

# Salinity rehabilitation and extension program



**Project Number:** 05N114-04

**Project Start Date:** 1/1/2007

**Project Completion Date:** 30/06/2009

## Project Description

This project will contribute to the Resource Condition Target of Maintaining or reducing the rate of groundwater rise and ensure that all salt affected areas are rehabilitated by 2025. It is designed to provide a greatly improved salinity extension service to landholders throughout the Northern Agricultural Region of Western Australia as well as providing a fencing incentive to help rehabilitate salt affected land. It will meet this goal by providing a three pronged approach to salinity extension.

### **An “on farm” salinity advice service**

**Regular updates of groundwater trends in the regions**

**Administration of a fencing incentive for fencing out saltland .**

The project is strategically focusing on the districts in the region where properties have a significant proportion affected by salinity. This includes the Yarra Yarra, eastern areas of the Moore River and the headwaters of the Irwin Catchment.

There is currently market failure in provision of an “unbiased on farm” service to farmers on salinity management. The Department of Agriculture's Rapid Catchment Appraisal project is looking at salinity at a large catchment scale with little to offer the individual landholder at a paddock level.

Salinity is a very site specific issue to manage and farmers need to know what groundwater flow system is operating in their paddock and what range of management options are available to them.

The service was to be delivered by a team of specialists in hydrology, farming systems, revegetation and surface water control and uses the Land Monitor products, Aerial photography, Satellite imagery, EM 38 and other survey results to provide the farmer with a range of salinity management options. Possible options include engineering, soil amelioration techniques, cropping and grazing solutions, farm forestry and revegetation for nature conservation outcomes. It would be hoped that up to 60 farming properties could be visited each year.

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A fencing incentive of \$2000/kilometre will assist landholders to implement saltland works on their farm agreed upon as a result of the farm visits. The first step in managing salt affected areas is to protect it from grazing to allow for natural regeneration, (at the very least) to occur. It is important to ensure that salt affected areas don't remain bare and lose topsoil as a result of grazing pressure. If we can encourage samphire and other halophytes to colonise these areas then options for other economic alternatives can be implemented as they become available.

The Department also has an extensive database of hydrological information, the results of which need to be extended to rural communities. This project would also provide information on groundwater trends for individual properties where data is available. It would also provide regular updates (Agmemo, field days, crop updates) of groundwater trends in representative bores from the different hydrological zones.

**Delivery Organisation:** Department of Agriculture and Food

**Total IP2 Funding:** \$ 546,019

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