



Conservation
Council SA

Natural Resources
Management
(NRM)
in South Australia

Information Kit

NRM Information Kit

This information kit is intended to provide an understanding of:

- What is meant by Natural Resources Management or NRM
- The background to NRM in Australia
- The NRM structure in SA—How all the NRM pieces fit together
- Acronyms, Boards, Plans, Committees and other NRM language
- How you and your community group can contribute to NRM

Check the Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) website for more NRM information
www.ccsa.asn.au

What does Natural Resources Management (NRM) mean?

Natural Resources Management (NRM) refers to the sustainable use and management of natural resources in an *integrated* way (i.e. looking at all natural resources as part of a larger system), while providing for environmental, social and economic well-being (referred to as the *Triple Bottom Line*) now and in the future.

The effective management of our natural resources is essential for virtually all aspects of our lives. We all use natural resources, every day.

What are Natural Resources ?

Natural Resources include:

- Soil;
- Water resources;
- Geological features and landscapes;
- Native vegetation;
- Native animals and other native organisms and
- Ecosystems.

Natural resources are critical in providing the basics for most of our food, clothes, building materials and absorbing our waste.



Southern Emu Wren - MLR SEW Recovery Team

A brief background to NRM

Decade of Landcare

The *Decade of Landcare* was launched in the 1989 *Statement on the Environment* by the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke, after the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation made a joint proposal to the Commonwealth Government to act against land degradation.

They emphasised the importance of self-help, relying largely on local community groups, within a framework that outlined the responsibilities of the Commonwealth, State and local governments.

Natural Heritage Trust (NHT)

The Natural Heritage Trust was established in 1997 by the Australian Government. Funding was made available by the Commonwealth Government through the NHT to conserve biodiversity, achieve sustainable use of natural resources and build community capacity across Australia, using community-based programs, such as Landcare. This funding was provided at community, regional and statewide and national levels.

The NRM Regional Delivery Model

56 NRM regions across Australia

NHT 1, the first phase of the Natural Heritage Trust:

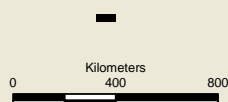
- Funded a range of environmental programs across Australia
- Continued Landcare and established Coastcare, Rivercare and Bushcare
- Invested \$1.5B over five years

NHT 2 began in 2002 and:

- Introduced funded environmental programs at a regional level
- Established 56 NRM regions across Australia - the NRM Regional Delivery Model
- Continued the four themes of Landcare, Coastcare, Rivercare and Bushcare
- Invested \$3B plus \$1.4B from the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP)
- Had bi-lateral agreements between states and Commonwealth to deliver regional program under agreed conditions and methods
- Expires June 2008

NHT 3 will begin in July 2008 and:

- Continues the regional delivery model
- Will have new bi-lateral agreements in place
- Will invest \$2B over five years (NHT and NAP)



Why does South Australia need a Natural Resources Management (NRM) Act?

Bi-Lateral Agreement

The SA Government signed a bi-lateral agreement with the Commonwealth Government in April 2003 and agreed to:

- Establish an Act of Parliament to deliver NRM at a regional level
- Establish the NRM Council and regional NRM boards
- Jointly work with regional boards to develop regional NRM plans
- Build community capacity guided by the *National NRM Capacity Building Framework*
- Support the community and other natural resource users to manage natural resources sustainably

NRM Act

The *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (NRM Act) replaced three other Acts:

- Water Resources Act 1997
- Soil Conservation and Landcare Act 1989
- Animal and Plant Control Act 1986

Each of these Acts had established various boards across the state. These previous boards had developed a number of management plans.

The NRM Act has established a new, more integrated structure for NRM in SA with a state NRM Council, regional NRM boards and local NRM groups. Previous plans have been replaced by a State NRM Plan and regional NRM plans.

As a result there are now a lot less boards and plans managing natural resources.

One of the key ideas behind NRM is integration. The NRM Act is designed to:

- Integrate complementary management boards
- Engage SA Government agencies in a 'whole of government' process
- Include local councils in NRM management and policy
- Encourage strong community involvement in a range of projects on the ground and in developing NRM plans

What does the NRM Act do?

The primary objective of the NRM Act is to assist in achieving ecologically sustainable development (ESD). ESD refers to using natural resources in a way that sustains and protects these resources for the future.

The Act aims to achieve this by:

- Protecting the intrinsic values of natural resources
- Protecting biodiversity and restoring ecosystems
- Protecting and managing catchments and land and water resources
- Supporting sustainable agriculture and other economic production systems
- Preventing and controlling pests
- Educating and involving the community

The Act sets up a new structure for NRM in South Australia. This includes:

- The State NRM Council
- Eight regional NRM boards
- Sub-regional NRM groups
- Committees (of the Council, boards and groups)
- The role of the Ministers
- The Chief Officer
- Authorised Officers
- Resource Management and Protection Arrangements
- Offences, Appeals and Orders

The Act clearly spells out the roles and responsibilities of each of these bodies and people, including their functions, powers and the knowledge and skills required for membership.

The Act also requires the NRM Council and regional NRM boards to prepare the State NRM Plan and regional NRM plans respectively and details the purpose of these plans. The Act gives a framework for the development of these plans including public consultation, content and timetables for reviewing plans and outlines their relationship to each other.

Other plans described in the Act include:

- Business plans (for implementing regional NRM plans)
- Water allocation plans (regarding water licensing and use)
- Action plans (for pest and land management)

The Conservation Council of SA, the South Australian Farmers Federation and the Local Government Association are identified as peak bodies in the Act, recognising the importance of involving community and Local Government in NRM.

The Act covers water management...

Water resources include:

- Watercourses (creeks, rivers, reservoirs and dams)
- Lakes (natural, including wetlands)
- Wells (including bores)
- Surface water

Under the Act, any of these water resources can be declared a prescribed water resource. Larger areas may also be declared a surface water prescribed area, where regional scale management is needed.

When a water resource is prescribed, many users will need a water licence to use the water. A water allocation plan must be developed to set out the criteria for the issue and transfer of licences.

Water licences come in two forms:

- Water (taking) allocation
- Water (holding) allocation

The NRM Act also includes other tools for the management of water resources, including permit controls for dams or wells and notices of prohibition that place a temporary hold on water use.



Fleurieu Peninsula swamp - Photo Alys Stevens

...control of animal and plant pests...

Plants and animals can be declared as pests under the Act. There are 75 classes of plants and animals that can be either restricted in certain areas or fully prohibited across the State.

As well as prohibiting or restricting a specified class of plant or animal, the Minister can quarantine parts of the State to control or prevent the spread of a specified class of plant or animal.

If a landowner fails to meet the requirements of the Act in regard to animal and plant pests, an authorised officer can require the landowner to develop an action plan to address the breach.

...and land protection too!



Watinuma - APY Lands SA Photo Paul Hastings

Where a landowner breaches the requirements of the Act to care for the land, a regional NRM board or a State authorised officer may require the owner to prepare a different type of action plan - this will outline what the land owner must do to address the problem.

Under the Act, the board or State authorised officer should attempt to resolve the issue through voluntary action by the landowner before requiring an action plan to be prepared.

Penalties, in some cases significant fines, can apply should a landowner fail to prepare or implement an action plan. The Chief Officer or regional NRM board or NRM group may then organise for appropriate measures to address the problem to be carried out, with the costs to be recovered from the landowner.

How will the Act be enforced?

The General Statutory Duty

'A person must act reasonably in relation to the management of natural resources in the State.'

(section 9 of the *Natural Resources Management Act, 2004*)

There are a range of ways in which the NRM Act 2004 will be enforced.

One way this will happen is through authorised officers. 'State authorised officers' have state-wide powers and 'regional authorised officers' have region-wide powers. Before resorting to formal processes or legal action, authorised officers are required to encourage voluntary action.

Appeals against prosecutions under the Act would be a matter for the Environment, Resources and Development (ERD) Court to deal with.

The general statutory duty serves as a guiding principal of the Act. It is not an offence to breach the general statutory duty, but if a person does breach it they may be required to prepare an action plan, or the an order may be imposed on the person.



Dead Red gums in Murray Darling Basin
Photo Peter Owen

What is the regional 'NRM Levy' on my council rates?

The effective management and rehabilitation of our natural resources will require significant investment.

Unfortunately, the NHT and NAP funding from the Commonwealth doesn't cover the full cost for regional NRM boards to implement their plans. Also, Commonwealth funding is not on-going and may only be available for a limited time. Besides, we all use natural resources, so we should all contribute to their management and rehabilitation.

The regional NRM levy is collected by local councils and appears as a separate line on council rates notices. This funding is then provided to the NRM boards to support NRM programs in their region.

In some regions, part of this levy used to be called the catchment levy.

In some parts of the State, there are no council areas, so the regional NRM board can seek approval for the Minister to levy the landowners directly, or rely solely on the NHT funding.

In some cases, a regional NRM plan may offer landowners the opportunity to apply for a refund of the NRM levy in return for undertaking specific practices to conserve, protect, maintain or improve natural resources. Examples could include drainage schemes or activities to restore or rehabilitate natural resources or the establishment.

What is the 'NRM Water Levy'?

The Minister may declare an NRM water levy on holders of water licences under a water allocation plan, holders of imported water licences and some other authorised water users. Currently, no NRM water levy is charged for domestic purposes or non-intensive stock use.

A special purpose NRM water levy can be collected by the Minister for a particular purpose, but this is usually only for a limited period of time. An example is to manage a prescribed water-course.

How can you become involved?

Community groups and individuals are crucial to the success of NRM and this is readily acknowledged by regional NRM boards.

Involvement of community groups and individuals in NRM is a key objective of the NRM Act and all levels of the new NRM structure in SA.

The Conservation Council of SA (CCSA) has an NRM Facilitator who can be contacted about how you or your community group can become more involved in NRM.

Contact the CCSA NRM Facilitator on 8223 5155 or email nrm@ccsa.asn.au.

There are a range of ways in which individuals and groups can and do contribute to NRM.

<p>Input into the development of regional NRM plans These are plans for the future of your region! Attend community meetings or make comments on the plan anytime during the planning process.</p>	<p>Watch for and participate in programs run by your regional NRM board Boards run a range of programs to educate and involve the community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult education courses and field days• Land and water management programs• Community events
<p>Nominate for membership to your regional NRM board, NRM group or Advisory Committee NRM Boards need local people with a range of skills and expertise Calls for nominations occur regularly</p>	<p>Check local newspapers for details of upcoming events</p>
<p>Contact your local NRM officers Each NRM region has specialist NRM officers who can advise you on funding opportunities, project assistance, board programs and much more</p>	<p>Keep an eye on your regional NRM board's website. See the SA NRM website for more NRM information and links to the regional NRM websites at www.nrm.sa.gov.au</p>

Where can you get more information?

The Fact Sheets in this package have more detailed information about NRM in South Australia.

If you have any questions that aren't answered by this package, there are a number of options:

- Contact your regional NRM board. All regions have a website that will give you details of meetings, copies of plans, and contact details. Check out www.nrm.sa.gov.au for links to the regional NRM board websites.
- Get involved with your local NRM group and get to know the members. NRM groups are the delivery end of the NRM process and are there to engage with the community on NRM projects, funding and a range of other information.
- Contact the Conservation Council's NRM Facilitator on (08) 8223 5155, email nrm@ccsa.asn.au or visit the website at www.ccsa.asn.au

Acknowledgements

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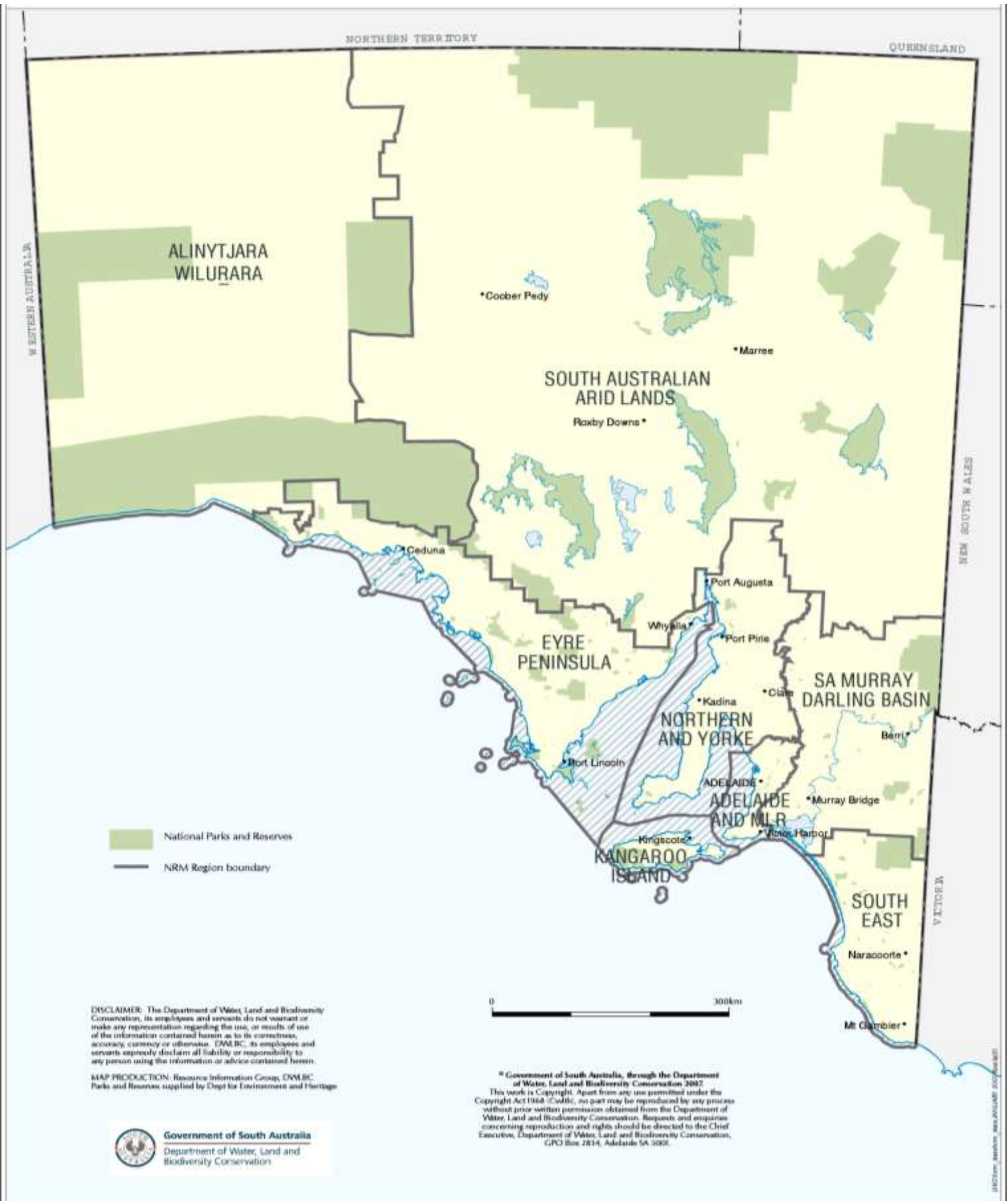
This publication is designed to assist in understanding the natural resources management processes in South Australia. Information is current at the time of publishing. While all care has been taken in compiling the information, CCSA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information. This package is not and should not be considered legal advice on the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* or any of its related documents. A legal practitioner should be consulted for specific legal advice.



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Natural Resource Management Regions of SA



Fact Sheet 1

Boards, Groups and Committees

NRM Council

What is the NRM Council and what does it do?

The NRM Council is the state's highest level body under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004.

One of the NRM Council's most important functions is to develop the State NRM Plan and keep it under review. The first State NRM Plan was released in February 2006.

Other functions of the NRM Council include to:

- Advise the Minister on administration and operation of the Act
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Act and the State NRM Plan
- Assist in cross-regional issues including convening forums
- Promote integration of the NRM principles into other Acts
- Contribute to the Planning Strategy (Development Act)
- Contribute to the State of the Environment

Committees

The NRM Council must establish committees required by regulations. At this stage, the only mandatory one is the Aboriginal Statewide Advisory Committee (ASAC).

The NRM Council has set up three sub-committees on a needs basis and they are:

- NRM Council Assessment Subcommittee (CASC)
- NRM Volunteer Committee
- NRM Capacity Building Steering Committee

Who is on the NRM Council?

The Council has nine members who are nominated by the Minister and appointed by the Governor.

This includes a nomination from each of the peak NRM organisations:

- Conservation Council of SA (CCSA)
- Local Government Association
- SA Farmers Federation

and one to represent Aboriginal interests, with the remainder publicly advertised.

At least two members must be women and at least two must be men. The Minister appoints one of the members to be the presiding member (chairperson). Membership may be for two or three year terms. Members may be reappointed, but only for a maximum of six years.

What experience do the members have in NRM?

Members were selected based on their knowledge, skills and practical experience across a range of areas including:

- Primary production
- Soil conservation and land management
- Conservation and biodiversity management
- Water resources management
- Business administration
- Local government administration
- Urban and regional planning
- Aboriginal heritage
- Coast, estuarine and marine management
- Fisheries or aquaculture

Further Information:

- Visit the website at www.nrm.sa.gov.au/council
- NRM Council: Grenfell Centre, Level 1, 25 Grenfell Street, Adelaide, SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8463 6851 E-mail: dwlbcnrmcouncil@saugov.sa.gov.au

Regional NRM Boards

What are regional NRM boards and what do they do?

South Australia's eight regional NRM boards are statutory authorities created by and under the direction of the Minister. They are high level boards that sit under but are not directed by the NRM Council.

One of the most important functions of regional NRM boards is to develop regional NRM plans. Initially, all regional NRM boards developed an Initial Plan that brought together all of the previous catchment, soil conservation, pest control, biodiversity and other regional plans.

A Comprehensive Plan including a Business Plan is now being developed by each board. Some of these will be completed by July 2008, but other regions will implement theirs by July 2009. This is partly due to the complexity of the plans and to allow for greater community input.

Other functions of regional NRM boards include:

- implementing and reviewing their regional plans
- promoting public awareness and education on sustainable NRM, including increasing capacity for people to manage natural resources
- providing advice on assessments made under the Act and the condition of natural resources
- working collaboratively with adjoining regions and all stakeholders including environment and community groups and organisations
- reporting to the Minister on the board's functions

Who are the members of a regional NRM board?

Regional NRM boards have up to nine members who are nominated by the Minister and appointed by the Governor.

Members should have a range of knowledge, skills and practical experience across a suite of areas similar to the NRM Council. There must be at least one male, one female, and one member of local government (where appropriate).

The Minister must advise the Conservation Council of SA, SA Farmers Federation and Local Government Association who will be appointed to a board and they can make comments on the proposed nominations.

Membership is for a three-year term and only two terms can be served. The Governor must appoint one of the members to be the presiding member (chairperson).

What authority or 'powers' does a regional NRM board have?

Section 30 (1) of the NRM Act states:

A regional NRM board has the power to do anything necessary, expedient or incidental to -

- (a) *perform the functions of the board under this or any other Act; or*
- (b) *assist in administration of this Act; or*
- (c) *furthering the objects of the Act.*

Boards also have special authorities to:

- carry out works
- enter and occupy land under certain circumstances
- provide financial assistance
- appoint authorised officers who have enforcement powers
- make by-laws
- issue orders

Further Information:

- Visit the SA NRM website at www.nrm.sa.gov.au for an electronic link to each regional NRM board website.

Regional NRM Board Contacts

Where are the regional NRM boards and groups and how can you contact them?

There are eight regions across South Australia and each has an NRM board. Each board can then create NRM groups to help deliver the regional NRM plan. Both boards and groups can establish committees to assist with their requirements under the Act.

The regions are:

Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges	(08) 8273 9100	www.amlnrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Northern, Central, Southern, Fleurieu	
Advisory Committees:	Coastal, Estuarine and Marine (CEMAC); Audit; Water Resources; Local Area Water Allocation	
<hr/>		
Alynitjara Wilurara	(08) 8357 3880	www.awnrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Currently under development	
Advisory Committees:	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands; Maralinga/Yalata Lands (under development)	
<hr/>		
Eyre Peninsula	(08) 8682 5655	www.epnrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Southern, Western, Central, Eastern	
Advisory Committees:	Water Resources; Land Management; Biodiversity; Indigenous; Coast and Marine	
<hr/>		
Kangaroo Island	(08) 8553 0111	www.kinrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Role taken on by the Board	
Advisory Committees:	On-ground Works; Biosecurity Advisory Committee; Land, Water and Biodiversity; Coast, Estuarine and Marine	
<hr/>		
Northern and Yorke	(08) 8636 2361	www.nynrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	York Peninsula, Lower North, Upper North	
Advisory Committees:	Audit and Finance; Human Resources; Communications and Promotions; Planning; Soils and Primary Production; Water; Biodiversity; Coastal and Marine	
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SA Arid Lands	(08) 8648 5977	www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Marla-Oodnadatta, Maree-Innamincka, Kingoonya, Northern Flinders, Gawler Ranges	
Advisory Committees:	Biodiversity; Pastoral; Pest; Water Management	
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SA Murray-Darling Basin	Murray Bridge (08) 8532 1432; Berri (08) 8582 4477	www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au
Groups:	Riverland, Rangelands, Mallee and Coorong, Ranges to River	
Advisory Committees:	River Murray; Finance; Investment and Programs; Policy; Executive; Communications; Regional Integration; Local Government; Community	
<hr/>		
South East	(08) 8724 6000	www.senrmb.com.au
Groups:	Northern, Central, Southern	
Advisory Committees:	Corporate Governance and Finance; Indigenous Focus Group; Plan Advisory Group; Sub-regional water allocation planning groups (5); Deer Committee; Dingo Control Committee (joint with SAMDB)	

NRM Groups

What are NRM groups and what do they do?

NRM groups are under the responsibility of their regional NRM board to implement programs from their regional NRM plan at a local level.

NRM Groups are also involved in the development of the regional plan.

A regional NRM board may delegate any of their functions or powers to an NRM group.

Other functions include:

- Develop and implement programs at the local level
- Promote public awareness and support educational activities on NRM
- Provide advice to the regional NRM board on any NRM issues in their group area
- Report its activities and finances to the regional NRM board annually
- Any other functions the regional NRM board determines

NRM groups also have a range of powers under the NRM Act. They can form committees to advise them on issues as required, and must set up certain committees if under 'regulations'; but at the moment there are none regulated.

Does every regional NRM board have NRM groups?

If a regional NRM board outlines an area within its region for a group to operate, it must establish an NRM group.

However, it isn't mandatory to outline group areas and in fact a regional NRM board can act as an NRM group.

This is the case with the Kangaroo Island NRM Board, which has decided to take on the functions of an NRM group.

Who are the members of a regional NRM groups?

Regional NRM groups have up to seven members appointed by their regional NRM board.

The majority of members must reside in the group area and be involved in an activity related to land management.

There must be at least one male and one female. Membership is for a three-year term and only three terms can be served.

Regional NRM boards must appoint a presiding member who is supported by an executive officer or group coordinator.

Powers and responsibilities of regional NRM boards can be delegated to NRM Groups.

Further Information:

- Visit the SA NRM website at www.nrm.sa.gov.au for an electronic link to each regional NRM board website and information about the NRM Groups

Fact Sheet 2

State NRM Plan

“The NRM Council must prepare and maintain a plan called the State Natural Resources Management Plan.” - section 74 of the NRM Act.

The first State NRM Plan was released on 15 February 2006 after extensive public consultation. It is available online at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/nrm/state_nrm_plan/snp.html

This plan is a high level statutory document. Importantly, it sets out 'principles' and 'policies' that help the NRM Act achieve its 'objects'.

The State NRM Plan must address a number of things including:

- The condition of SA's natural resources, including current and future risks
- Prioritising the management of SA's natural resources and **promoting 'integrated management'**
- Taking account of the **'Planning Strategy'**
- Incorporating any other plans and policies specified by the Minister

The State NRM Plan must be reviewed every five years. During the review, the NRM Council must take 'reasonable steps' to consult with the Conservation Council of SA (and also with the Local Government Association and SA Farmers Federation).

The State NRM Plan is at the same state government policy level as the Planning Strategy (the high level planning policy under the *Development Act 1993*). The State NRM Plan may identify changes needed to the Planning Strategy.

What is in the State NRM Plan?

Despite being reviewed every five years, the State NRM Plan has a 50 year vision:

“South Australia, a capable and prosperous community, managing natural resources for a good quality of life within the capacity of our environment for the long term”

It also has four goals:

1. Landscape scale management that maintains healthy natural systems and is adaptive to climate change
2. Prosperous communities and industries using and managing natural resources within ecologically sustainable limits
3. Communities, governments and industries with the capability, commitment and connections to manage natural resources in an integrated way
4. Integrated management of biological threats to minimise risks to natural systems, communities and industries

Under each of the Goals are a range of Milestones and Strategies that link to other policies, where appropriate

The State NRM Plan has a strong focus on partnerships between government, communities, industry, landowners and the regional NRM boards.

Fact Sheet 2 - State NRM Plan



Why is the State NRM Plan important?

The State NRM Plan interprets what the NRM Act is designed to achieve. It provides a pathway between the Act and the regional NRM boards, and the projects that boards invest money in.

This is important because scientific evidence supports what we all know - that the condition of our natural resources is declining in many areas.

For example, monitoring of seagrass loss off the metropolitan coast has shown a strong trend of continuing decline, despite the causes being known. Evidence is also available on a range of land ecosystems that show similar decline.

Using this type of evidence, the State and regional NRM plans will identify high priority areas that are contributing to these declines and work with relevant government agencies, industry, local councils and the community to address the problems.

Being a high level statutory document gives the State NRM Plan credibility and the ability to influence other policies at a similar level.

The regional NRM plans developed by the regional NRM boards must be consistent with the State NRM Plan.

'Implementation of the State NRM Plan' Project

An implementation project for the State NRM Plan is in operation to assess whether the State NRM Plan is effective, and whether the Plan's 108 strategies are being implemented.

The Department for Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) is running the project, and conducted a survey during January 2007 to assess the implementation of strategies across all government agencies and peak bodies (Conservation Council of SA, SA Farmers Federation, Local Government Association).

As part of the project, a government agency, regional NRM board or peak body will nominate to be the lead agency for each of the strategies outlined in the State NRM Plan, to ensure that each strategy is being carried out. Other agencies may also nominate to be a major or minor contributor to each of the strategies.

Surveys will be conducted on an annual basis and will be used to monitor the implementation of the State NRM Plan and contribute to the five-yearly review of the Plan.

Fact Sheet 3

Regional NRM Plans

“A regional NRM board must prepare and maintain a plan for the purpose of its operations (a regional NRM plan)” - section 75 of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004

Each of the eight regional NRM boards is required to produce a plan for their region.

These are 'strategic plans' that outline the boards' focus for the following ten years, with a review after five years.

Regional NRM plans must:

- identify the natural resources within the region
- assess the condition of these natural resources and the surrounding 'environmental, social and economic' issues
- include methods for improving, using, conserving and managing natural resources using a 'whole of landscape' approach, including coast and marine systems

Regional NRM plans must also include:

- A set of goals for the plan
- Methods for implementing the plan (e.g. through community groups)
- Methods for monitoring of the condition of natural resources and the success of the programs under the plan
- Changes needed to development plans or other statutory plans
- Activities impacting the natural resources in the region

Regional NRM plans also include a 'business plan'. This is a financial document outlining investments and costs for a regional NRM board over the following three years and is reviewed annually.

Regional NRM plans should be consistent with the State NRM Plan and a range of legislation that deal with natural resources such as the Native Vegetation Act, Environment Protection Act and the Coast Protection Act.

Can I have input into the regional NRM plans?

YES!

As of January 2007, each of the regional NRM boards had an approved 'Initial Plan' that was the compilation of former animal and plant control plans, soil conservation plans and catchment water management plans. The next stage is to develop a comprehensive regional NRM plan to guide NRM activities in the region.

In 2007/2008, all of the regional NRM boards will be developing their comprehensive plans. There are opportunities for community groups and individuals to have an input into these plans. Check your NRM board's website to find out how their plan is progressing and how you can be involved or contact the Conservation Council's NRM Facilitator on 8223 5155 or email nrm@ccsa.asn.au.

Draft plans will undergo extensive public consultation prior to being submitted for approval by the Minister. Once the Minister has the plans, there is an approval process to go through before there will be another opportunity for comments on the plans during the formal public consultation process.

Plans will be reviewed every five years and annual reviews will also be undertaken for the business plans. There will be also opportunities for community involvement in these reviews.

Fact Sheet 4

Water Allocation Plans

“A regional NRM board must prepare a water allocation plan for each ‘prescribed water resource’ in their region” - section 76 of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004

A water allocation plan becomes part of a regional NRM plan.

Some considerations it must include are:

- The water needs of ecosystems
- A balanced ‘allocation’ of water between environmental, social and economic needs
- Anticipation of future water needs
- Monitoring the demands on the water and evaluating the ‘capacity’ of the water source to meet those demands
- How to use the water ‘sustainably’ including how the use in one place will affect users in another place

Prescribed Water Resources

A watercourse, lake or well may be declared a prescribed water resource and there must be a three-month period of public consultation for proposed areas.

Once an area has been declared, a water allocation plan is developed. Under a water allocation plan, people may be licensed to use the water.

The licences come in two forms:

- Water (taking) allocation
- Water (holding) allocation

The Minister may reserve excess water in a prescribed water resource.

Water (Holding) Allocation

- Preserves the right to access water in a prescribed water resource
- Licensee not authorised to take water, but may make a request to convert a licence to a water (taking) allocation
- Water cannot be allocated to another licence or use but the licence can be transferred
- Allocation may be reduced by the Minister with seven days notice
- Licensee may transfer water allocation or licence for a limited period or permanently

Water (Taking) Allocation

- Authorises the holder to take water from a prescribed water resource
- Must be consistent with the relevant water allocation plans
- Licensee may convert to a water (holding) allocation
- Allocation may be reduced by the Minister with seven days notice
- Licensee may transfer water allocation or licence for a limited period or permanently

Water Licences and Action Plans

Water Licences

Water licences are granted by the Minister and are endorsed with a water (taking) allocation or a water (holding) allocation.

Water licences must include a number of details including:

- Specifying the water resource and the parts thereof that water can be taken from
- Endorsing an allocation that includes an expiry date and specifies quantity
- Special conditions within the Murray-Darling Basin

A water licence:

- **Becomes the 'personal property' of the licensee** meaning that either the licence or the allocation may be transferred to another person
- May be varied by the Minister
- May be surrendered and the water allocation reverts to the Minister

The Minister may establish a scheme to transfer or surrender allocations. Also, the Minister may reserve any excess water in a water allocation plan and allocate that water for a maximum period of 15 years as a water (taking) allocation. This allocation is not transferable. Recipients of excess water allocations must be published in the SA Government Gazette.

Water Conservation Measures

The way in which water is used and the purpose of the use may be prohibited or restricted by regulations introduced by the Governor.

These may be longer-term measures (up to five years) or short-term measures (up to one year)

Action Plans - Animal and Plant Control

Under the requirements to control declared animals and plants, an authorised officer can require a land owner to prepare an action plan for **failing to destroy or control 'pest'** animals or plants.

The action plan must set out what the land owner proposes to do to address the problem and when they will do it and must be approved or amended by the authorised officer. There are penalties for failing to comply.

Action Plans - Land

Regional NRM boards and State authorised officers may require an owner of land to prepare an action plan if an **'unreasonable degradation of land'** occurs as a result of land management practices that breach the general statutory duty.

The action plan sets out the measures that the owner proposes to take and what time frame. There are penalties for failing to comply.

Action Plans - Stormwater

A regional NRM plan must include information required for action plans that ensure proper stormwater management and flood mitigation.

Fact Sheet 5

NRM Glossary, Terms and Acronyms

Authorised Officer - A regional authorised officer may be appointed by a regional NRM board to assist in the administration, operation or enforcement of the NRM Act. A *State Authorised Officer* may be appointed by the Minister.

Bi-lateral Agreement - Agreements negotiated between the Australian Government and each of the States and Territories of Australia. The SA Government signed a bi-lateral agreement with the Australian Government for the delivery of the second phase of the Natural Heritage Trust in 2003. A copy of this is available from the Australian Government's NRM website at www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements. A bi-lateral agreement for the third phase of NHT in SA is due to be settled by the end of 2007.

Biodiversity (or biological diversity) - The variety of life forms represented by plants, animals and other organisms and micro-organisms, the genes that they contain, and the ecosystems and ecosystem processes of which they form a part.

Capacity Building - Capacity building relates to a range of activities by which individuals, groups and organisations improve their capacity (ability) to achieve sustainable natural resource management. Capacity includes awareness, skills, knowledge, motivation, commitment and confidence.

Catchment - An area of land which drains water to one point, through a watercourse, such as a stream or river.

Chief Officer - The chief officer is the chief executive of the Minister's department (currently DWLBC) and is responsible for the operations of the State Authorised Officer and reviews the operations of regional authorised officers.

Ecologically sustainable development - The use, conservation, development and enhancement of natural resources in a way, and at a rate, that will enable people and communities to provide for their economic, social and physical well-being while—

- (a) sustaining the potential of natural resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations;
- (b) safeguarding the life-supporting capacities of natural resources and
- (c) avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on natural resources.

Ecosystem - A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

Environment, Resources and Development (ERD) Court - established under the *Environment, Resources and Development Court Act 1993* and has jurisdiction under legislation dealing with the environment and water resources.

General statutory duty - 'A person must act reasonably in relation to the management of natural resources within the State,' NRM Act 2004 Section 9 (1).

Intrinsic value - The inherent worth or value of something in itself or for its own sake, distinct from its economic or cultural value etc.

Landcare - A partnership model between the community, government and business to protect and repair the environment through localised Landcare groups undertaking practical projects and on-ground work. This idea has now been extended to *Bushcare*, *Rivercare*, *Coastcare* and *Urban landcare*. See the Landcare Australia website www.landcareonline.com

Fact Sheet 5 - NRM Glossary, Terms and Acronyms

Ministers - The Ministers responsible for NRM in SA are currently The Hon. Gail Gago, Minister for Environment and Conservation and The Hon. Karlene Waywald, Minister for the River Murray. The Hon. Rory McEwen, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is a key Minister in the delivery of NRM, though not directly responsible under the NRM Act 2004.

Natural Resources - include

- soil;
- water resources;
- geological features and landscapes;
- native vegetation, native animals and other native organisms and
- ecosystems.

NAP - The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality is a joint Australian and State and Territory Government program delivered at a regional level. It aims to target action to improve salinity and water quality issues in highly affected catchments or regions.

NHT - The Natural Heritage Trust was established in 1997 by the Australian Government and provides funding to conserve biodiversity, achieve sustainable use of natural resources and build community capacity across Australia. This funding is provided at community, regional, statewide and national levels. Phase two of the NHT, or NHT 2, comes to an end in June 2008 and will be replaced by NHT 3.

NRM - Natural Resources Management (NRM) refers to the sustainable use and management of natural resources in an *integrated* way (i.e. looking at all resources as part of a larger system) while providing for environmental, social and economic well-being (referred to as the *Triple Bottom Line*) now and in the future.

NRM Act - The *Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (NRM Act 2004)*, was introduced by the SA Government in 2004 and is the main piece of legislation addressing the management of natural resources in SA. It guides the activities of the NRM Council and regional NRM boards.

NRM Levy - Collected from most SA landholders through Councils who contribute the funds to the regional NRM board (may be collected directly by the Minister if there is no Council in place). Funds go towards assisting the regional NRM boards to achieve their functions and provide some on-going funding. In some cases, replaces previous 'Catchment Levy.'

NRM Water levy - A levy may be declared by the Minister to be paid by people who hold water licences (or a right to a water allocation through an Interstate Water Entitlements Scheme) or an imported water licence or who are authorised by the Minister to take water for a particular purpose. The *Interstate Water Entitlements Scheme* allows for the transfer of water entitlements between States under the Agreement approved under the *Murray-Darling Basin Act 1993*. An *imported water licence* refers to the use of water which has been brought into the region from elsewhere via a pipe or other channel when the regional NRM plan for this region specifies that a water licence is needed and the water is used at a higher rate than prescribed by the NRM plan.

Planning Strategy - A three volume document guiding development in SA. The peak document under the *Development Act 1984*.

Regional Delivery Model - Refers to the current structure for delivery of NRM program implementation via regional bodies. In South Australia, the *regional bodies* are the regional NRM boards. In the other States and Territories, the regional bodies are referred to differently; for example, in New South Wales they are known as Catchment Management Authorities. Regional delivery is a partnership between the community and all levels of Government.

Water resource - Watercourses, lakes, surface water, underground water, stormwater and effluent are all water resources. A water resource may be declared as '*prescribed*' under the NRM Act, after which a '**Water Allocation Plan**' needs to be developed for the management of that water resource. *Water licences* are required to use or hold the water. Landholders may still use water from their property for domestic and stock watering purposes (other than intensive farming).