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Agenda

Forum Theme: Partnering with community to deliver the national Landcare and sustainable agriculture programmes

Forum aims:

1. Chairs are to feel welcomed and valued, with the opportunity to make new connections and engage in productive discussions with a good promise of continuing later.
2. To share information and identify issues relating to the implementation of the Australian Government's National Landcare programme.
3. How are we engaging with our communities? We will focus on:
 - Strengthening the partnership with the agriculture sector?
 - Building Community Capacity;
 - Identifying the key NRM messages?
4. To receive progress reports on national projects - particular attention will be given to our NRM Organisational Performance Excellence project.
5. To establish the budget and direction for the 2015/16 NRM Regions Australia work plan - this will be set in the context of strategic challenges and opportunities for regional NRM in Australia.
6. To identify issues for bringing to the attention of Ministers

Wednesday 18 March 2015	
6.00 pm to 8.00 pm	Welcome Reception, Rydges Southbank (Pool Lounge)
Thursday 19 March 2015	
9.00 am	Forum Opening: Max Kitchell , Chair, NRM Regions Australia and Robert Smith , Chair, SEQ Catchments
9.15 am	Session 1: Partnering with the agriculture sector Session Chair: Sharon Starick , Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin Keynote speaker: Charles Burke , CEO, AgForce, Queensland
10.00 am	Working with industry - experiences from the sea food sector – Brad Warren , Executive Chair of Ocean Watch
10.15 am	Workshop session – what practical steps can regional NRM organisations take to strengthen the partnership with the agriculture sector? Table groups (7 groups with 10 participants)
10.45 am	Morning Tea
11.15 am	Session 2: Implementing the National Landcare Programme – panel discussion.

	<p>The Panel will comprise one Chair from each jurisdiction who will make a short presentation (5 minutes) on their experiences. The Panel will also include Sean Sullivan (First Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment) and Ian Thompson (First Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture)</p> <p>Panel moderator: Max Kitchell</p>
12.15 pm	Session 3: Building partnerships with the National Landcare Network – Terry Hubbard , President, National Landcare Network
12.30 pm	Lunch
1.15 pm	<p>Session 4: Do we have an effective NRM message?</p> <p>Session Chair: Mariyon Slany, Perth NRM</p> <p>Workshop session: Table groups (7 groups with 10 participants) to identify key messages and opportunities for getting the message out.</p>
2.45 pm	<p>Session 5: Future trends in NRM from a Commonwealth agency perspective</p> <p>Session Chair: Max Kitchell, NRM Regions Australia</p> <p>Keynote speakers: Sean Sullivan, First Assistant Secretary, Biodiversity Conservation Division, Department of Environment and Ian Thompson, First Assistant Secretary, Sustainability and Biosecurity Policy, Department of Agriculture.</p>
3.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
3.50 pm	<p>Session 6: New Directions for Organisational Performance Excellence Session Chair: Andrew Drysdale, Queensland Regional Groups Collective</p> <p>Organisational Performance Excellence – learning from other sectors - Cynthia Payne, CEO SummitCare (winner of the 2014 Australian Organisational Excellence Award)</p>
4.20 pm	Launch of NRM Regions Australia’s Organisational Performance Excellence Framework (version 3) - Norbert Vogel , AKM Group
4.30 pm	Workshop session - Where to from here for our OPE effort? 15 minute discussion and 10 minute report back – one minute per table
4.55 pm	Session 7: NRM Regions Australia Project Reports
5.00 pm	Close: Summary of main points from the day - Alex Anthony, Murray Local Land Services, NSW.

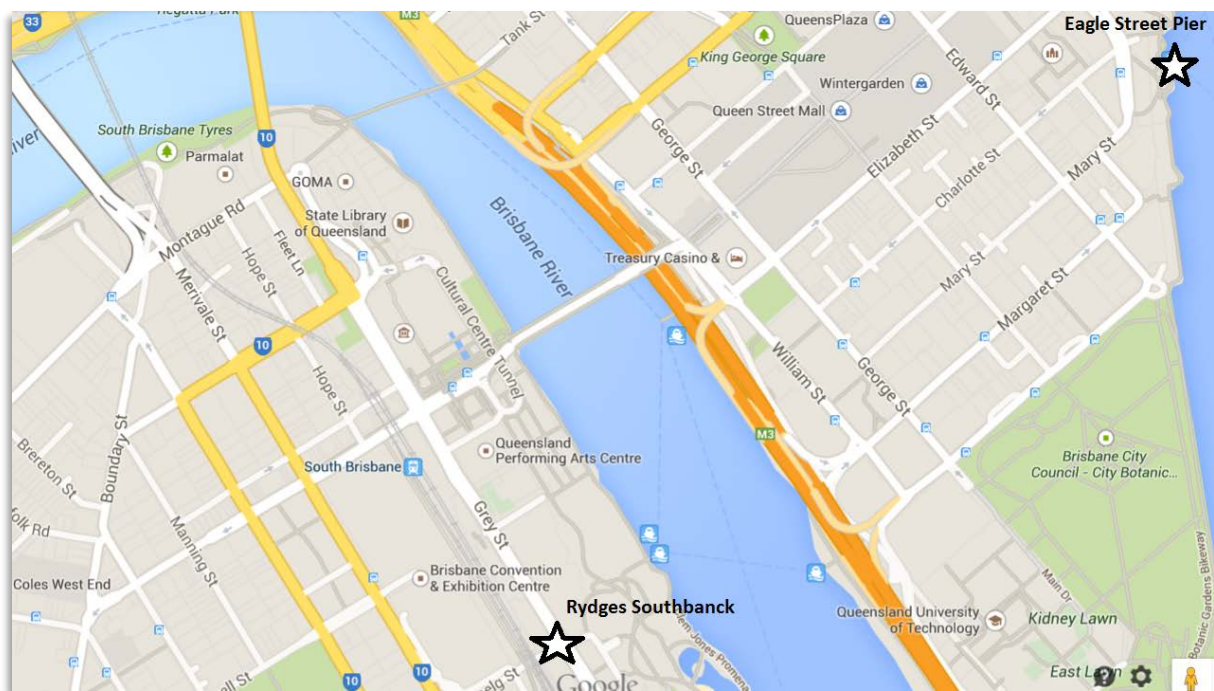
7.00 pm to 10.00 pm	Chairs Dinner: Dinner will be held on Brisbane's iconic Kookaburra Queen paddle steamer. Buses will depart from Rydges Southbank 6.20 pm to arrive at Eagle Street Pier (embarkation point) by 6.45 pm (the boat leaves at 7.00 pm).
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Friday 20 March 2015	
9.00 am	<p>Session 8: The Next Big Step for NRM - identifying the big opportunities for advancing NRM and the role NRM regional organisations have in progressing or capitalising on those opportunities.</p> <p>Session Chair: Max Kitchell, NRM Regions Australia</p> <p>Keynote Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Cosier, CEO Wentworth Group, <i>Blueprint for a Healthy Environment and a Productive Economy</i> • Andrew Johnson, Executive Director Environment, CSIRO
10.30 am	Morning Tea
11.00 am	<p>Session 9: Developing the 2015/16 work program</p> <p>Introduction from Mick Murphy (Victoria's Catchment Management Council) - What we have learnt over 13 years of National NRM Chairs Forums</p>
11.15 am	Workshop Session: In table groups Chairs are asked to reflect on the presentations to this Forum and consider priority issues for 2015/16
12.15 pm	<p>Official closing comments from Max Kitchell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of NRM Regions Australia Chair from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017. • Handover for the 2016 Forum (NSW)
12.30 pm	Forum close followed by lunch and then airport transfers (A bus will leave from Rydges at approximately 1.15 pm)

Logistics

Forum and Welcome Reception: will be held at Rydges Southbank, 9 Glenelg Street, South Brisbane, Queensland. **The Welcome Reception will be held in the Pool Lounge from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm on Wednesday 18 March 2015.**

Forum Dinner: Will be on the Kookaburra Queen, it departs from Eagle Street Pier, 7.00 pm on Thursday 19 March 2015 **(a bus will depart from Rydges Southbank at 6.20 pm to transport Chairs to the Eagle Street Pier)**



Airport transfers: Chairs are asked to make their own way from the airport to Rydges Southbank. But we have arranged for a coach to depart from Rydges Southbank at 1.15 pm on Friday 20 March. If your flight is earlier than say 3.00 pm we can try to arrange shared taxis – please let Danny know (contact details below)

NRM Regions Australia Executive Officer: Danny O'Neill phone 0419 387 161 **(please call Danny if you have any queries regarding arrangements)**

Delegates (as at 14 March 2015)

A final delegates list will be available at the Forum.

Delegate		Organisation
Jim	Adams	National Landcare Network
Parry	Aguis	Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara
Alexandra	Anthony	Murray Local Land Services
Sam	Archer	Riverina Local Land Services
Mike	Berwick	Terrain
John	Bethel	Northern Gulf Resource Management Group
Royce	Bishop	Reef Catchments
Kathleen	Broderick	NRM WA
Charles	Burke	Queensland AgForce
Jeff	Campbell	Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc
Grant	Chapman	Natural Resources Northern and Yorke
Terry	Charlton	Greater Sydney Local Land Services
David	Clark	North Central Catchment Management Authority
David	Claudie	Cape York NRM
Peter	Cosier	Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists
Karen	Douglas	Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
Andrew	Drysdale	Queensland Regional Groups Collective
Tim	Ferraro	Local Land Services NSW
Ailsa	Fox	Goulburn - Broken Catchment Management Authority
David	Gardner	South West Catchments Council Inc
Tom	Gavel	Central West Local Land Services
Neville	Goodwin	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
John	Herbert	Condamine Alliance
Bill	Hollingsworth	South Coast NRM Inc.
Susan	Hooke	Hunter Local Land Services
Hugo	Hopton	Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin
Terry	Hubbard	National Landcare Network
Angus	Hume	West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Anthony	Jarvis	North East Catchment Management Authority
Russell	Johnstone	Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Max	Kitchell	NRM South Committee
Alice	Knight	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Kent	Lee	North Coast Local Land Services
John	Macarthur-Stanham	LLS Board of Chairs
Ian	MacGibbon	Fitzroy Basin Association Inc
Clare	Martin	Territory Natural Resource Management
James	McKee	National Landcare Advisory Committee
David	Mitchell	South East Local Land Services
Mick	Murphy	Victorian Catchment Management Council
Mark	O'Brien	South West NRM Group Ltd
Danny	O'Neill	CMA Forum Secretariat
Cynthia	Payne	Summitcare
Sharyon	Peart	Mallee Catchment Management Authority
Tony	Ricciardi	Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management
Ian	Rogan	Central Tablelands Local Land Services
Bruce	Scott	Desert Channels Group

Delegate		Organisation
Mariyon	Slany	Perth Region NRM Inc
Robert	Smith	South East Queensland Catchments
Jan	Star	Peel Harvey Catchment Council
Sharon	Starick	Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin
Mark	Stoneman	NQ Dry Tropics Group Inc
Jim	Sullivan	Wheatbelt NRM Council Inc.
Sean	Sullivan	Department of Environment
John	Taylor	Southern Gulf Catchments Inc
Ian	Thompson	Department of Agriculture
Norbert	Vogel	AKM Group
Mike	Wagg	Glenelg - Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
James	Walch	NRM North Committee
Simon	Warner	South East Queensland Catchments
Brad	Warren	OceanWatch
Jill	Wilson	Northern Agricultural Catchments Council Inc

Apologies

Delegate		Organisation
Joseph	Elu	Torres Strait Regional Authority
Ian	Armstrong	Central Tablelands Local Land Services
Conrad	Bolton	North West Local Land Services
Hans	Hietbrink	Northern Tablelands Local Land Services
Tom	Hynes	Western Local Land Services
Peter	Veenker	East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Bill	Mitchell	Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group Inc.
Heather	Baldock	Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula
Richard	Trethway	Natural Resources Kangaroo Island
Janet	Brook	Natural Resources SA Arid Lands
Frank	Brennan	Natural Resources South East
Rick	Rockliff	Cradle Coast NRM Committee
Paul	Davies	ACT NRM Council
Richard	Ingram	Cradle Coast NRM Committee

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 1 **Partnering with Agriculture and Industry**

Presented by: Sharon Starick

Recommendation:

1. To receive briefings from:

- a. Charles Burke, CEO of AgForce, Queensland on engaging with the agriculture sector.**
- b. Brad Warren, Executive Chair of Oceanwatch, on experiences with working with industry**

2. To identify, through a workshop session, practical steps regional NRM organisations can take to strengthen the partnership with agriculture and industry

Background:

- 3. Farmers manage 61% of Australia's landmass.
- 4. Engaging farmers in sustainable agriculture practices is core business for regional NRM organisations. We are supported in this endeavour by funding from the National Landcare Programme for part of the regional delivery funding to be directed to sustainable agriculture projects and by funding from State and Territory governments. But more importantly our regional NRM plans collectively stress engagement of farmers.
- 5. NRM Regions Australia has consistently promoted sustainable agriculture as part of our business with several papers:
 - a. Agriculture and Regional NRM - a presentation of case-studies (May 2014)
 - b. National NRM regions' sustainable agriculture position paper (March 2014)
 - c. Submission to the Australian Government's Agriculture Green Paper (December 2014)
- 6. So how do we effectively engage with agriculture? This session is in two parts:

Address by Charles Burke, CEO of AgForce, Queensland

- 7. AgForce has been the unifying voice for Queensland's beef, sheep and grain producers since 1999. The organisation's strength continues through its membership and a strategic vision to secure the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the agribusiness sector.
- 8. It has worked with regional NRM organisations (Fitzroy Basin Association) to develop the Grazing BMP and Grains BMP. The Grazing BMP is an online, self-assessment tool that allows graziers to benchmark their current grazing and business practice against an industry-developed set of standards. Similarly the Grains BMP is a voluntary industry led process that allows broad acre grain growers to identify improved practices which can help improve the long term profitability of their enterprise. In time it will allow the grains industry to demonstrate good environmental management to the wider community.

9. Charles Burke was appointed CEO in 2011. He is a beef producer with cattle holdings near Esk in South East Queensland. Mr Burke holds a Bachelor of Business and has a long association with the rural sector and agricultural policy. Mr Burke has held a number of positions with the National Farmers Federation, including Vice President and Director of NFF Limited. He is a company director of Austsafe Super and has had similar positions with National Food Industry Strategy Limited. He was also Deputy Chair of the Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group and served as a Director of the Australian Made Australian Grown Campaign for five years.
10. Charles will talk about engaging with agriculture at a State and industry level.

Address by Brad Warren, Chair of Oceanwatch

11. In 2014 Oceanwatch became the newest member of NRM Regions Australia after the Australian Government designated them as a regional NRM organisation.
12. OceanWatch Australia was established in 1989 by Peter Doyle OA, the renowned seafood industry personality, following reports of poor water quality and high levels of contamination in fish from Sydney's inshore ocean outfalls. Since then OceanWatch has grown and now works on projects and with fishers around Australia.
13. Their work focuses on finding practical solutions to environmental problems that affect our coastal environments and estuaries. They also help commercial fishers take up new technologies and improved practices for a sustainable seafood industry.
14. Brad Warren is the Executive Chair. Brad, a commercial fisher for the past 18 years, has been a Board Member since 2003. He has been an owner/operator in the New South Wales lobster, estuary prawn trawl, trap and line and estuary general fisheries. Brad's enormous capacity to forge effective working relations with government, industry and the community is based on his broad experience as an owner/operator and in representing the fishing industry in diverse forums.
15. Brad will share with Chairs his experience of working with industry and provide insights on how we can engage with industry groups.

Workshop Session

16. This short workshop session will aim to share information about your regional sustainable agriculture challenges. Working in table groups (approximately 7 per table) Chairs are asked to:
 - a. Identify one (this will be hard) agriculture management practice promoted by your regional NRM organisation; and
 - b. In 30 seconds outline one of your organisations projects that is partnering well with agriculture
17. Over morning tea we will collate the management practice response and present a brief snapshot of the practices we are promoting across Australia.

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 2 Implementing the National Landcare Programme

Presented by: Max Kitchell

Recommendation:

- 1. To share lessons from the implementation of the National Landcare Programme within jurisdictions.**

Background:

2. The National Landcare Programme formally commenced in 2013 following the Australian Government elections. The final design of the new programme was completed in the latter half of 2014 with the programme consisting of:
 - a. A regional stream (\$454 million over 4 years) delivered through Australia's 56 natural resource management organisations.
 - b. A national stream comprising: the 20 Million Trees programme; 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants; support for State, Territory and national landcare networks and for Landcare Australia Limited; and a number of smaller local projects given priority by the Government.
3. New regional delivery contracts were required for 11 regions that received one year funding under the former Caring for our Country program – for the remaining regions work is now underway to transition the old CfoC contracts to the new Landcare Programme contracts.
4. The Government's policy drivers for the programme are "Simple, Local and Long-term". How well is the implementation of the National Landcare programme meeting these objectives?

Comment:

5. This session will involve a Panel discussion with one Chair representative from each jurisdiction, along with Sean Sullivan (Department of Environment), Ian Thompson (Department of Agriculture) and James McKee (member of the National Landcare Advisory Committee). Each Chair will make a 5 minute presentation of experiences from their State/Territory with implementing the programme. The presentation will be followed by questions and discussion involving all Chairs and Panel members.

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 4 Do we have an effective NRM message?

Presented by: Mariyon Slany

Recommendation:

- 1. To develop 2 or 3 key messages that capture the essence of regional natural resource management and identify the role of NRM Regions Australia in promoting these messages.**

Preparation:

2. When asked about your regional NRM organisation and its work, what do you say? (Thinking of how you communicate both within the sector and to acquaintances outside the sector).
3. Regional NRM organisations have been part of the national sustainable resource management effort for almost 15 years (and longer in some States). When governments change we are collectively faced with the challenge of explaining ourselves and the benefits of investing in regional NRM to an incoming government.
4. But, the audience is not just government; it also includes our regional communities, farmers, partner organisations, local government etc.
5. So what have we learnt about the best way to sell our brand? What is it that regional NRM organisations do that others do not? Attachment 1 is a random selection of NRM organisation by-lines.

Workshop session:

6. Working in table groups (about 7 Chairs per group)
 - a. Each Chair is asked to provide a one minute response to the question "what does your regional NRM organisation do?" Assume the question is being asked by the media or a member of parliament.
 - b. Following the presentations the Chairs are to work in groups to identify two or three common messages, based on those responses, for reporting back to the Forum.
7. The second part of workshop session will focus on what actions, if any, NRM Regions Australia should take to support the message.
 - a. Most regional NRM organisations have access to communications resources and apply these to communicating with their regional communities.
 - b. In 2012, NRM Regions Australia, with funding from the Australian Government, engaged Wombat communications to run a coordinated regional program under the banner "There's a lot happening in our backyard". Regions were provided with templates to be used for regional media releases over an agreed two week

period. Using the template ensured that for a specified week this message was nationally communicated (See attachment 2 for results of that campaign).

- c. A national campaign can potentially be very costly and the returns to regional NRM organisations are not easily quantifiable. There are however lower cost options:
 - i. Run a 2015/16 campaign similar to the 2012 campaign;
 - ii. Look to opportunities to engage multimedia students and others to use regional NRM organisations as a challenging media opportunity/national competition.
 - d. Again working in table groups Chairs are asked to discuss/debate the issue of what role NRM Regions Australia should play.
8. Each table group will be asked to report back to the Forum.

By-lines

(a random selection used by regional NRM organisations in vision statements, newsletters, NRM Plans etc)

Below are several examples of by-lines used by regional NRM organisations in various publications. Apologies to those Chairs whose web-sites we randomly selected. Our aim was to capture a few “pithy” comments that describe regional NRM and to promote discussion at the Forum about our collective message. **So homework for you, does your regional NRM organisation have a by-line and what is it?**

- SEQ Catchments (QLD): “Healthy Land, Healthy Water”
- Goulburn Broken (VIC): “Connecting Community and Catchment”
- Central Tablelands Local Land Services (NSW): “Part of your community”
- NRM North (TAS): “Working with you to care for the natural resources of our island home”
- Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board (SA) “a healthy and valued region, managed responsibly now, for the future benefit of people and country”
- Territory NRM (NT): “Our dedicated and professional team of staff work with people across the Territory to identify NRM issues and opportunities, and to plan and implement NRM solutions at a local and regional scale”.
- Rangelands NRM (WA): “A not-for-profit facilitating collaboration and best practice in environmental management for land managers in the WA Rangeland region”.

2012 National NRM Awareness Campaign Report

Following the success of the 2011 National NRM Awareness Campaign, the first collaborative national communication project, Regional NRM Bodies through the National CEO/GM Working Group indicated their support for a similar project to be rolled out during 2012. The second year of the campaign was intended to continue building on the success of the initial campaign project and to increase the awareness of the Australian public of what is being achieved with the Australian Government investment by:

- Increasing the number of participating Regional NRM Bodies in a set of national awareness activities;
- Identifying and collating a small number of national output data sets;
- Working with Regional Body and Australian Government Land and Coast officers to ensure consistency in branding and acknowledgement of Australian Government as a funding partner; and
- Support the national network of communication officers to build on the initial campaign by developing low---cost, easy to implement regional strategies, which collectively form a national campaign.

The second year of the campaign was partially funded by the Australian Government and again relied heavily upon the collective commitment of Regional NRM Bodies across Australia. The campaign largely built on the themes and content established for the pilot project undertaken in 2011 and was further developed following recommendations and feedback from Regional NRM Bodies.

- The campaign was run over a longer period of time to allow for more media and communication activity to take place. The campaign period ran from 12 October to 22 October 2012.
- The campaign was supported by a national gathering of communications staff, which took place in conjunction with the National Natural Resource Management Knowledge Conference held in Adelaide during April 2012. In addition, the project coordinator attended state-wide gatherings of communications staff (Western Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland) to encourage and plan for state-wide collaboration during the campaign period.
- Regions again participated on a voluntary basis.
- “There’s a lot happening in our backyard” was again used as the campaign theme to build on initial campaign efforts and to tie communication and marketing collateral together.
- YouTube videos and social media elements were added to the campaign roll out to help maximise the communication effort within the budget available.

- National output datasets were collated and used in campaign communications to provide consistent and meaningful messages about what Regional NRM is achieving through Australian Government investment.

OUTPUT SUMMARY

- Of the 29 campaign reports submitted by Regional NRM Bodies, 22 actively participated in the campaign,
- 102 media releases distributed, 43 news stories known to be published by external outlets,
- Paid advertising in 38 print publications, 18 of these being joint advertisements,
- An increase of 322 Facebook followers and 118 twitter followers was reported across participating regions,
- Campaign Facebook page has reached 365 likes and gained 337 likes during October 2012 (campaign period),
- Three video clips based around national output data produced --- www.youtube.com/RegionalNRMgroups,
- 12 meetings held with politicians at local, state and federal levels,
- Approximately 12 hours per participating region contributed to campaign (a total of 259 hours was contributed across the 29 reporting regions),
- An additional \$26,000 invested in campaign activities by participating regions.

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 6 New Directions for Organisational Performance Excellence

Presented by: Andrew Drysdale

Recommendation:

- 1. To receive a briefing from Cynthia Payne, CEO of SummitCare (winner of the Australian Organisational Excellence Foundation 2014 Gold Award).**
- 2. To consider future directions for NRM Regions Australia Organisational Performance Excellence project**

Background:

- NRM regional organisations have invested strongly in the OPE project which has the objectives of:
 - driving improvement of capability and performance of individual NRM bodies;
 - improving the capability and performance of the sector as a whole through benchmarking and dissemination of information on outstanding governance and management practices identified through the reviews.
- At the 2011 National NRM Chairs Forum Chairs Norbert Vogel (Australian Knowledge Management Group) reported on the outcomes of Organisational Performance Excellence (OPE) reviews of regional NRM bodies undertaken over the previous 5 years. At that Forum Chairs agreed to set a target of 85% of regional NRM bodies having undertaken a review by 2013. This target was achieved.
- The OPE is now focussed on follow-up reviews that assess changes since the initial reviews. These are undertaken by a lead reviewer and a co-reviewer over two or three days following a formal process outlined in the *Performance Excellence Guide for Regional Natural Resource Management Organisation* (this guide is currently being updated and a revised framework will be released at this Forum – see below).
- NRM Regions Australia's OPE Working Group is also exploring opportunities for synchronising the review process with the Australian Government's Performance Expectations of Regional NRM Organisations to give the regional NRM organisations the option of submitting part of the review report to the Australian Government to satisfy Performance Expectation reporting requirements.

Keynote Speaker

- 7. The Keynote speaker for this session is Cynthia Payne.** She is the CEO of SummitCare and for the past twelve years she has been working diligently with her team transforming the organisation to a leader in the residential and in-home aged care sector. In 2013 she was awarded the Woodside Better Business Award for her leadership role in the Arts Health Institute as Australia's fastest growing Arts Charity.

8. SummitCare is the only provider of aged services to have been awarded Both Gold (2014 and 2012) and Silver (2009) through the prestigious - Australian Business Excellence Awards.
9. Cynthia has committed over 22 years of leadership to the aged care industry. She started out as a personal carer whilst studying to complete her Bachelor of Nursing at Sydney University. She is a grass roots CEO who has risen through the ranks across all spans of programs that operate in aged care delivery. Her qualifications include an MBA from the University of New England and she has lead and managed both for profit and not for profit entities.
10. The organisation, under her stewardship, has grown to serving over 1200 older Australian each day in residential and in-home care services. Revenue growth has more than doubled from \$37 million to \$82 million. All services have undergone a significant level of building upgrades and a development was approved in March 2012 for new service which will cater for over 186 people in the Hills District in North western Sydney.
11. She is mother to Four (4) children and is an active participant in a range of community activities.
12. Of note her contribution as Vice President/Director of Leading Aged Services Association NSW, Federal Director of LASA Ltd, Director of the Australian Organisational Excellence Foundation, Mentor to the Lucy mentoring program (University of Sydney and University of Western Sydney) and finally Founding Chairman of the Arts Health Institute – a constituted National Charity that is bringing the arts and health care together to change worlds.

Workshop

13. Following Cynthia's briefing, **Norbert Vogel** will present version 3 of the NRM Organisational Performance Excellence guidelines to the Forum.
14. We would then like Chairs to consider the implications for our OPE project. To guide the discussion we propose two questions:
 - a. What did you hear from Cynthia's talk that you thought would be useful to take back to your organisation's Board?
 - b. What can NRM Regions Australia do to encourage the uptake of the OPE review process"?

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 7 NRM Regions Australia Project Reports

Presented by: Max Kitchell and the Executive Officer

Recommendation:

- 1. That Chairs receive progress reports from NRM Regions Australia on its activities and those of its project groups.**
- 2. That Chairs note the opportunity for individual discussion with project leaders**

Background:

3. NRM Regions Australia, in response to the outcomes from the 2014 National NRM Chairs' Forum, established the following work program for 2014/15:
 - a. Maintaining the operations of the NRM Regions Australia
 - b. Establishing a Community Capacity Building project as a new initiative
 - c. Maintaining our efforts in relation to:
 - i. Sustainable Agriculture
 - ii. Indigenous Land Management
 - iii. Terrestrial Carbon
 - iv. Organisational Performance Excellence
 - v. Regional Environmental Accounts.

Comment:

4. A brief summary of activities in relation to the work program is attached. Rather than formally report on these projects to the Forum, members are invited to approach the project leaders to discuss informally.
5. Information from the attachment will assist with the discussion at Session 9 on Friday morning where we will identify priorities for the 2015/16 work program.

NRM Regions Australia Report 2014/15

Maintaining the operations of the NRM Regions Australia

Lead: Max Kitchell (Chair, NRM Regions Australia)

Since the last Forum NRM Regions Australia has met 8 times, 6 by teleconference and 2 in person meetings, (in Melbourne in May 2014 and in Canberra in November 2014). The Melbourne meeting was followed by a meeting with the Minister for Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt, in his Melbourne office and the Canberra meeting was attended by senior government officials.

We maintained regular contact with Ministers and their advisors. In July 2014 a delegation met again with Minister Hunt, while the Chair and Executive officer have met with advisers Sarah Meredith (Minister Hunt) and Richard Hyett (Minister Joyce) on several occasions.

The focus of these interactions included the 2014 May Federal Budget outcomes for NRM programs and the design of the new National Landcare Programme.

Other major initiatives included a submission to the Senate Landcare Inquiry and the presentation of evidence to that inquiry and a submission to the Governments Agriculture Green Paper.

The National CEOs Working Group also forms part of the NRM Regions Australia operations. One national CEO Forum was held in Canberra in November - again the focus was on implementing the National Landcare Programme.

NRM Community Capacity Building project

Lead: Carole Sweatman (CEO, Terrain NRM and Kathleen Broderick, NRM Western Australia)

The 2014 National NRM Chairs' Forum gave priority to a national Community Engagement and Capacity Building Project as part of the 2014/15 work program. The concept arose from the National NRM Knowledge Conference where the following needs were identified:

- The importance of establishing a national collective understanding covering: agreement on the purpose of Community Engagement /Capacity Building (Is it a social outcome in itself or is it an enabler of NRM? How do we define the "end game"?); the need to track outcomes not outputs relating to Community Engagement and understand the return on investment but this requires us to draw the relationship between Community Engagement/Capacity Building and biophysical outcomes.
- A National Framework can provide consistency in approach: this could provide some level of consistency for the planning and monitoring of outcomes; but such a framework must be flexible and adaptable to local circumstances and need
- Understanding Regional NRM sector capacity required to plan for and measure Community Engagement and Capacity Building including: skills; clarity of purpose;

attribution (proving our investments/activities have made a contribution to longer-term outcomes which are influenced by a wide range of factors).

- Tools for monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection - we need simple but effective tools for collecting monitoring data on community outcomes (smart tools). We need a suite of tools which enable data collection which is repeatable, reportable, and rigorous and is able to be aggregated to enable reporting at different scales.

Interviews have been conducted with officers from 20 regional NRM organisations to determine how they approach/measure capacity building and community engagement efforts. A report on the interviews is now being prepared and will form the basis for a practitioner workshop to be held in April/May 2015.

Sustainable Agriculture

Lead: Sharon Starick (Natural Resources SA Murray Darling)

The purpose of this project is to promote the contribution regional NRM organisations can and do make to the sustainability and long term profitability of agriculture. To date we have prepared:

- a. National NRM regions' sustainable agriculture position paper (March 2014)
- b. Submission to the Australian Government's Agriculture Competitiveness Issues Paper (April 2014)
- c. Agriculture and Regional NRM - a presentation of case-studies (May 2014)
- d. Submission to the Australian Government's Agriculture Competitiveness Green Paper (December 2014)

In addition to these formal papers, we continue to seek opportunities to identify and share leading practice by regional NRM organisations – including holding a Sustainable Agriculture Workshop at the 2014 Knowledge Conference and giving priority to discussion agriculture partnership opportunities at the 2015 National NRM Chairs Forum.

Indigenous Land and Sea Management

Lead: (TBA – formerly Kate Andrews, from Territory NRM)

Following the 2014 Indigenous Land and Sea Management workshop held at the Launceston NRM Knowledge conference, efforts have focussed on developing a series of Indigenous Land and Sea Management - Principles for Regional NRM organisations. These principles are intended to guide the work of the Indigenous Land and Sea Management Working Group.

Terrestrial Carbon

Lead: Mike Berwick (Terrain NRM, Queensland)

NRM Regions Australia agreed to maintain a watching brief on the implementation of the Government's carbon policies and when appropriate alert regions to relevant developments. To support this aim, NRM Regions Australia has joined the Carbon Market Institute and has been tracking the implementation of the Emission Reduction Fund (ERF). In January 2015 a

briefing was prepared on opportunities for regional NRM organisations and circulated to CEOs and General Managers.

Organisational Performance Excellence

Lead: Andrew Drysdale (Queensland Regional Groups Collective)

Progress with this work is covered in the Session 6 paper. In summary the focus has been: aligning the OPE project with the Government's Performance Expectations of regional NRM organisations; Updating the OPE Guidelines (version 3 is now available); undertaking follow-up reviews.

Regional Environmental Accounts

Lead: Max Kitchell (Chair, NRM Regions Australia)

The Regional Environment Accounts project, a partnership with the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, involved 10 regional pilot programs (which concluded in June 2013). Prior to the 2013 Federal elections there was strong interest from Minister Hunt and a proposal was developed to progress the implementation.

The proposal required the investment of \$12 million per year to enable regional NRM organisations to appoint technical staff and for a National Standards Authority to develop standards and oversee the accreditation process. It was initially envisaged that an expanded National Water Commission could undertake this function but with the Commission being disbanded other possibilities include CSIRO or the Bureau of Meteorology. The ABS would have the key role of data custodian.

An Evaluation Report of the trials has almost been completed and will be used as the basis for the next round of discussions with the Australian Government. Apart from the issue of funds, a key challenge is securing the support of senior Government officials.

Strategic Landcare Partnerships

Lead: Max Kitchell

The National Landcare Network (NLN) and Landcare Australia Limited (LAL) are strategic partners in regional NRM. This project focusses on fostering those partnerships. In previous years we have developed the Statement of Common Purpose with NLN and provided resources for an annual review of that Statement. With changes in the NLN leadership over 2014/15 we have not undertaken this review and instead have applied the resources to invite the current President of the NLN to this Chairs' Forum and to maintain regular communications with both organisations.

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 8 The Next Big Step for NRM - identifying the big opportunities for advancing NRM and the role NRM regional organisations have in progressing or capitalising on those opportunities

Presented by: Max Kitchell

Recommendation:

1. That Chairs receive briefings from Peter Cosier (Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists) and Dr Andrew Johnson (CSIRO).

Background:

2. This session is intended to stimulate thinking about future challenges and opportunities for NRM. We have asked our two speakers to share with you their thoughts about these challenges and opportunities.
3. **Peter Cosier** is the CEO of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientist. He will base his presentation on the recent Wentworth Group's publication *Blueprint for a Healthy Environment and a Productive Economy*. A copy of that publication will be available at the Forum, but can be viewed beforehand at:
<http://wentworthgroup.org/2014/11/blueprint-for-a-healthy-environment-and-a-productive-economy/2014/>
4. The publication was released in November 2014 and, as well as emphasising the importance of Regional Environment Accounts, one of its key messages is to "regionalise management" of Australia's natural resources.
5. **Dr Andrew Johnson** is the Executive Director Environment with CSIRO. He is a member of the CSIRO Executive Team and with responsibilities for leading the organisation's water, land, marine, atmospheric, biodiversity, urban sustainability, and regional development research.
6. His professional interests are in natural resource policy and management, public participation in private and public sector decision-making and novel approaches to support rural and regional development.
7. He was formerly a non-Executive Director of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Reef & Rainforest Research Centre Ltd., a member of the Prime Ministers Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce, as well as Chair of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum Expert Advisory Council.
8. Dr Johnson was awarded a PhD from the University of Queensland and a Masters Degree from the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University where he was a Rotary Foundation Scholar. His undergraduate training was in Agricultural Science.

National NRM Chairs' Forum 2015

Session: 9 Developing the 2015/16 NRM Regions Australia's work program

Presented by: Max Kitchell

Recommendation:

- 1. That Chairs receive a short briefing from Mick Murphy covering the evolution of the National NRM Chairs Forums;**
- 2. That Chairs identify priority issues for inclusion in the 2015/16 NRM Regions Australia work program.**

Background:

3. NRM Regions Australia, as the national representative body of Australia's 56 NRM regional organisations, draws upon the annual Forum of regional NRM organisation Chairs to determine its work program.
4. This will be the last Forum attended by Mick Murphy OAM (Chair of Victoria's Catchment Council). Mick has attended all previous 12 Forums either in his role as Chair of Victoria's Glenelg Hopkins CMA or Chair of the VCMC) and his insights regarding the evolution of the Forum will provide a context for considering the future work program.
5. NRM Regions Australia operates on an annual budget of \$180,000. Each region contributes \$2,000 to that budget with the remaining funds being sourced from profits generated by the biannual National NRM Knowledge Conference.
6. In 2014/15 the budget was applied in the following way:

National NRM Regions Australia Operations Lead: Max Kitchell	\$92,250
National CEOs Working Group Lead: Andrew Drysdale	\$14,000
NLP Monitoring and Reporting Lead: Max Kitchell	\$2,500
Terrestrial Carbon Lead: Mike Berwick	\$2,500
Organisational Performance Excellence Lead: Andrew Drysdale	\$8,000
Strategic Landcare Partnerships Lead: To be advised	\$2,500
Sustainable Agriculture Lead: Sharon Starick	\$2,500

Community Engagement and Capacity Building Lead: Carole Sweatman	\$9,000
Regional NRM bodies Indigenous Land and Sea Management Lead: Kate Andrews	\$8,250
National NRM Chairs Forum Lead: Max Kitchell	\$25,000
Sub-total	\$166,500
Administration expenses	\$13,500
Total	\$180,000

7. NRM Regions Australia is proposing that the 2015/16 regional subscriptions remain at the 2014/15 level, that is \$2,000 (plus GST per region).

Comment:

8. In establishing the 2015/16 work program Chairs are asked to consider the Session 7 paper that outlined 2014/15 activities and reflect on the various presentations to the Forum.
9. In table groups we would like you to identify three matters that you think NRM Regions Australia should focus on in 2015/16 – these could be some of our on-going activities or entirely new initiatives stemming from the Forum presentations.