

THE BENEFITS OF A REGIONAL NRM MODEL FOR AUSTRALIA



THE REGIONAL MODEL – NRMS WORKING WITH EVERYONE

The regional NRM model is about NRM regions working and partnering with a remarkable range of people across the country, from the local scale to the national level. We are community-based, and work with producers, community groups, landcarers, industry, and NGOs – amongst others – to help build capacity and strengthen networks and help partners along when needed. A fundamental role in rural, regional and outback Australia.

That’s how we work. And because we operate at the regional scale, we have the relationships built up over decades needed to accomplish this.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Regions have systems in place to meet their State or Territory jurisdictional requirements alongside Australian Government requirements.

Regional NRM bodies have established systems to provide accountability for:

- Financials
- Governance
- Project management
- Monitoring and evaluation, and reporting

NRM regions and the Australian Government have also established accountability and improvement mechanisms via the NRM Regions’ Organisational Performance Excellence Program and the Australian Government’s MERIT reporting system and Performance expectation framework. The Organisational Performance Excellence Program was initiated at the 2011 National NRM Chairs’ Forum, where a target of 85% of all regional NRM bodies undertaking a performance excellence review by 2013 was set.

This target was met with the financial support of Australian Government and supported some 22 regional bodies to undertake performance excellence reviews during this period. At the 2013 National NRM Chairs Forum, Chairs reinforced the importance of this project and asked the National NRM Regions’ Working Group to ensure sufficient resources for its ongoing implementation.

NATIONAL COVERAGE

Australia is the only country where natural resource management organisations, and strategic plans, cover the entirety of the nation – something that is looked upon with envy from many other countries. This national infrastructure, developed over many years, constitutes organisational capacity and systems; knowledge and skills; networks and relationships; strategic plans, and committed people. This enables the Commonwealth government to deliver its objectives and legislative responsibilities across the country, even where there is less capacity.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Working with regional bodies and through regional NRM strategies helps to prioritise actions and investment at a local level. NRM regions and strategies align priorities both vertically (national, State to local level) and horizontally (across tenures, land-types and land-uses).

This targets investment and delivers outcomes from a paddock to regional to national scale; enabling the best return on investment and an impact that adds up over time and across the country. It adds up to making a difference. It also allows investment where they may otherwise be no capacity.

There is an opportunity for the Australian Government to deliver additional Commonwealth objectives through the regional NRMs just as State governments do, such as flood recovery in Tasmania or industry adjustment in the Goulburn Valley of Victoria.



Image credit: South West Catchments Council

DELIVERY MECHANISMS

Over time, our natural resource management systems have improved. Our methods and tools have become more diverse and sophisticated, and we can adapt our delivery method to whatever will be the most appropriate, efficient and effective.

We can work with the diversity found across our country, people and industries. This may be working with individuals or groups, businesses or government; using grants or capacity building, market-based instruments or practice change. Our approach is not 'one size fits all'.

NRM organisations reflect regional differences, regional needs and landscape diversity. Australia's diverse landscapes and natural resource uses present a range of challenges. NRM regional planning ensures on-ground works don't happen in isolation and instead help local communities find local solutions that meet their needs and suit the local environment.

EXTENDING INVESTMENT

An important function of regions is to encourage contributions from a variety of investors, and to ensure investments will yield the maximum benefits.

Regional NRMs leverage investment from a range of sources, at least matching every \$ of Australian Government funds. Furthermore, with support from regional NRMs, local communities contribute at least \$5 for every \$1 of Government investment – what other local community model achieves this?

NRM and Landcare is unique to Australia. It has been quietly built over 30 years by people who care about their local land, water and communities.

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