western Australian Department of Fisheries provided a 'Nil Response'.
 - (b) As both heritage and resource management are now the joint responsibility of the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, DEWHA confirmed that their advice on this issue, previously provided for the EPHC process, would also be sufficient for the NRMMC process. In summary, whilst Queensland was not opposed to the concept of geoparks, Australian network additions should only be assessed or progressed with both Australian Government and relevant state/territory government support. No state funding would be provided and the potential management, financial and protection implications needed to be carefully considered before endorsement. The full response is at [Annex A](#).
 - (c) South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage advice forwarded by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation made clear that whilst the South Australian Government had yet to determine a position on geoparks (which it was doing for a response to the EPHC request), in summary, there were potential resource management, governance and financial management responsibility, and heritage issues related to the application of the geopark concept in that state. No special arrangements for geoparks seemed warranted outside of the existing mechanisms for protecting geological heritage in that state. The full response is at [Annex B](#).
 - (d) The Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation confirmed that their advice on this issue, previously provided for the EPHC process, would also be sufficient for the NRMMC process. In summary, whilst acknowledging the importance of geoheritage and geotourism, DEWHA had a series of concerns including confusion of brands and designations, financial and management expectations, governance and protection issues, and lack of clarity about implications for land use. The recommendation was that geoparks should not be recognised by Australian governments. The full response is at [Annex C](#).

9. Responses to the request for NRMSC endorsement of the council paper (18 August):
- (a) The Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment considered that there were various issues that needed to be taken into account before formal comment could be made on the geopark concept. These included the conservation significance of these geological landscapes, the threats to them, the level of protection required compared to that already afforded, the objectives of geoheritage management and the role of geoparks, the compatibility of this role with the government's commitments, the role of government and the costs and benefits of intervention, governance and financing, and socio-economic and regulatory/administrative impacts. The full response is at [Annex D](#).
 - (b) The Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources comments included support for the concerns of other states that the geoparks concept could lead to resource use conflicts, and a suggestion to change to the paper's recommendation to include this and a concern about potential impact on resource development, which has been incorporated into the recommendation. The full response is at [Annex E](#).
 - (c) The South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation response included a note that the South Australian Government had yet to determine its position on geoparks. It also requested a change to this paper's summary of that government's previous comments, which has been completed. The full response is at [Annex F](#).
 - (d) The Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport commented that the geoparks concept has little merit within the context of protected area management in the Northern Territory. The response also noted that the concept has potential to undermine the existing government policy, the potential to perturb community cohesion and bring an unnecessary, cumbersome additional layer of management and reporting requirements to the Australian Government and state/territory jurisdictions. The comments also refer to an existing scientifically robust and systematic approach by Australian governments to the identification, selection, protection and management of areas of high natural and cultural importance. The response explains the range of conservation and protective mechanisms and the matrix of environmental legislation in place in jurisdictions to control/influence developments that may threaten environmentally sensitive or other areas of conservation significance, including geological resources. The geopark concept is seen as being unlikely to add anything to protect geoheritage and even that a nomination to UNESCO by sectoral interests without broad community support and insufficient financial resources may lead to animosity within the community. The geoparks concept is considered to be centrally flawed. The response also includes a detailed commentary on the UNESCO criteria for geoparks. The full response is at [Annex G](#).

RESOLUTION

10. Council **AGREED** to advise the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council out-of-session (for its late 2009 meeting) to inform the development of an agreed national position on this concept and its application in Australia, that:

- (a) Whilst NRMCC members support the protection of geological heritage through existing mechanisms, they have significant concerns with the implications of applying the UNESCO Geoparks concept in Australia, especially without endorsement by national and relevant state/territory governments. Jurisdictions' concerns include responsibility for resource management, governance and financial management, confusion with other designations, and duplication of heritage arrangements. Also, there is concern about impact on existing resource use and future development, and that there is no government funding available for geoparks.

ANNEX A: Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management response

ANNEX B: South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage Response

ANNEX C: Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation response

ANNEX D: Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment response

ANNEX E: Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources response

ANNEX F: South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation response

ANNEX G: Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport response

[Annexes A–G are held by the secretariat]

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Communiqué

NRMMC 16

5 NOVEMBER 2009

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

Aquaculture in Commonwealth Waters

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

Evaluating Options for Water Sensitive Urban Design – A National Guide

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Review of the National Koala Conservation Strategy

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

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

Draft Feral Camel Action Plan

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

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

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

Overarching Policy Framework for Ongoing Eradication Programs

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

Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation in PI and NRM—Annual Report

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

Aquaculture Land Use Mapping and Environmental Management

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

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

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

