

Why regional natural resource management

Photo: North Central Catchment Management Authority

Regional NRM organisations work with people across the country, from the local to national level, to manage our land, water, soil, plants and animals. NRM Regions Australia is the national representative body of Australia's 54 regional NRM organisations, covering the entire continent. While established through a variety of means, they share the objective of creating a sustainable future for Australia's environment for current and future generations.

Regional NRM organisations have Australian Government recognition as regional delivery partners under the National Heritage Trust, providing efficient and effective delivery pathways for NRM and nature repair programs by the experts.

Standing capability continent-wide

Australia is the only country where natural resource management organisations, and strategic NRM plans, cover the entire nation. This national 'infrastructure', developed over many years, constitutes organisational capacity and systems; knowledge and skills; networks and relationships; strategic plans and committed people.

This infrastructure provides governments with a pathway to respond quickly and appropriately for different regions, through a cooperative delivery mechanism and in a strategic way. It also provides stability and continuity – helping to manage uncertainty.

Partnerships, collaboration and leverage

NRM regions work and partner with a remarkable range of people, industries, NGOs at all scales (local to national) - whether seafood producers, Landcare groups, farming groups, individual farmers, tourism operators, Indigenous corporations, research organisations... it's our job.

As regional NRM organisations, we are based in the community. Our relationships have been built up over decades. And we can help build and re-build capacity when required and help partners along when needed - a fundamental role in rural, regional and outback Australia.



Australian Government

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AUSTRALIA**

NRM Regions Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia where we live and work. We pay our respect to First Nations cultures; and to Elders past and present. We commit to working together to care for Country.



Regionally adapted, place-based and relevant

Regional NRM organisations are as diverse as the continent they cover. They need to be. This makes them relevant to the people and places they work. NRM organisations reflect regional difference, regional needs and landscape diversity. Yet they all share the same principles, and they are integrated by a shared vision, regional planning and regionally coordinated actions, and through national and state-level organisations and communities of practice.

Landscape-scale NRM planning

Past national programs have been critiqued for an ad hoc approach to investment. This can diminish impacts, or worse, create unintended negative outcomes. Working with and through regional NRM strategies enables aligned and strategic investment. Regional NRM strategies prioritise actions and investment working with local communities and best available knowledge. Community participation is an essential element. NRM regions and strategies link or align priorities vertically (national, State to local level) and horizontally (across tenures, land-types and land-uses). Working with regional plans contributes to more targeted, effective and cumulative action.

Regional NRM 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.

Multiple and appropriate delivery mechanisms

Over time NRM methods and tools have grown in diversity and sophistication to deliver in whatever way is most appropriate and effective. We work with diverse people and industries: individuals and groups, businesses and government - using grants, capacity building, market-based instruments and practice change. Community participation in the design and implementation of NRM enables leveraging and delivers better outcomes that stick, because they are supported from within the communities that need them. The breadth of what regional bodies do is mind-boggling. No one size fits all.

An important function of regions is to encourage investment from a variety of sources and ensuring better alignment of investment whether it is financial, expertise or volunteer activity, so that the benefits can be fully realised.

Accountability and strong governance

Regional NRM bodies are proven, reliable, accountable bodies to work with governments and other funders. They have established systems to provide accountability: financial, governance, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. NRM regions and the Australian Government have also established accountability and improvement mechanisms: the NRM Regions' Organisational Performance Excellence Program and the Australian Government's MERI framework.

Technically skilled and connected staff

Regional NRM professionals are technically skilled and connected to science. The majority of NRM staff hold science degrees, and have extensive experience in extension and communication practice – grounding their knowledge and skills in the reality of their local industries and environments. Regional NRMs are also closely connected to regional research organisations and institutions- they access and contribute to the scientific research that makes sense where they are.



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