



NEWS from the Landcare Facilitator for the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council

What is in this issue?

Outcomes of NACC's Landcare Workshop held in Geraldton on 26th November 2009, including key lessons learnt and emerging issues

Purpose of the landcare workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to showcase landcare works and discuss lessons learnt and any emerging NRM issues in the Northern Agricultural Region. It is also to provide an opportunity for participants to network and exchange information.



2. OUTCOMES OF THE NACC's LANDCARE WORKSHOP

Speakers	Project title	Key points	Key outcomes	Lessons Learnt	Emerging Issues
<p>Hellene McTaggart (NRM officer)</p> <p>West Midlands Group (WMG); Shire Administration Building; PO Box 100; Dandaragan WA 6507 Tel 9951 4008 Email: hellene@wmgroup. org.au</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A BRIEF HISTORY - Looking back to go forward -the successes and challenges of Land care in the West Midlands region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NRM funding environment has contracted greatly in last two years- the organization has had to adapt. - Projects that focus on increasing production whilst maintaining and increasing NRM values have proven the most successful. 	<p>Organisation Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic plan developed. - Streamlining of management committee structure. - Development of production focus and move to grower group organizational model. - Employment of full-time Executive Officer. - NRM program is focused on delivering Federal Government priorities through NACC funded NRM Officers. - Increased diversification of funding sources including- corporate sponsorship; partnerships with NACC, Local Government and Government Agencies; development of options for paid organisational membership. <p>SUCCESSFUL project example- outcomes: ‘Combating erosion in the Warradarge catchment’ (NLP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 845 ha in catchment sown to perennials and fodder shrubs - Catchment scale reduction of wind and water erosion. - Almost all farmers in catchment engaged in project (if not as participant, attended field days) - Farming systems change in catchment. Project acted as a catalyst for catchment scale change. <p>FAILED project example- outcomes: ‘Hill River’ (Envirofunds)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects which focus solely on NRM outcomes generally do not engage the critical mass of farmers; and on-ground NRM work needs to be financially viable for farmer’s business. - Engage farmers at start of projects and/or consult stakeholders on potential project ideas. - Share info on failures as well as successes of projects - Need projects at catchment scale - Combining production values and NRM is a smarter way to go- farmers are very willing to invest in their own sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important to get broader industry involvement in landcare - Do we have too many tiers of management in our system e.g. hierarchy in landcare delivery

<p>Rob Grima (Agricultural Economist)</p> <p>DAFWA, 20 Gregory Street, Geraldton WA 6530; Tel: 9956 8555 Email: robert.grima@agric .wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Adapting to a drier climate - fallow farming system in NAR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drier seasons have caused farmers to reconsider fallow in their system. - Fallow can be an effective tool to retain moisture for following cereal crops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not all land managers in catchment supportive of project, therefore failure to engage majority of land managers. - Production benefits of NRM asset (Hill River) not given enough consideration in project design. - Only one land manager participated. - Project outcomes not reached and funding sent back to Government. - 5 fallow trials funded by North East Farming Future (NEFF), managed by farmers and supported by Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) and CSIRO set up in 2009. - Through production simulation (APSim) and farmers interviews, it was concluded that fallow increased the grain yield for following crops by approx 500kg/ha on average (range 0-2000kg/ha). The results also showed that loamy soils were most suited, but deep loamy sands responded positively also. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be a lot more fallow and creeping west. - There is loss stock/sheep in the system. - Tactical response will dominate over strategic decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A need to investigate an impact of fallow on soil carbon/biology plus hidden costs.
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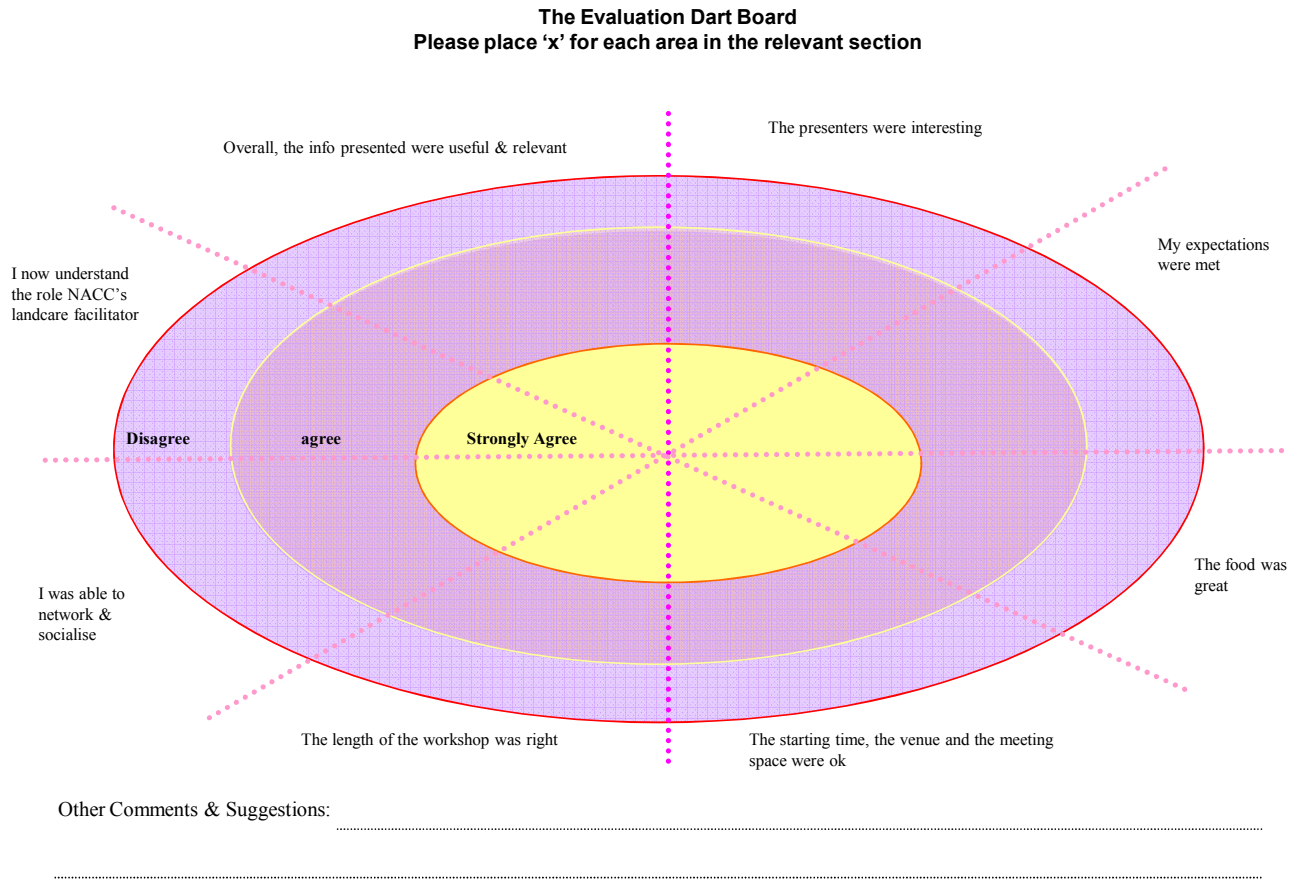
<p>Gavan Mullan (Recovery Catchment officer)</p> <p>DEC - Midwest region; 201 Foreshore Drive; Geraldton WA 6531 Tel 9921 5955 Email: gavan.mullan@dec .wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Buntine- Marchagee - Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Buntine- Marchagee there is a wide diversity of <u>regionally significant</u> natural areas (e.g. wetlands), threatened by salinity (five distinct 'types' of wetlands). <p>Project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect and where possible restore high priority biodiversity assets, particularly wetlands, that are threatened by salinity, and which are regionally significant. - contribute to the development of technologies to combat salinity throughout the agricultural region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revegetation has improved probability of persistence of biota near to priority biological assets threatened by salinity - Improved management of private property. About 12,000 ha treated with Integrated Water Management. - Increased survey effort has revealed more complete list of species. - Large scale implementation of Integrated Water Management (planning & operational). - Refined revegetation techniques to achieve high establishment success in consecutive 'record dry years' (06- 07). - contribution to the commercially prospective mallee eucalypt industry i.e. in terms of plant water-use research; and building up product in the paddock - Recognised by the global restoration network as one of Australasia's 'Highly commended' ecological restoration projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of doing value based planning - Demonstration sub- catchment of Integrated Water Management was valuable - in terms of larger scale rollout - High cost of managing water at a landscape scale - Need to allow for substantial lead time when requesting local government 'on-ground input' to Integrated Water Management, i.e. culvert or floodway upgrades. - Importance of multi- project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to place values on environmental services - Future funding for salinity - Research & role of native grass and integration into production systems.
<p>Tim Wiley Senior Development Officer</p> <p>DAFWA, 20 Gregory Street, Geraldton WA 6530 Tel 9956 8555 Email: tim.wiley@agric.w</p>	<p>Climate change in the Northern Agriculture Region of WA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - threats and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project aims to investigate the productivity of perennial pasture systems and wind erosion, grazing management, farm economics, pasture cropping, and soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The projects have demonstrated that perennial pastures on sandy soils are productive, profitable and protect the natural resources on farms. - Management packages have been developed for farmers and extended to key industry, NACC and agency staff. - Evidence has been gathered that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are some native perennial that will germinate that we don't know - There are some toxicity issues (stock with panic - Pasture cropping works for pastures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R & D into perennials in the low rainfall region (particularly natives), pasture cropping, soil biology and carbon sequestration. - Support for producer groups testing and developing perennial based systems.

<p>a.gov.au</p> <p>Mike Clarke / Naomi Thomson Senior Dev officer and Dev officer (communication) DAFWA, 20 Gregory Street, Geraldton WA 6530 Tel 9956 8555 Emails: mike.clarke@agric.wa.gov.au / naomi.thomson@agric.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>- Future projects for the North East Agricultural Region (NEAR)</p>	<p>carbon and soil biology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DAFWA's long term plan to increase drought preparedness and resilience of farm businesses in the North East Agricultural Region. - Three projects that have received funding and are currently operational include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Yield Prophet to Make Better Decisions • Determining the Characteristics of Vulnerable and Resilient Farm Businesses • Changing Land use on Unproductive Soils in the North and Eastern Wheatbelt 	<p>perennials may sequester significant amounts of carbon, and soil biology may be the critical factor driving these processes.</p> <p><u>Using Yield Prophet to Make Better Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project outcome will be more informed decision making and reduced financial risk by farmers and agribusiness in the region. This will result in the profitability of cropping programs being increased for farm businesses participating in the project <p><u>Determining the Characteristics of Vulnerable and Resilient Farm Businesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved preparedness and self reliance amongst the NEAR and Eastern Wheatbelt farmers to overcome business, farming and climatic obstacles. <p><u>Changing Land use on Unproductive Soils in the North and Eastern Wheatbelt</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through this project the characteristics and extent of both unproductive and productive soils in the targeted region will be defined. - An economic analysis to determine the contribution of unproductive soils to whole farm viability, using real farm data. With input from farmers, suitable land use options for unproductive soils will be identified. - Research and development needs and policy opportunities will also be highlighted for those options that are less developed. 	<p>- Natural regeneration on poor soils can work much better than planting e.g. Oil Mallees on shallow soils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our knowledge is very limited on Carbon storage - Potential for cross-agency collaborative research e.g. DEC & DAFWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need livestock system and grazing skills/ confidence of farmers. - "There is a lack of data about the carbon storage capability of native vegetation. This information is crucial to allow land in the NEAR to play a role in an Emission Trading Scheme." - "There is a potential for carbon storage under native shrubs, what level this is we are currently unsure of."
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<p>Ian Kininmonth Principal Consultant Environmental Knowledge Systems Australia (EKSA) PO Box 8266 Subiaco East WA 6008</p> <p>T: (08) 9317 3471 M: 0401 521 895 Email: ian@eksa.com.au</p>	<p>On-ground implementation of environmental best practices for perennial horticulture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Web-based database of best practices for perennial horticulture (orchard crops) and horses developed. See http://www.eksa.com.au/nacc-bmps - Contains map showing application of best practices in the southern section of the NACC region - Information relevant to existing land managers and developers, State and local governments and industry groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved awareness of best practices and resources to support implementation for better orchards and horses - Improved accessibility to this type of information (relates to C4oC business plan target of making information freely available and accessible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to keep info current / relevant / Updated. - Relevance to have documents shared on other organisation website e.g. fact sheets. - need for more effective engagement with local groups - effective promotion strategy required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horticulture in NAR - had to get info and horticulturalists together e.g. “horticultural for dummies” start up guide. - Industry engagement and support, linking to drivers, packaging information for adoption and ongoing monitoring and evaluation - maintenance of the existing knowledge base - expansion of the knowledge base to other uses and management practices
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3. EVALUATION

Evaluation dart boards were distributed to the workshop’s participants to gauge participant feeling on a range of workshop aspects. Participants were asked to make a mark in each segment of the dartboard according to their level of satisfaction. The nearer the mark is to the middle of the board (strongly agree), the higher the satisfaction. The further away from the middle (disagree), the less their satisfaction is. The dart board below depicts aspects of the workshop that were presented to the participants. There were 15 participants in total, however, 10 of them filled out the dart boards.



3.1 Results

Evaluation aspects of the workshop:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Overall, the information presented were useful and relevant	5	5	0
The presenters were interesting	6	4	0
My expectations were met	5	5	0
The food was great	6	3	1
The starting time, the venue and the space were ok	7	2	1
The length of the workshop was right	5	5	0
I was able to network and socialise	5	5	0
I now understand the role of NACC landcare facilitator	5	5	0

- As can be seen in the Table above, all the respondents agreed that the information presented in the workshop was useful and relevant and that the presenters were interesting.
- About 60% of respondents strongly agreed that the workshop has met their expectation with 40 % agreed their expectations were met.
- In terms of hospitality, 90% of respondents mentioned that the food provided in the workshop was great, with 10% disagreed.

- As far as the starting time, the venue and the space of the workshop are concerned, 80% of the respondents indicated satisfaction. Also they showed that length of the workshop is alright.
- Regarding understand the role of NACC's landcare facilitator all respondents agreed that they have now understood the landcare role.
- Nearly all respondents agreed that the workshop has provided good opportunity to network and socialise.

3.2 Other comments and suggestions:

- A very interesting day with a great variety of resources and knowledge throughout the day.
- Need more warning beforehand. Better to call up potential presenters than just send email.
- No presenter mentioned the core problem which is total balance of the landscape. To do this is essential to create a balance between water and air ratio.

Appendices

4.1 List of NACC Landcare workshop participants

No.	Surname	First Name	Affiliation	Place a tick to register
1	Marsden	Yvonne	NACC	✓
2	Kininmonth	Ian	Environmental Knowledge Systems Australia (EKSA)	✓
3	Mullan	Gavan	DEC	✓
4	Fox	Bronwyn	West Midlands Group	Apology
5	Hellenne	McTaggart	West Midlands Group	✓
6	Thomson	Naomi	DAFWA	✓
7	Wiley	Tim	DAFWA	✓
8	Clarke	Mike	DAFWA	✓
9	Grima	Rob	DAFWA	✓
10	Sorgiovani	Jim		✓
11	Bagshaw	Rachel	MIG	Apology
12	Lewis	Clayton	AG CFoC	✓
13	Currans	Bill	NACC	✓
14	Parker	Roma	Farmer	✓
15	Beamont	Euan		✓
16	Gill	Viv	Farmer	
17	Findlater	Paul	DAFWA	✓
18	Ruse	Tony	Farmer	
19	Yokwe	Stanley	NACC	✓