



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Caring for our Country - working together

Presentation to the WA State NRM Conference Geraldton 2009

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Caring for our Country

“An environment that is healthy, better-protected, well-managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate”



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Six national priority areas for investment:

The national reserve system

Biodiversity and natural icons

Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats

Sustainable farm practices

Natural resource management in remote and
northern Australia

Community skills, knowledge and engagement



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Caring for our Country program design

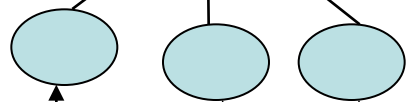
Goal

An environment that is healthy, better protected, well managed, resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate

National Priority Areas

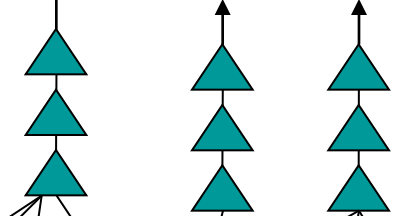
the National Reserve System	Biodiversity and natural icons	Coasts and critical aquatic habitats	Sustainable farm practices	Community skills, knowledge & engagement	NRM in northern and remote Australia
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Outcomes



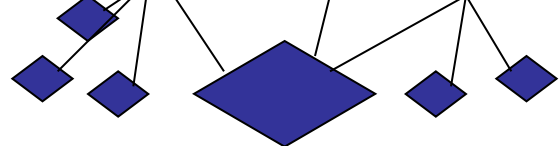
Multiple 5 year outcomes for each priority area

Targets



1-4 year targets that combine to deliver outcomes

Projects or Activities



Projects that deliver against individual or multiple targets



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Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Comments on NHT 1:

'....determining suitable performance information can be technically difficult when measuring change in environmental conditions. This is because there are substantial time lags between an action ... and the result expected...'

'.....in order to monitor medium term performance including the management of program risks, Environment Australia and AFFA [should] implement intermediate performance measures as an integral part of accountability arrangements for the NHT and future natural resource management and environment programs'.

(ANAO, 2006)



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What is MERI?

Monitoring – regular collection and analysis of information

Evaluation – periodic assessment of impact, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and legacy of a program, project or activity

Reporting – communicating the findings of evaluation

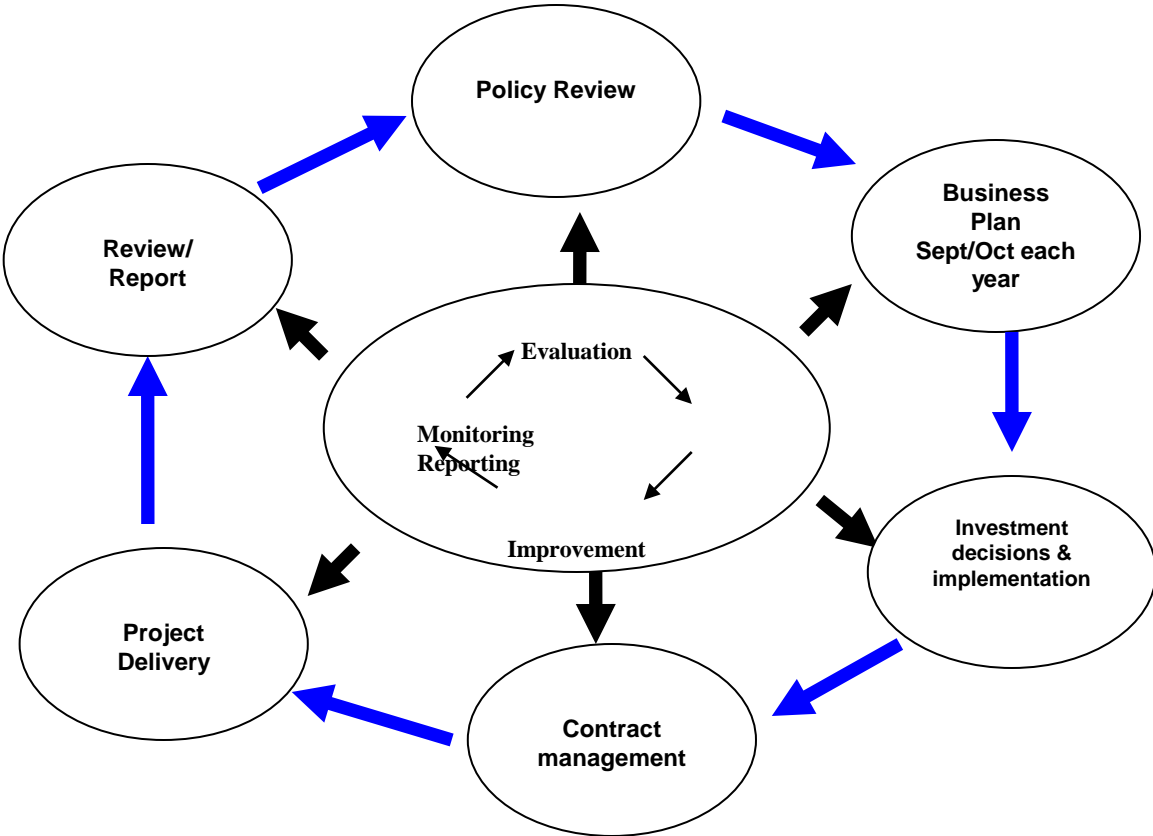
Improvement – use of the findings to inform decisions and make adjustments



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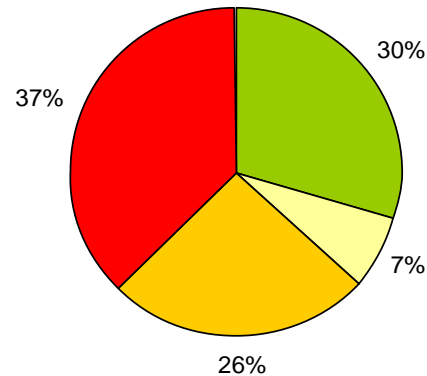


Caring for our Country business cycle



Assessment performance of all 2009-10 business plan competitive proposals

Percentages are National - proportions for WA roughly similar



- A - Strong performance against targets, good value for money
- B - Competitive performance/cost, but not against targets
- C - Relevant to targets, but performance/cost may be prohibitive
- D - Unable to demonstrate good delivery against targets or value for money



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WA Caring for our Country proposals

192 applications received - worth \$370 million
(2 large, 120 medium and 70 small scale)

11 WA proposals were successful worth \$5.7 million

\$55.6 million – regional NRM Groups base level funding
over 2 to 4 years

2 National Indigenous projects worth \$5.2 million
plus the large Camel project will be delivered partly in WA



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Assessment process

7 Primary assessment panels (1 for WA)

**3 Community advisory panels (1 for WA, SA & NT)
– one National Community advisory panel**

1 Scientific Advisory Panel

An Executive Evaluation Panel



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Learnings from assessment of WA proposals

Successful proposals focused directly on the Business Plan targets.

Justifications for projects outside of priority areas were not convincing.

Proposals often did not address the “investment scope” for each target.

Partnership activities needed to be better reflected in the budget table.

There were limited funds available compared to amount requested.

Community knowledge, skills and engagement (CKSE) targets needed to be delivered as part of proposals delivering against other “on-ground” or “biophysical” targets.



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Feedback from stakeholders:

The business plan was too complex

Application form was too long

Some liked the targeted approach

High transaction costs

Low success rate disappointing

Difficult for small community groups to access funds

Not enough clarity around the budget

Confusion around CSKE targets

Not enough time to form partnerships

Unsure how to do MERI

...and more



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Listening and responding....

Community Action Grants (closed 22 October 2009)

More simple on-line application form for 2010-11

Revised targets

Improved information and guidelines for applicants

Guidelines and kits online for MERI

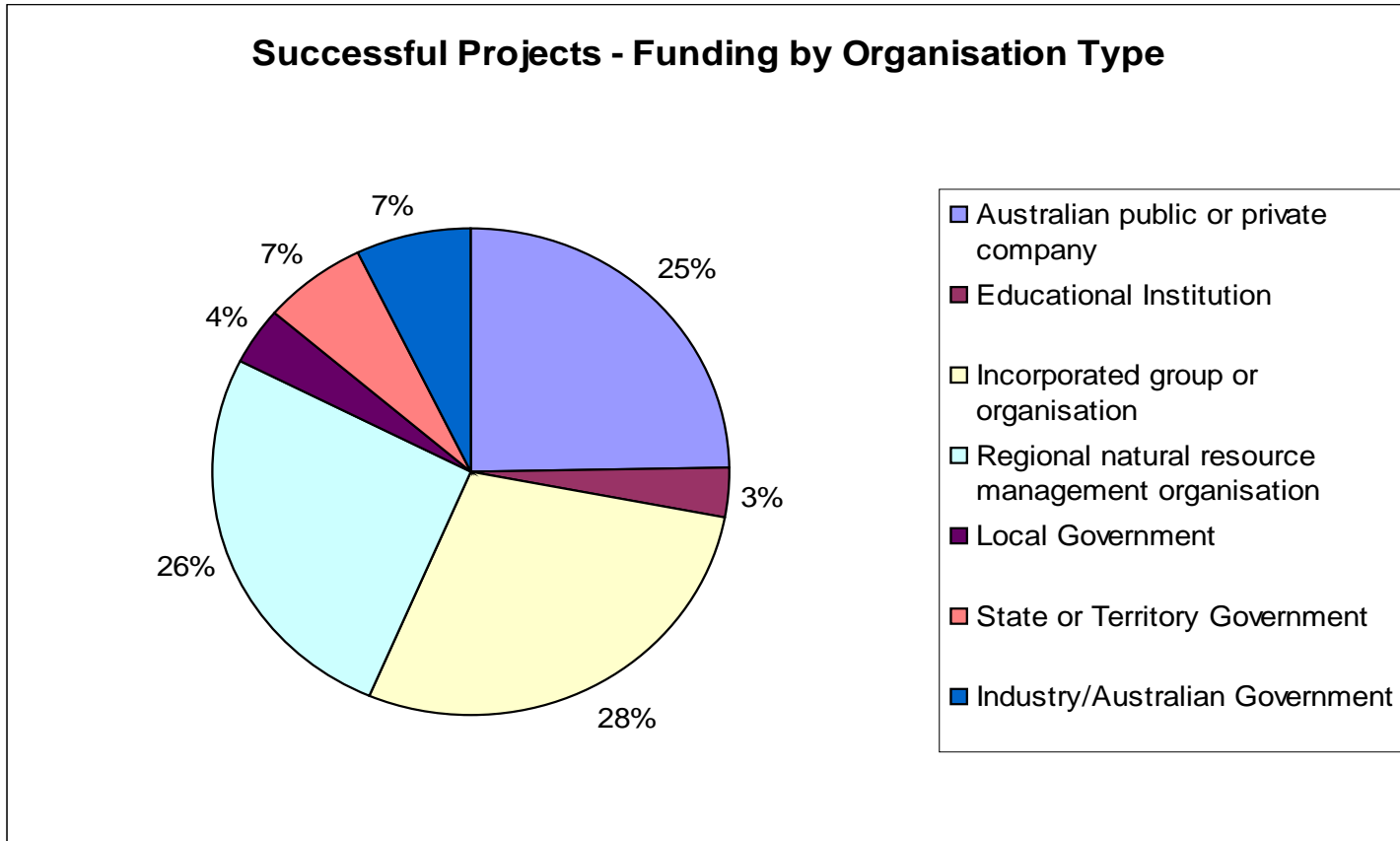
Greater clarity around budgets



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Caring for our Country - Working together



Caring for our Country - Working together in WA

State and Australian Government Departments
- 3 projects

Local Government – 2 projects

Regional NRM Group – 1 project

Incorporated group or organisation – 5 projects



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For further information:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au>

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications.html>

Thank you for listening....



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