

Media Release

Report shows great outcomes in Natural Resource Management by peak Community Groups

Successful management of our prized natural resources has increased with the activities of the six peak Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups across WA.

That's the finding of a study released today that shows substantial environmental, social and economic benefits resulting from the work of the six groups in partnership with community and government.

These groups, which are community boards, undertake natural resource management (NRM) projects in the South Coast, South West, Avon, Northern Agricultural, Rangelands and the Swan regions to repair, protect and sustainably manage the environment.

The report will be made available to the State Government which is currently reviewing the state of natural resource management and environmental services delivery in WA.

Each of the groups has already received funding from the Australian Government through the Caring for Our Country program and is looking forward to a similar partnership with the State Government.

According to Chris King, Chair of the Regional NRM Groups Collective, there is no doubt that the groups had leveraged the local knowledge and skills of their communities to achieve great outcomes in protecting and rehabilitating natural land, water, flora and fauna resources.

"In the last four years of the joint government program, the groups have achieved a great deal in areas as diverse as salinity control, weed and pest control, community awareness, marine and coastal rehabilitation and protection of biodiversity,

"We have also achieved a great deal of success working with farmers and land managers in sustainable farming, which will become more and more important as climate change impacts are felt across Western Australia.

"Many of the staff working for these programs are not only highly trained professionals but also locals with a great deal of knowledge about the environmental and natural resource systems," he said. "This is invaluable in getting results on the ground quickly and effectively".

Mr King said the study had identified that the Regional NRM Groups across WA were effective in combining science and research with on-ground action.

"Over the past few years, each Regional NRM Group has established conduits between the scientists and researchers and the end users, so information is designed for local requirements and disseminated where it is needed.

The study identified seven key areas where the Regional NRM Groups add value:

- Integrating national and state policies and translating them into regional plans,
- Providing a community-led and -backed platform for NRM planning,

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- Integrating scientific and local knowledge to inform NRM planning and implementation,
- Leveraging investment from diverse sources,
- Driving more coordinated and accountable provision of NRM-related services,
- Tackling cross-boundary issues, and
- Accessing and building regional capacity, networks and partnerships.

Mr King said that this translated into action.

“It also shows that when the funds are made available, the Regional NRM Groups are able to get them into the community.”

“The report has highlighted the power the state-wide network has to coordinate activity and get funds onto the ground where they’re most needed,” he said.

“We are looking forward to the release of State Government policies and programs for ongoing improvement of WA’s natural resources.”

A copy of the report can be found at the following webpage:

<http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/waRegionlNrmGroups.htm>