



Australian Government



Northern Agricultural Catchments Council

# Annual Report 2007-2008



# NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL REGION



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## CHAIR'S REPORT

### CHRIS KING

It gives me great pleasure to present the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council Annual Report 2007-2008. It is the first report I have had the privilege to deliver to our members and partners. It describes the many activities NACC and its partners deliver in the Northern Agricultural Region (NAR) to make a difference in our natural environment.

An organisation like NACC has an extremely important role to play in the implementation of Natural Resource Management (NRM) within our quite exceptional ecosystems. It is crucial that NACC takes a lead role in providing leadership and direction for environmental management in the region; equally it is obligatory for NACC to engage the whole community in recognising that individually and collectively we all have a part to play.

The NAR is internationally recognised as one of the most significant regions of biodiversity in the world. Five of the eight Priority One environmental priorities as identified in the State of the Environment 2007 report are impacting or are predicted to significantly impact on this region. They include climate change, land salinisation, dieback, introduced weeds and salinisation of inland waters. People from my part of the region might suggest that the inland waters are already salty, but we do have some very important fresh water systems that we need to protect. With the cooperation of adjacent landowners we can facilitate intensive active management of these systems.

Along with the richness of the natural systems we are also a major contributor to the State's economy through agriculture and, increasingly, mining.

The Northern Agricultural Region is about to face significant challenges from climate variability and potentially major climate change. The need to develop farming systems that adapt to those challenges requires us to foster greater collaborative participation from farmers, scientists, agronomists and natural resource managers in projects that lead to a better understanding of our changing climate.

Through this understanding, the processes and systems that will mitigate the impacts of the predicted changes can be developed to allow farmers to adapt and continue to maintain productivity and sustain our local communities.

Similarly the impacts of changes in temperature and rainfall on our remnant vegetation and biodiverse landscapes require innovative approaches to protect and allow the existing flora and fauna to continue to flourish.



## CHAIRS REPORT [Cont.]

At a Board level we have, in the past 12 months, moved to a smaller structure in line with the recommendations of the Walter Turnbull review. We have, during the year, employed an independent consultancy to conduct project audits to ascertain the effectiveness and compliance of project partners. I believe we are the only NRM region in WA doing this.

I express my gratitude to the current Board members for their cooperation and contribution for the past year. In doing so, I acknowledge the contribution made by all of the members of the previous Management Committee; in particular community members John Longman, Cynthia McMorrان, Gary Dring, Geoff Erickson, and Peter Syme, all of whom had a vital role in building the NACC strategy and the organisation. I additionally thank the Agency representatives for their involvement and for the linkages to professional advice they fostered. At this point I also express our appreciation of the contribution made by our former chair Elizabeth Eaton. Elizabeth has been actively engaged in NACC and its predecessor NAIMS since 1998. She has now decided not to seek a position on the Board following this AGM and to take a well earned rest. Thank you to Elizabeth from all of the NACC members and Board.

The partnerships between NACC and funding bodies, and NACC and our delivery partners will continue to be a major focus for the Board in the near future. With the election of the Rudd government at a national level, the NAP and NHT2 programs have been replaced by the Caring for our Country Program which has committed to expend \$1.2 billion over the next five years. We have, in retrospect, been fortunate that there were delays early in the NAP and NHT2 rollout that has now allowed us to maintain most of the capacity in people and technical skills built up in recent years, while the new program is being readied for delivery. Transition year funding has been guaranteed by the Australian Government during the period of 2008/2009 after which a new funding model will be introduced. With the right planning it will be possible to lessen the negative consequences regarding skills retention and stakeholder disenchantment. The Australian Government Land and Coasts Team are currently building a business plan for the rollout of funding for years two to five.

The Western Australian Government has also allocated \$125 million over the next five years for NRM expenditure through the regions. On behalf of NACC and all project deliverers I would like to acknowledge the very significant financial contribution made by the Australian Government and the State Government of Western Australia to our operating and investment program. Approximately \$6 million was spent across the NAR in the past 12 months delivering projects on public and private land. Our natural environment and sustainability would be vastly poorer without this major contribution.

Drought had a major impact in the NAR during 2007 with significant negative outcomes for biodiversity of both flora and fauna as well as the social and economic fallout for a large part of the region. It is noteworthy that given those climatic conditions in the past year, projects in the NAR being delivered by NACC and our partners are making significant landscape change, having moved from a planning and identification phase to more implementation across the region. One major impact is the increasing private investment on sustainable land use practices. This is being demonstrated in the Catchment Demonstration Initiative (CDI), the Targeted Investment Program (TIP), the Yarra Yarra Drainage Program and the Upper Chapman projects. For example, in the CDI area public funding of \$267,000 has attracted private investment of \$361,000. Most of the investment is in plantings; with perennial pastures, tagasaste, tree planting and salt bush almost doubling the public funding. In the Yarra Yarra almost 100 kilometres of privately funded drainage has taken place to link with the publicly funded drainage. The Saline Lands Program has attracted almost \$600,000 of local investment to more than match the \$490,000 expended through public funds. There is also an increasing interest in protecting remnant natural vegetation on private land. These are just a few instances of the influence that the collaborative approach between NACC, partners and landowners can make on our environment. As has been suggested to me by a field staff member, we are seeing the 'tip of the iceberg'.

There is now an increased focus on communication with the community. NACC have long recognised that an important component of NRM is the engagement and education of our stakeholders and landholders (farmers, local governments and the State) and the general public, the people of the region. To facilitate this communication NACC have allocated funding to a position to promote natural resource management, engage and raise community awareness of the role of NACC and encourage the community to look at their own personal contribution to sustaining our environment. Most of us would have noticed the weekly two page spread in a local newspaper. Thank you to Jackie Gill for her efforts as our communications and training coordinator.

Very little would have been achieved without an extraordinarily good team. The NACC staff is the key ingredient in our success. From the wonderful NRMO team which is often the only face that our stakeholders in the bush or on the paddock see; to the program managers who guide them; the project staff based with our many partners; the financial team based at Perenjori; the support team at the office in Geraldton, and our senior management of Alan Bradley and Bill Currans, I thank them all for their fantastic contribution to the development and accomplishments of NACC.

In conclusion I acknowledge the involvement of our members and stakeholders in the projects and programs that NACC delivers. It is your interest and passion that will ultimately be what makes a difference now and in what we leave behind for future generations.

**Chris King**  
Chair

## CEO'S REPORT

### ALAN BRADLEY

Change management is always difficult for an organisation to deal with, but at NACC, change is becoming the norm. With a complete revitalisation of the Board from previous years, to dealing with a change in Federal Government and new directions for the NRM program, and now a change in State Government means we are set to see a raft of changes for any WA Program. The amount of change and the time periods between announcements and decisions on how they will take effect makes purposeful engagement with the community difficult.

The NACC team has worked extremely hard throughout the last 12 months to ensure the program continues and input is provided to the policy makers for planning the future programs. The ongoing commitment from the team is unwavering and members should be satisfied with the efforts produced.

During the past 12 months the funding programs have changed significantly. The program formerly known as the Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity (NHT/NAP) has come to an end with the election of the Federal Labor Government in November '07.

The program has been replaced at a national level by the Caring for Our Country program (C4OC). A program at a state level has yet to be developed, however, in May '08, there was a budget commitment to a (yet to be named) program made. The bilateral agreement for this current financial year between the Australian and State Governments has recently been made available on the State NRM website at <http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/latestDocuments.htm>.

The C4OC program is currently operating in a transitional arrangement, with projects funded from the current 07/08 funds originally due to be completed by June 30. However, due to the changes and the late approval of NACC investment plans, funding has been approved for carry over to June 30, 2009, to allow for projects to be extended or completed where appropriate. Some projects have already been completed; meeting their objectives and providing some quality information that will assist with improved NRM outcomes into the future.

The Board has also made some changes to improve how it interacts with the community; initiating local meetings to include a community session late in the day for subregions and guests, followed by dinner for invited guests. This will hopefully allow for greater discussion and interaction on local issues. Following their formal meetings, the Board will participate in field visits or institutional activities.

During this year there were a number of significant representations made to both Australian and State Government officials in the region. In February 2008, NACC hosted the Joint Steering Committee on a tour of the West Midlands locality, where they observed a number of activities that had been initiated through NACC, such as the Australian Sea Lion monitoring, the establishment of perennial pastures and a dieback monitoring site.

NACC also made a presentation to the Cabinet Standing Committee on Regional Development held in Perenjori, where the Premier and several Ministers were briefed on issues in the Northern Agricultural Region.

The organisation received very positive feedback on its efforts from both groups on the performance of the programs and the outcomes being achieved.

Governance issues remain of high importance to NACC and to this end we have been involved in the establishment of an audit program for NACC projects: financial and qualitative. Further, NACC as an organisation has been audited by external parties on several occasions, including an audit on the delivery of the Targeted Investment Program. These reports have provided some improvement opportunities for the operations that NACC has instigated.

In February 2008, a special meeting was held to adjust the constitution at the request of the Department of Environment and Heritage to allow for NACC to be entered onto the Register of Environmental Organisations, to allow for approval of Gift Deductible Status to proceed. The minor amendments were approved by the members present and the request filed. The process has continued and NACC has been successful in obtaining Gift Deductible Recipient status. This will open a new chapter for NACC and the region on alternative funding opportunities for continued delivery on NRM.

It should be noted that the above changes are happening and we need to be mindful of this and be flexible in our arrangements, but importantly work together and collectively into the future.

I have clear direction from the NACC Board that we need to continue to work together and build on the funding opportunities for the NAR. NACC will continue to support the NRMO team to assist in the planning and delivery of our Regional NRM Strategy objectives in an holistic and collaborative way.

**Alan Bradley**  
**CEO**



**AUDITOR'S REPORT****WESTWOOD  
ACCOUNTANTS**

**AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO  
NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL CATCHMENTS COUNCIL INC.**

Directors  
Shane Van Styn CPA  
Andrew Ford CPA  
Kevin Cassidy NTAA

Scope

I have examined the attached special purpose financial statements of Northern Agricultural Catchments Council Incorporated (NACC) for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The Directors are responsible for the financial statements. The Directors have determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the reporting requirements of NACC and are appropriate to meet their needs. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial statements in order to express an opinion as to whether the financial statements are a true and fair representation of the position of the entity and the results of its operations, for the year ended 30 June 2008. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of NACC.

The financial statements have been prepared for distribution to the Directors for the purpose of fulfilling the reporting requirements of NACC's constitution as well as complying with the reporting requirements of both State and Federal Government funding bodies. I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial statements to which it relates to any person other than the Directors of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council Incorporated or relevant Government Department or for any purpose other than for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly. These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional requirements in Australia.

The Audit Opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the attached financial statements present fairly, the financial position as at 30 June 2008 of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council Incorporated and the results of its operations for the year then ended.

WESTWOOD ACCOUNTANTS



SHANE GERALD VAN STYN CPA  
DIRECTOR

Date: 25 SEPTEMBER 2008  
Geraldton, Western Australia

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## PROGRAM ORGANISATION

NACC has 37 projects currently operating throughout the region, many of them building on successes of our first Investment Plan.

The Investment Plan II includes four programs, developed from Expressions of Interest from a very wide range of potential partners.

The table below demonstrates new program and sub-program organisation in Investment Plan II.

<b>Program IP II / IP III</b>	<b>Sub-program IP II / IP III</b>
<b>Balancing Diversity and Productivity</b>	Land
	Water
	Coastal and Marine
	Biodiversity
<b>Integrated Natural Resource Management</b>	Water and Wetlands solutions to salinity
	Production based solutions to salinity
	Native plant-based solutions to salinity
<b>Community Leverage</b>	Communication and Engagement
	Sharing Aboriginal Knowledge
	Education and Increasing Skills
<b>Resource Condition and Program Effectiveness</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting



## INVESTMENT PLAN II & III

### PROGRAM TITLE:

## TARGETED INVESTMENT PROGRAM

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

This program will develop and implement a coordinated and targeted investment process using best available technical knowledge and financial incentives to engage land managers to achieve resource and landuse change. The program will implement river management, saline land management, native vegetation and salinity/watertable management works. A coordinated incentives management system will also be developed and implemented.

### PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Develop a targeted and strategic investment system
- Implement on-ground salinity and river management actions
- Benchmark social and economic information for use in refining incentives delivery (2007/08)

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Targeted Investment Program (TIP) has been operating in the Northern Agricultural Region for over 12 months with some significant results being achieved in that time, including the handover of the first cheque to a landholder for completed on-ground works. Since the program began operation officially on 29 June 2007, over 147 expressions of interest have been received from landholders in the TIP area.

On the ground, the program has had some significant achievements. To date TIP has signed agreements for 212 ha of saline land management worth \$28,281, 2,054.7 ha of perennial pastures agreements worth \$283,625, 52.5 ha of farm forestry worth \$52,300 and 4,542 ha of native vegetation management agreements worth \$553,757. Further agreements have been offered for 110ha of perennial pastures worth \$17,149 and 544ha of native vegetation management worth \$93,126.

62 agreements have also been signed to implement 299km of saline land fencing worth \$489,287 covering a total area of 13,575ha. These milestones are well above the planned targets for this aspect of the program. Also through the TIP program, 24 land managers have committed to protecting 3,100ha of riparian zones worth \$438,155.

In order to deliver some outcomes of the program a contract has been established with ESRI to deliver a customised GIS mapping tool, and Evergreen have also assisted in the delivery of seeding workshops which have significantly increased the capacity of landholders participating in the TIP program.

Specifications for a web-based database containing contact details, management agreement details and reporting functions have also been finalised and this database is currently under construction. Once implemented this database will provide a detailed compendium of data collected through the program.

**PROGRAM TITLE:****LAND – SOIL AND CLIMATE SYSTEMS****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This subprogram aims to limit rising groundwater and the spread of dryland salinity, and increase farm productivity/profitability. Land management will involve engineering and agronomic options, fencing and revegetation, catchment-scale planning and extension activities. This subprogram promotes and supports best practice agricultural production whilst protecting our natural resources. Issues dealt with include salinity, soil condition and structure, wind and water erosion, soil biology, farming systems, and off-farm impacts. It will promote the development of commercial and agro-forestry including integration with other land-uses. Support is also provided for the integrated management and prevention of agricultural or environmental weeds, pests and diseases.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Farming to the Climate: Managing climate risk and variability in the low rainfall NAR
- “Healthy Farms” - a pilot project
- Integrating innovative farming systems and catchment management
- Salinity Rehabilitation and Extension Program
- Soil Stabilisation Solutions for the Nangetty Valley
- White Out

**PROGRESS:**

Through the development of strong relationships and good progress of key investment areas, several significant achievements have been made during 2007-08.

The Healthy Farms initiative which provides Environmental Management Systems (EMS) information to land managers and assists in EMS implementation has made several key achievements during 2007/08 including:

- providing assistance in updating EMS manuals;
- the project has also been promoted at the Environmental Management System Forum, the Perth Royal Show and the Keep it Real Quality Assurance and Environmental Management System conference in Hobart and at several local region events;
- assisting farmers to source funding for priority on-ground works via the Rivercare Project and Envirofunds;
- promotion of the project to a broader base of landholders within the Northern Agricultural Region.

This program has also provided technical support and enabled the delivery of salinity incentives. This technical support team has operated extremely efficiently and this project has continually achieved beyond the required targets.

To assist landholders with the changing climate and improve their natural resource management techniques four soil water workshops on Understanding Soil Water in collaboration with CSIRO staff from Queensland and Perth were held during 2007-08. Workshops were attended by growers and industry as part of a new package which is striving to improve growers understanding of soil moisture and its place in climate risk management.

As part of the Buntine Marchagee Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment project (White Out), Airborne laser scanning (or high resolution surface terrain mapping) has been conducted in the catchment. This work is required in order for software model scenario development and the development of credible salinity/water management options.



**PROGRAM TITLE:****BALANCING DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY LAND -  
DRAINAGE AND ENGINEERING****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This subprogram aims to limit rising groundwater and the spread of dryland salinity, and increase farm productivity/profitability. Land management will involve engineering and agronomic options, fencing and revegetation, catchment-scale planning and extension activities. This subprogram promotes and supports best practice agricultural production whilst protecting our natural resources. Issues dealt with include salinity, soil condition and structure, wind and water erosion, soil biology, farming systems, and off-farm impacts. This subprogram will promote engineering management of urban salinity in Moora, Perenjori and Morawa townships, and benchmark location and effectiveness of deep drainage.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Revegetation of natural drainage lines and protection of remnant vegetation in East Moore
- Groundwater and salinity in the Koojan – Gillingarra Region
- Drainage Benchmarking
- Rural Towns – Liquid Assets
- Yarra Yarra Drainage Phase 2 – Drainage Construction and Monitoring
- Salaries Phase 2 Yarra Yarra Regional Drainage

**PROGRESS:**

The Drainage and Engineering program has examined and trialled several drainage and engineering options for dealing with surface and ground water issues. To evaluate the viability of the deep closed drain a new Telemetry Equipment and Logging System (TELS), suitable for precise and multiple parameter surface water quality measurements is being utilised in Moora, Morawa and Perenjori. Water temperature, EC, flow velocity, pH and discharge rates are all measured every 5 minutes during runoff events. The data is transmitted via the Telstra mobile phone network to a base station in DAFWA offices. From the base station, data is automatically uploaded to a new 'Hydstra' database which has been purchased specifically to handle data from all 6 TELS units in the Region. Analysis of the data will then be used as a decision support tool in the planning, design and layout of surface water harvesting, storage and recycling schemes in each of the three towns.

Data gathered as a result of the drainage benchmarking project has indicated that of the drains, properties and farmers surveyed, the changes to soil characteristics, drain condition and water quality were highly variable between farms. Of the farms surveyed, very few if any had had independent site assessments undertaken prior to installation of the drains.

The six drains being constructed as part of the Yarra Yarra drainage project are nearing completion with fences due for completion early in the new financial year.

**PROGRAM TITLE:****BALANCING DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY - INTRODUCING PERENNIALS****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This subprogram aims to limit rising groundwater and the spread of dryland salinity as well as increase farm productivity/profitability. Land management will involve establishment and management of deep-rooted perennial species that have both productivity and environmental/salinity benefits. Projects explore environmental benefits and management of perennial pastures, and the use of farm forestry to manage and reduce salinity.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- An understanding of the environmental benefits and risks associated with the perennial pastures
- Determining Optimum grazing rotations to perennial pastures
- Developing incentives to revegetate by establishing commercially successful Oil Mallee Industry
- Brushwood Industry Development on Saline Land
- Acacia Saligna for fibrewood in the Northern Agricultural Region
- Drought Proofing the North Eastern Wheatbelt

**PROGRESS:**

This program has expanded in 2007/08 to include additional key investment areas relating to Acacia Saligna for fibrewood in the Northern Agricultural Region and an additional Oil Mallee project which focuses on dealing with climate change issues and the role of perennials in the changing landscape.

Determining optimum grazing rotations was mildly affected by the dry seasons experienced in the Northern Agricultural Region, however some meaningful results and outcomes have still been achieved. Specifically data from the trials have indicated how perennial pastures perform in drought conditions. Measurement of grass and soil cores have also been analysed for NO<sub>3</sub> and soil carbon. Comparative samples are being taken from beneath adjoining annual pastures which will provide data on the ability of perennial grasses to reduce nitrogen in ground water and to sequester CO<sub>2</sub>.

Results obtained so far for the optimum grazing rotations key investment area are beginning to show increased production, however unexpected results have shown that a bigger impact has been made on Green Panic than Rhodes grass. It is anticipated that growth will be better this summer as a result of recent rains.

The Brushwood Industry Development project has established 430,000 seedlings with landholders this year, however demand for seedlings was around 500,000. An inventory of brushwood in the region is currently being done to gauge the availability of this resource for the brushwood fencing industry.

At a visit by Minister Chance the Oil Mallee Industry project showcased the Harvester, Still and mulched trees as well as plantings. Minister Chance was very impressed with the progress of this project and in particular the commitment which has been made by landholders and project proponents to advance the project.



**PROGRAM TITLE:****BALANCING DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY LAND - COASTAL AND MARINE****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

With a focus on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, and threatened species and communities, this subprogram assesses resource condition, addresses threats to coastal and marine biodiversity and coastal lake water quality, develops key partnerships and increases stakeholder cooperation. Activities include: improvements to waste management systems; resource assessment and modelling of impacts on coastal areas; benchmarking and monitoring fish and sea lion populations; and providing coordination and support to community groups and Local Government coastal management plans and strategies.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Long term monitoring of the effects of Marine Protected Areas on reef fish assemblages at the Houtman Abrolhos Islands
- Implementation of waste management systems at the Abrolhos Islands Reserve
- Foraging ecology and ecotrophic role of the Australian Sea Lion in Marine Ecosystems
- Between the inland and the ocean – assessing and addressing threats to the coastal strip.

**PROGRESS:**

NACC's Coastal and Marine investment program has continued to achieve strong outcomes during 2007/08 including the completion of fieldwork associated with the Long Term Monitoring of the effects of MPAs on reef fish assemblages at the Abrolhos Islands. Results from this project indicate that Marine Protected Areas have had an impact on fish assemblages at the Abrolhos Islands, although there is some variation in impact between species.

The investigation into the foraging ecology and ecotrophic role of the Australian Sea Lion has commenced the use of acoustic as well as satellite tagging of Australian Sea Lions to study their at-sea movements. This is the first time this type of research technique has been applied to this species and early results indicate that while numbers are low throughout the coastal locations surveyed in the Northern Agricultural Region, populations seem stable. Furthermore, preliminary results indicate that juvenile mortality is somewhat higher than anticipated as a result of high levels of entanglement in ocean rubbish.

Coastal Assessment and Restoration works throughout the Northern Agricultural Region have made significant progress during 2007/08 with Site Protection Plans for the Shire of Northampton, i.e. Wittecarra Ck, Hutt River mouth and Bowes River mouth being completed and accepted by the relevant Shire councils. Assistance has also been provided to the Shire of Chapman Valley to restore the Buller River mouth. A renewed partnership between this key investment area and NACC's Indigenous Heritage Unit was also initiated with the goal of engaging in communication with the Traditional Owners of the Buller River mouth regarding restoration efforts.

On-ground works at Lake Thetis are also now underway with a new entry to the site being established and road access and car parking works improving the protection of this important coastal site.

A successful school education project has also been run at Jurien Bay Primary school in association with Department of Environment and Conservation Marine Parks staff. A plan is currently underway to roll out this program to other schools in the area to assist in the development of project material for multiple users. A DVD project outlining the outcomes and material produced from this project is in the planning stage and may occur in collaboration with students at the Edith Cowan University.

**PROGRAM TITLE:****BALANCING DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY LAND - BIODIVERSITY****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

The Northern Agricultural Region is renowned for its plant diversity, and includes three Australian Biodiversity Hotspots. This subprogram aims to conserve terrestrial biodiversity by: implementing protecting and managing native vegetation; implementing Recovery Plans for threatened species and communities; managing high conservation woodlands; and addressing threats to terrestrial biodiversity including weeds and pest animals. Active management of native vegetation will also contribute to the management of broader salinity issues.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Woodland Watch: Community protection and management of biodiversity assets in the NAR
- Back from the Brink
- Stop the Rot

**PROGRESS:**

The NACC Biodiversity Program has continued to progress strongly throughout 2007/08 with several significant achievements being made by the key investment areas within this program.

Through the Woodland Watch project, more than 10 Flora surveys have been conducted on properties within the NAR. The result of these surveys has been 5 sites being signed up to Voluntary Management Agreements (VMAs) and another 2 sites being signed up to covenants. Of the agreements which resulted from earlier flora surveys, 1 landholders has now completed his agreed on-ground works and these works have been inspected.

Several other surveys of threatened flora and fauna species have been undertaken in the NAR during 2007/08, with several flora populations being extended and valuable information being gathered about threatened fauna, particularly with reference to Spiny Tailed skinks and Rock Wallabys. Education materials from the Back from the Brink project have also been trialled in several schools throughout the region and these resource packs are almost ready for printing and region wide distribution.

A survey was also undertaken for *Thelymitra Stellata* (Sun Star Orchid) in Lesueur National Park with over 400 volunteer hours contributed to the survey by members of the Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group, three populations were located as a result of this survey.

Through the Stop the Rot project, 75 cubic metres of Victorian Tea Tree was removed from road verges around Moora, Badgingarra and Dandaragan. Surrounding areas were also chemically treated to prevent further spread and growth of Victorian Tea Tree.



**PROGRAM TITLE:****BALANCING DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY LAND - WATER****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This program is protecting and restoring priority rivers and wetlands by increasing the extent and health of riparian and estuarine vegetation; protecting key habitats; reducing threats from nutrient enrichment, stock grazing, erosion and sedimentation; and improving knowledge of aquatic biodiversity.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Waterways Management Project (NAR Technical Advice)
- Conservation of the Gingin Brook and its environment
- Chapman River Upper Catchment Management

**PROGRESS:**

NACC's water program has continued to progress throughout 2007-08. This program has enabled technical advice to be provided by the Department of Water for the delivery of Rivercare Incentives and has also enabled the continuation of the Conservation of the Gingin Brook and the finalisation of the Upper Chapman River Catchment Management Plan. Specifically some of the key achievements of this program during 2007-08 have been:

- the establishment of an Arum Lily eradication program covering 12km of the upper Gingin Brook catchment;
- liaison between WWF Australia and Gingin LCDC on Balancing Agriculture Production and Conservation in the Wetlands of the Gingin Brook;
- development of a partnership with Iluka on design and costing of stormwater treatment for the Gingin Brook;
- identification of on-ground works required through the Chapman Valley Catchment plan. These works have been prioritised by the project steering group and;
- implementation of priority on-ground works including over 20.45 km of fencing signed up in agreements targeting high priority remnants and creek lines. Seed has also been collected from two properties and 10,000 seedlings have been ordered to be planted in 2008-09.

**PROGRAM TITLE:****INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - COMMUNITY LEVERAGE****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This program will provide information and knowledge, skills and training, community facilitation and support to the NAR regional community and natural resource managers. It specifically focuses on engaging Local Government, to provide them with support for participation in NRM activities, and Aboriginal communities through direct consultation with both traditional owners and representatives of native title claimant working groups who have an interest in NRM or "caring for country".

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- NAR Local Government Engagement, NRM Planning and Land management incentives
- Mogumber Community Project
- Yued Booja environmental audit of cultural-spiritual sites and land use practices
- Audit of Priority Heritage Sites in the Yamatji Region

**PROGRESS:**

The Community Leverage program has continued to result in the development of strong relationships with various community stakeholders including Local Governments and Indigenous NRM groups operating within the region.

In a partnership between Greening Australia and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council the Mogumber Community Project has established an Indigenous Green Corps team to assist with the implementation of on-ground works for Mogumber farm. This has provided an opportunity for a group of young Indigenous people to learn about Natural Resource Management and the cultural and environmental significance of the Mogumber property.

Relationships with Department of Defence (DOD) have also been strengthened through collaborative discussions about the management options for two priority sites being audited by the Yued Site Audit project which are located on DOD Land. Management plans for these sites have now been completed.

Yued News: Caring for Country Newsletter is widely and regularly distributed as part of the Mogumber and Yued Site Audit project to Noongar people. The newsletter is very well received by the community and aims to increase community understanding of NRM and provide regular reports to Noongar people on the progress of the Mogumber Farm Project and the Yued Site Audit Project. Several Action Plans for Aboriginal sites of significance are underway and will be reviewed by the Yued NRM Advisory group early in 07/08.

Collaboration has also taken place between the Mogumber Farm project and Land for Wildlife, Carnaby's Black Cockatoo project and the Stop the Rot Project to discuss implementation of conservation measures at Mogumber Farm.

Coordination has occurred between NACC's GIS Officer and Mogumber property project officer to create maps of the Mogumber farm with GPS coordinates which can be included in the Management/Action Plan. These GPS points include existing natural resources such as wetlands, soil types, rivers/watercourses, and vegetation types and quality, as well as threats such as pollution, soil and water erosion, salinity and groundwater rise. It is also intended that maps will include proposed on ground works, opportunities/recommendations, made by both the Mogumber NRM Advisory Group, technical advisors and other stakeholders in the property.

25 NACC staff visited Mogumber farm in June 2008, where the protection of a Mogumber burial site was showcased. The burial ground is registered under the Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972) but is part of a grazed paddock and was previously not acknowledged by signage or protected from stock until the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and the Mogumber and Yued Natural Resource Management Advisory Groups decided to protect it. Around 30 people gathered at the new fence, sign and gate to witness the Welcome to Country, followed by a walk through the site on a trail made by the newly commenced Green Corps team.



**PROGRAM TITLE:****RESOURCE CONDITION AND PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

This program will establish and implement a regional monitoring and evaluation framework that will track and evaluate changes over time to resource condition and will also monitor and evaluate performance of activities, projects, programs and the regional delivery of NRM.

**PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Hidden Treasures of NACC – Identification and Prioritisation of Biodiversity Asset Values
- Hydrogeological survey of groundwater quality in the NAR

**PROGRESS:**

A Hydrogeological survey of groundwater quality has resulted in a series of discussions with farmers around Mingenew, Moora, Dandaragan, Walkaway and Badgingarra. Due to problems with rising water tables around Moora and Dandaragan, there has been a particularly high level of interest in the hydrogeological groundwater quality survey activities. This data will be available for utilisation in other NACC funded projects. 73 samples have been taken from bores in the region as part of the hydrogeological survey.

The Hidden Treasures project has also developed a draft database that provides a summary of the vegetation of the Northern Agricultural Region and information about priority vegetation. This will be released publicly after the beta version has been tested.

Data gathered by a caves consultant for the Hidden Treasures project has been written into reports and articles for submission in appropriate National journals. This information will also be presented at the International Symposium on Subterranean Biology in Fremantle.

NACC has also developed a regional monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan to coordinate resource condition and activity monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Activity monitoring and reporting is well advanced, and 2007/08 will focus on social monitoring and evaluation, plus activity evaluation processes.

## Other NACC Supported Projects

### Regional NRM Facilitator Funding for NACC - Finalised

The Strategic Regional Facilitator has been charged with supporting the delivery of NHT and NAP including communicating Australian and WA NRM policies to develop partnerships and provide an avenue for community feedback.

Some of the key achievements of this project have been:

- “Good News Stories” collected and provided to the Australian Government
- Monthly editions of ‘NACC News’ prepared and distributed to NACC staff members, board, funding partners and stakeholders
- Workshops and field days attended and facilitated to communicate information regarding Envirofund, community water grants and NRM policies and other funding initiatives.
- Assist with Launch of Targeted Investment Program
- Assessment of NAR Envirofund applications completed
- National and State NRM facilitator meetings attended in both Canberra and Perth.
- Quarterly regional team meetings attended
- State NRM conference attended
- NACC CEO assisted with submission of documents for 08/09 submission for Caring for our Country

### Carnaby’s Black Cockatoo - Finalised

The project will instigate cross-regional recovery actions relevant to Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo in its breeding range (specifically in region as covered by NACC, SWCC and SCRIPT) and in some parts of its non-breeding range in regions such as SCRIPT. The project will be carried out with reference to the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo Recovery Plan (Cale 1999).

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM FINAL REPORT

The project has identified Important Bird Areas (IBAs) for Carnaby’s cockatoos, with these areas becoming targets for on-ground works. The project has fenced 160ha of feeding habitat and 49ha of nesting habitat for cockatoos within the identified IBAs. With IBAs identified for Carnaby’s Cockatoos, we are able to focus our conservation initiatives on priority areas and protect nesting habitat at risk from degradation by grazing.

Community engagement has been highly successful, with presentations to community groups, landholders, schools, universities and agricultural field days generating interest and excitement about cockatoo conservation. Proof of the effectiveness of our community engagement is shown in a number of private donations from members of the public for other aspects of cockatoo conservation.

Our monitoring program has been successful in providing evidence of the use of IBAs by cockatoos. Monitoring data were essential in the IBA process. Further, the monitoring has been important in maintaining the interest and involvement of volunteers in the project. The review of the monitoring protocols is helping to streamline and improve procedures and methodologies for monitoring and will result in a better program for future breeding seasons.

Staff turnover was an unforeseen issue, but was resolved by forming a partnership with WWF Australia and developing a Project Advisory Group designed to strategically direct and inform the activities of the Recovery Project and to provide support to project staff.

### Geophysical investigation of paleochannels in the Yarra Yarra Catchment of WA - Finalised

This project has had several key achievements despite not being able to fully complete all elements of the project.

Six widely spaced gravity transects with 558 stations have been completed across the Yarra Yarra Catchment. These were designed to investigate whether there may be linkage between the current drainage and paleodrainage. Ground or airborne electromagnetic surveys may also be used to further investigate these transects but at present there is insufficient funds in the project to enable this work to take place.

The gravity and GPS measurements were acquired in the periods May 31 – June 4, 2005 for transects 2 – 6 and July 10 - 11, 2006 for transect 1. Gravity data were acquired using a Scintrex CG3 digital gravity meter. Station interval on each transect was 40 metres. This meter measures to 0.01 mgal precision which corresponds to 1 part in 100 million. Each measurement was set to read in 60 seconds. One station on each transect was used as a base station and readings were made at start, middle and end of each day to provide data for drift corrections.

## **Perennial Pasture Trials in the Mullewa Dryland Agricultural Farming System - Finalised**

This project aimed to determine which perennial pasture species are most productive and persistent, and which soils/land forms are most suitable for perennial pastures before testing them in paddock-scale sowings as a potential salinity control measure.

The project faced several unforeseen issues, the most significant of which was severe droughts in 2006 and 2007. The trial was sown in April 2006, however no seeds germinated due to no winter rainfall. Some summer crops were established in late 2006 and 2007.

## **Buntine-Marchagee Integrated Surface Water Demonstration Catchment - Finalised**

The key aim of the project was to show how to control the movement of surface water in the situation of a 1 in 20 heavy rain fall event.

This has been achieved by the construction of waterways, levee banks, and grade banks in the appropriate positions within the catchment. The project was tested out early in December 2007 with approximately 100mm falling in the catchment area.

There were also 120,000 trees planted in the project area with approximately 90% survival rate, which is very good considering the 2006 season was quite dry. The winter rainfall for this area in 2006 being just 49 mm across June, July and August.

The waterways, levee banks & trees have all been fenced off.

Some problems were experienced with locations of road crossing. The original location of the proposed floodway was not acceptable due to the close proximity of a corner in the road. After resurveying, it was realised that the lowest point was some 150 m west of the original culverts. The solution to this issue was the installation of 7 box culverts to handle a 1 in 20 rainfall event.

Originally, there was a V notch weir (for measuring surface water volume) planned to be installed near the culvert on Buntine-Marchagee Rd. After further consideration, the value of collecting data at this location was considered low. However, surface water gauging is still an important action in the broader catchment. A number of surface water gauging stations have been installed in other parts of the Innering Hills catchment (part of the Buntine-Marchagee Recovery Catchment expanded ICM target area).

## **Planning and implementation of on-ground works to control surface water and erosion in Red Gully catchment (and the adoption of best practice grazing management techniques)**

This project aimed to develop and implement a catchment plan, establish a perennial pastures demonstration site, and provide support for landholders to use perennial pastures, build fencing to improve riparian vegetation and protect revegetated saline scalds.

The project has been able to achieve several outputs of on-ground works to reduce erosion and protect the Red Gully Creek. Approximately 10,000 native seedlings were planted in a revegetation demonstration day on 26th of July 2007. A field day was also held in October 2006 to demonstrate the types of work that could be done through the Red Gully project, such as grade banks and tagasaste, and their potential impact on NRM issues.

Additionally 3.07km's of fencing was erected along the Red Gully Creek to protect it from stock access and erosion. Paddocks susceptible to erosion were also fenced off to protect them from grazing by stock and 59ha of perennial pastures plus 114ha of tagasaste was established to hold the top soil and lower the water table. Individual property surface water management plans were also developed by a landcare technician which recommended works to control surface water and erosion. There were 8.25km's of grade banks and spoon drains were also installed to control surface water which was eroding the soils and causing water-logging.

Due to a high turnover of staff in the 1st half of the project, a number of delays were experienced. Some landholders also overcommitted themselves to the project, which caused some under achievement of on-ground works. installed to control surface water which was causing erosion to soils and water-logging.

## **Do perennials use more water than annuals? - Finalised**

The project aimed to quantify perennial pasture water use and compare it with annual pastures and crops to predict (using models) the impact on salinity and groundwater, and encourage landholders to adopt perennial pasture farming systems.

To this end, the project has installed 60 neutron moisture meter access tubes on 6 properties in the Northern Agricultural Region. In order to analyse and describe soil in these sites, comprehensive calibration of the moisture meters, including digging pits was carried out. These sites have been monitored for water balance on a monthly basis for 2.5 years. The results obtained from this monitoring have been used to model water usage of perennials compared to annuals.

## **Evaluation of an enclosed sub-surface (perforated pipe) drainage as an alternative engineering option for managing saline land**

This project investigated the viability of enclosed sub-surface drains as an alternative or complementary option to open-surface drainage. It examined the workability and rehabilitation of saline land to determine if they are an environmentally and economically sustainable engineering option to address salinity.

The project was eventually completed with all 3 sites having the perforated pipe installed. Both the Carnamah and Burakin sites were ultimately completed in the conventional method usually associated with sub-surface drainage installation i.e one pass operation with the pipe being fed into the group and encased by an aggregate to protect and ensure the filtration of water into the pipe. Small flows have been monitored at the Burakin site.

The Carnamah site has recorded minimal flow with the total water discharged being less than 100, 000 litres for the entirety of the project, a figure we would normally expect on a daily basis. It will be interesting to record the changes when the drought breaks and we enjoy normal rainfall patterns.

At Three Springs it was eventually agreed to excavate the lines by open deep drainage for the following reasons:

1. The ground was very hard and rocky to dig conventionally, actually destroying the machinery.
2. The volume of water was large and made conventional installation impossible
3. No other option existed within the available budget constraints.

This site has produced large volumes of water and continues to flow at an average of 2 litres per second (as at November 2007).

The bores at this site are being monitored in conjunction with Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia who have their own transect on site.

## **Large scale testing of downhill Tramline Farming and very wide cereal rows - Finalised**

The project will use on-ground and extension works to test and demonstrate improved surface water management and sub-surface soil compaction using 'downhill' tramline farming, the reduced risks of yield and grain quality losses in dry seasons on shallow soils by wide-row cereal methods and the reduced risks of financial loss from herbicide use in dry seasons, by using inter-row shielded spraying.

## **Engaging the Traditional Owners of Yamatji Country in NRM - Continuing**

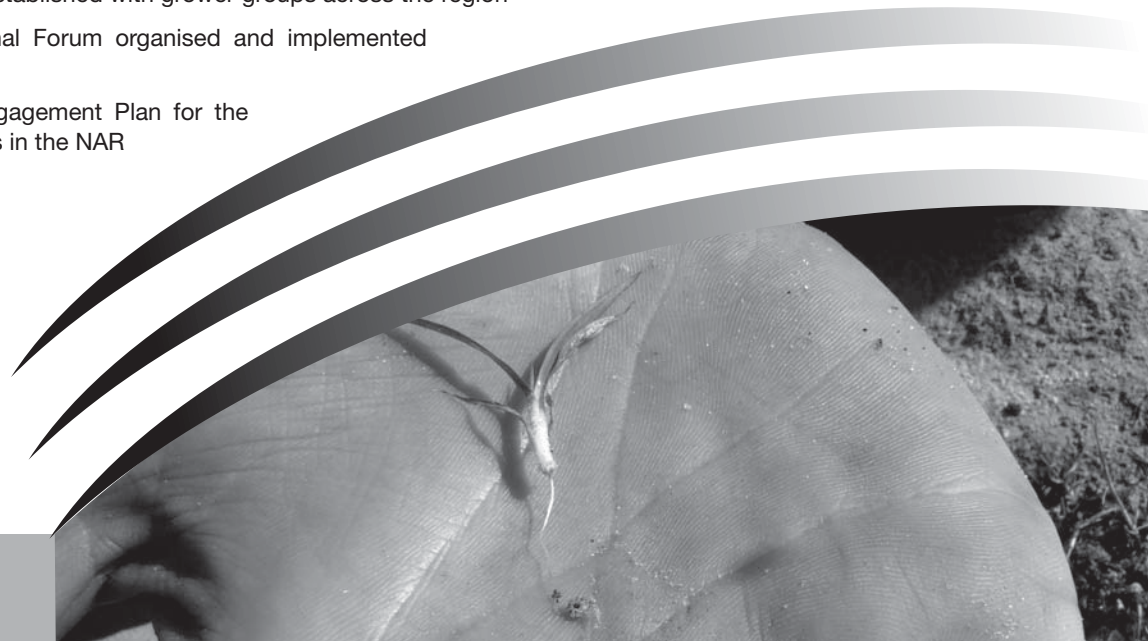
This project will develop an engagement strategy in an attempt to ensure Traditional Owners in the Yamatji region are consulted thoroughly through a documented process. The capacity of Traditional Owners will be increased through the implementation of NRM Advisory Groups who will receive NRM information.

## **Community Landcare Coordinator (CLC) Funding for the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council – WA – Finished 30/06/2008**

The Community Landcare Coordinator has provided leadership and support as well as training opportunities and improved communication to project managers of National Landcare Programme projects throughout the NAR.

As a result of this project, several key achievements have been made by this project. Some of these include:

- Excellent relationships established with grower groups across the region
- Inaugural NACC Regional Forum organised and implemented successfully
- Development of the Engagement Plan for the Agricultural Stakeholders in the NAR



## **Long Term Sustainability of Profitable ‘Medium Rainfall’ Farming Systems - Continuing**

This project will plan, analyse, develop and deliver workshops and information packages relevant to the long term sustainability of farm businesses faced with the increasing threat of herbicide resistant ryegrass and wild radish in the Northern Agricultural Region.

## **Evaluation of an enclosed sub surface (perforated pipe) drainage as an alternative engineering option for managing saline land Years 2 & 3 – Finished**

This project will build on work funded in 2004-05 to investigate the viability of enclosed sub-surface drains as an alternative or complementary option to open-surface drainage. It will examine the workability and rehabilitation of saline land to determine if they are an environmentally and economically sustainable engineering option to address salinity.

## **Agronomic package and benchmarking for mildly and periodically saline land allowing for viable pasture and cropping options -continuing**

To investigate agronomic issues associated with mildly saline land, including the development of agronomic packages and investigation of issues associated with colonisation of mildly saline land by iceplant.

### **PROGRESS**

Planning 2008 trials, selection of trial sites and negotiating in-kind trial contribution from farmers have been the focus activities during this quarter. 10 demonstration sites were pegged and sprayed in preparation for trial establishment soon after the season break. Four farmers around the district in particular are involved in larger scale demonstrations of suitable crops and pastures on their mild saltland.

A transect trial has been established, immediately followed by an EM-38 survey, examining salt tolerance of ten most suitable crop & pasture species. A soil remediation trial was sown, investigating the ability of three remediation treatments to ameliorate sodic and iceplant infested soil. Another transect trial was established, investigating crop & pasture tolerance to subsoil boron toxicity, commonly occurring on duplex soils associated with saline drainage lines.

A herbicide trial was established at two sites demonstrating pre-emergent herbicide control of slender iceplant, allowing for volunteer pastures.

The biology of slender iceplant and germination patterns have been investigated, in collaboration with the Botanical Gardens & Parks Authority (BGPA) and Future Farms Industry CRC (FFI CRC). Seeds have been collected from the field on a monthly basis to monitor the developing seed dormancy over the season.

## **Reducing erosion under high stocking rate grazing systems**

The purpose of this project is to identify profitable stocking rates that both minimise erosion and control herbicide resistance within the whole farm. This will be examined via quantifiable and anecdotal evidence.

### **PROGRESS**

The project is progressing well and the 2008 season continues to look positive. Focus and activity on perennial pastures from previous seasons and further development of these pasture systems has recently commenced in the region following successful completion of all planned seeding programs of grain crops. Continued and plentiful rainfall events during the April – June 2008 quarter has seen much activity and confidence renewed as the landscape stabilised. Due to past seasonal conditions people have destocked so grazing data collected in 2008 may not reflect the true potential grazing outcomes but achievements will be delivered on different outcomes due to extreme season variability endured.

## **Catchment Demonstration Initiative (CDI)- Continuing**

This project will assist with the implementation of new and more sustainable (triple bottom line) farming systems or practices, in particular those based on the use of perennials to target rising groundwater, water logging and salinity.

### **PROGRESS**

The West Koojan Gillingarra CDI continues to experience a high rate of land manager engagement. Project works targeting an increased perennial grass pasture, forage tree and farm forestry component in farming systems are well received by local farmers.

Project promotions and learning materials constructed by the CDI have been very well received by the community directly involved with the project and land managers throughout the Northern Agricultural Region. CDI contributions to the Buntine Marchagee Recovery Catchment news Letter, Ag Memo and The countryman have led to positive feedback from across the region. The CDI initiated and funded publication Your Guide to Perennial Grasses in the Northern Agricultural Region has proven to be a valuable resource for land managers and project staff since its release in March of this year.

## Grain & Graze Regional Initiative: Northern Agricultural Region - Finalised

Over four years this project will:

1. Maximise farming system profitability by introducing perennial pastures into the farming system,
2. Stimulate change in Northern Agricultural region farming systems so that the natural resource base is significantly improved whilst at the same time increasing production.
3. Increase the capacity of producers and service industry staff to successfully incorporate perennial pastures into farming systems.
4. Engage, through communication, extension and participation activities, at least 1000 producers in NAR Grain & Graze activities between 2004-2008 with a view to change on farm / adoption of Grain & Graze practices that are 10% more profitable and in-tune with catchment aspirations occurring on at least 450 farm businesses.

## Creating productive saltland pastures on saline land - Continuing

Creating Productive Saltbush Pastures on Saline Land aims to improve the profitability and agricultural sustainability of the Moora-Miling Pasture Improvement Group (MMPIG) region. The project aims to build the capacity of farmers in saline land management through group activities such as guest speakers to MMPIG, planting demonstrations, field trips and individual membership of professional organisations, subscription to saline land management periodicals and obtaining reference literature. Planned on-ground works are aimed at around 15 farmers in the area who are encouraged to change their farm and land management systems by planting saltbush and rhagodia. Resource assessment, along with monitoring and evaluation will play a role in capacity building for both participants and the wider agricultural community.

### PROGRESS:

This project is progressing well as a result of a thorough handover of the project between Delivery Organisation staff. All sites have had a management agreement drawn up with some of these already being signed by landholders. The remainder are currently with the remaining landholders. A workshop was attended by 14 people in Miling in June to receive 'Tips & tricks to successful tree planting' which encompassed planting, watering techniques, nursery information and a planting demonstration using hand held planters. Some stakeholders have commenced their works with the remaining due to start soon with the presently good planting weather.

## Extension of Integrated Catchment Management for Productivity and Conservation in the Buntine Marchagee Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment – Finalised

Following successful demonstration of water resource management DEC intends to expand on the BMNDRC demonstration site and apply best practice Integrated Catchment Management techniques to a wider catchment area of 23,000 ha. The project area was delineated by the catchment boundary of a land system known as the Inering Hills. DEC has been successful in gaining funding from NACC for the planning phase of the Inering Hills Integrated Catchment Management Plan. This plan was completed in December 2006, and outlines the design of surface water management structures, a revegetation plan, and provides recommendations for farming activities, particularly in those areas which in recent years have been subject to reduced productivity as a consequence of salinity. For the purposes of planning and management of implementation, the Inering Hills Catchment was divided into 6 sub-catchments. The first of these sub catchments (Stage One: 6150 ha) was selected as a priority for the first phase of implementation as it contains high value biodiversity assets, including a valley floor wetland with gypsum substrate, and at least 3 Declared Rare Flora. This funding will be used to implement Stage One (6150 ha) of the larger Inering Hills ICM project.

### PROGRESS:

This project has progressed well despite several contracted milestones not being achieved at the completion date of the project.

The project has been hampered by dry seasons and a delay in receipt of funding which has meant that several of the earthworks components of this project could not be started until 2008 when soil moisture increased to adequate levels.

Despite the above delays, some significant achievements have been made by this project, including:

- Earthworks for grade banks and levees partially completed;
- Completion of the fencing and revegetation components of the project and;
- Partial completion of the first shire water crossing upgrade (being funded by a NACC Investment Plan project)

## Combating Erosion in the Warradarge Catchment – Continuing

The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of wind and water erosion by planting 845ha to a combination of perennials including; Tagasaste, Rhadgodia, and a mix of perennial grasses (fine cut Rhodes, Gatton Panic, Signal Grass and Splenda Seteria), thereby returning once abandoned land into full production in the Warradarge Catchment.

### PROGRESS:

Some of the key achievements of this project to date have been a meeting held with Warradarge group to discuss 2008 perennial planting. Information also provided to the Warradarge group on the prograze course, upcoming field days, and placement of signage on farm. Project staff have also been collaborating with Evergreen and NACC to ensure maximum impact of the project at the upcoming perennial field day.

## Large Scale Planting of Perennials To Reduce Erosion and Recharge in the Lake Indoon Catchment – Continuing

The purpose of this project is to reduce the rate of rising groundwater tables and the risk of wind erosion by planting a mix of perennial grasses and saltbush, thereby returning once abandoned land into productive land in the Lake Indoon Catchment. This work will be supported by scientific data collected during the project which will be extended to the wider community through regular newspaper articles, a field day and a report outlining the benefits of growing perennials.

Some of the key achievements of this project so far have been:

- Discussions held with landholders regarding 2008 perennial planting;
- Discussions held regarding guest speakers and suitable dates for project field day and;
- Information provided on Prograze course and upcoming perennial field day.

## Increase Profitability and Sustainability by Managing Soil Type Variability Within Farm - Continuing

Throughout the Northern Agricultural Region there are approximately 160,000 ha of soil with acidic topsoil (pH <4.5), 70,000 ha of soil with acidic subsoil with another 1.9 million ha at risk of sub-surface acidity, 1.7 million ha of soils with high susceptibility to compaction and 1.4 million ha of land at risk of becoming saline.

It is these low production areas that can contribute significantly to groundwater recharge, soil erosion and weed infestation when they are cropped as they do not provide good ground cover or use less rainfall due to poor establishment and yield.

Over the last 5-10 years yield mapping has become a common addition to harvest machinery, however the majority of growers have not taken the technology to the next level by using yield maps to identify and then manage differently zones of poorer or high performance

This project will build upon farmer's own knowledge of their farms, using precision agriculture tools such as yield mapping and satellite imagery to analyse production patterns both within and across paddocks. The aim will be to identify areas that are unprofitable or are declining in profitability and to assess alternative management regimes or uses for such land.

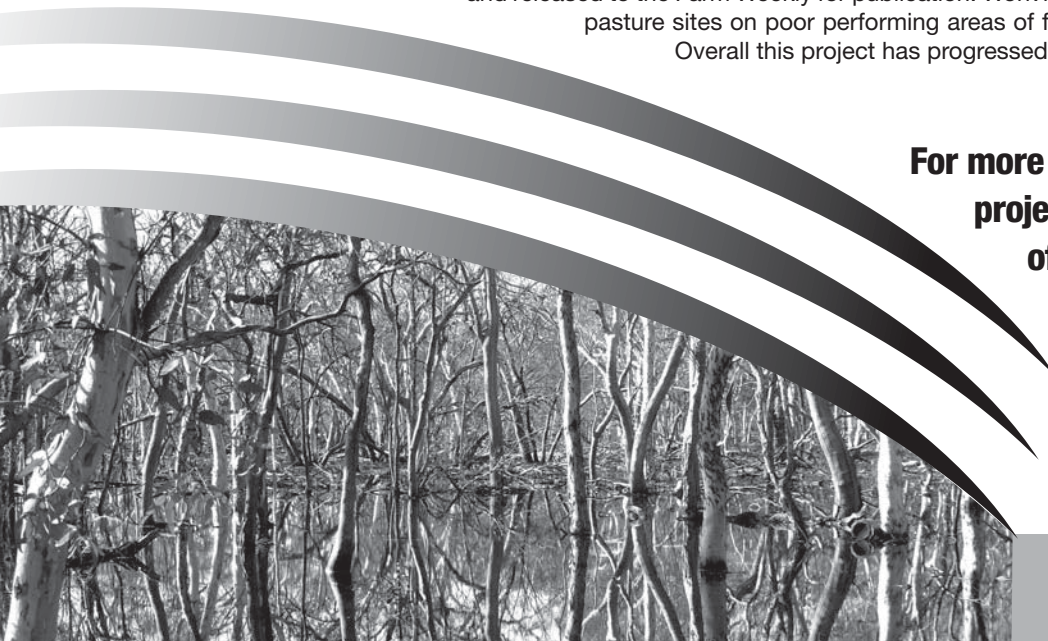
### PROGRESS

This project is continuing to progress ahead of schedule. 6 case studies have been produced detailing the soil variation on each of the 6 farms and possible management options to increase productivity on poor performing areas. These case studies will be a major component of the final report. An executive summary has also been written, which gives an overview of the project's progress, including aims, methods and results. A media statement based on the executive summary was written and released to the Farm Weekly for publication. Work has now begun on establishing perennial pasture sites on poor performing areas of farmland, identified through this project.

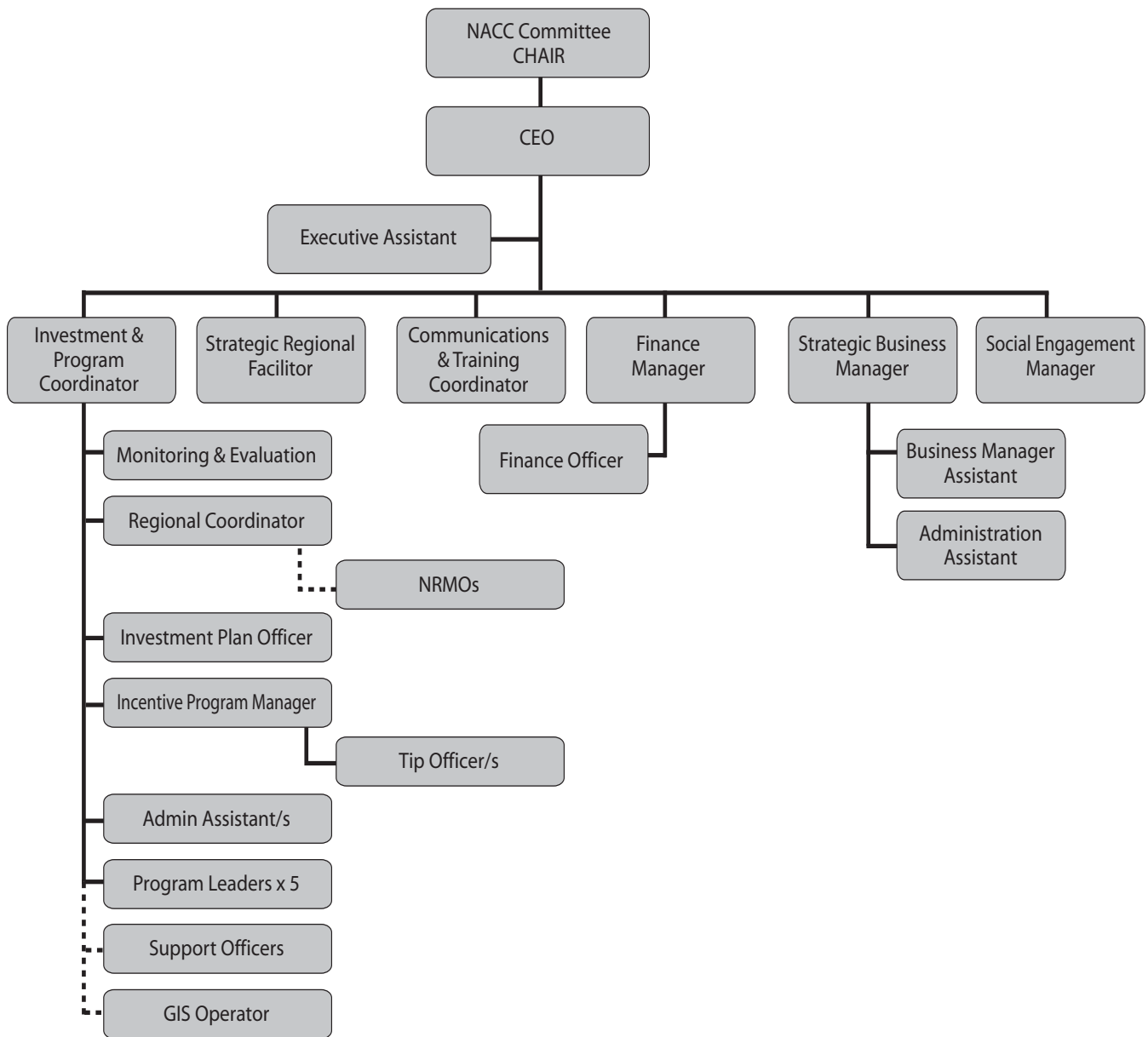
Overall this project has progressed well and will finish on schedule.

**For more information on any of these projects please contact the NACC office or visit the website.**

**[www.nacc.com.au](http://www.nacc.com.au)**



# NACC STAFF STRUCTURE



**\* NRM0's**

- 2x West Midlands
- 2x Yarra Yarra
- 2x Greenough
- 2x Moore

**# Program Leaders**

- Biodiversity
- Aboriginal
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Water
- Coastal and Marine

## NACC BOARD

The NACC Management Committee, which was operational during the 2006/07 year was dissolved effective September 2007, and was replaced by a seven person, skills-based Board.

The sub-committees operational under the former management committee were also dissolved. There is now only one sub-committee, an audit sub-committee.

### BOARD ELECTION PROCESS

With the dissolution of the Committee and the establishment of a Board, a Board election process was instituted, reflected in the NACC Constitution.

10.4: The Directors to retire at an AGM (other than the 2008 AGM) are those Directors who have been the longest in office. Directors appointed on the same day may agree among themselves or determine by lot which of them must retire.

The Board confirms the method for determining terms of office for current officers is that the highest vote getting candidate is appointed on a three year term. The three elected members receiving the next highest votes be appointed for two years and the remaining members receive a one year term. Where equal votes are received lots be are to be drawn.

### MEMBERSHIP, ELECTION AND VOTING POLICY

As a result of the 2007 Postal Ballot election of the new NACC Board, a need for a Membership, Voting and Elections Policy was identified.

Consideration was given to initially develop three individual policies however upon collaborating all research and information together including public feedback from the election process, the first draft of the "three in one" preferred policy was completed.

Membership includes who it is available to, what membership includes, validity of membership, voting rights and administration.

Voting includes who is eligible to vote, election package, sending and receiving ballots, what to do when ballot not received, complaints and how to vote.

Election includes role of the Returning Officer, Candidates and Profiles, Scrutineers, Election Timetable and Election Packages. The policy is to be reviewed annually to capture further feedback and streamline processes.

#### CHAIR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Providing leadership and direction to NACC
- Address issues requiring urgent attention where NACC is unable to assemble. Actions to be presented in full at first opportunity
- Appoint employees/contractors as required
- Chair to present Executive Committee report to each full NACC Management Committee meeting.

#### TREASURER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Timely payment of accounts
  - Oversee financial management of NACC
  - Chair to present Financial report to each full NACC Management Committee meeting
- Meeting calendar: Monthly

#### SECRETARY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Review and present organisation options to Management Committee. (Constitution review)
- Oversee preparation of contract documents
- Oversee employment protocols. Meeting calendar: As required

#### VICE CHAIR RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Provide assessment to project proposals presented through NACC processes
  - Chair to present Planning and Assessment committee report to each full NACC Management Committee meeting
- Meeting calendar: As required

**BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE**

<b>Committee Members Attendance 2007-2008</b>				
<b>NAME</b>	<b>Committee Representative</b>	<b>AGM</b>	<b>Number of Board Meetings Attended (3)</b>	<b>Period on Committee 2007</b>
Eaton E	Chair	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07
Findlater P	Agency Representative - Dept of Agriculture	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07
Desmond A	Agency Representative - CALM	1	1	July 07 - Sept 07
Clayton P	Agency Representative - MWDC	1	0	July 07 - Sept 07
Mohsenzadeh H	Agency Representative - Dept of Water	1	1	July 07 - Sept 07
Wells F	Agency Representative - Dept of Fisheries	0	0	July 07 - Sept 07
Longman J	Sub Regional Rep - West Midlands	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07
Dring G	Sub Regional Rep - West Midlands (secretary)	1	2	July 07 - Sept 07
Syme P	Sub Regional Rep - Yarra Yarra	0	2	July 07 - Sept 07
King C	Sub Regional Rep - Yarra Yarra	1	0	July 07 - Sept 07 (Leave)
Marsden Y	Sub Regional Rep - Greenough (treasurer)	1	2	July 07 - Sept 07
Brooker T	Sub Regional Rep - Greenough	1	2	July 07 - Sept 07
Easton W	Sub Regional Rep - Moore	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07
McMorran C	Sub Regional Rep - Moore	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07
Erickson G	Community Representative - Community Development	1	3	July 07 - Sept 07

<b>NACC Board Directors Attendance 2007-2008</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Board Representative</b>	<b>AGM</b>	<b>Number of Board Meetings Attended 8</b>	<b>Period on Board 07/08</b>
King C	Chair	1	8	Oct 07- June 08
Marsden Y	Deputy Chair / Secretary	1	7	Oct 07- June 08
Easton W	Treasurer	1	7	Oct 07- June 08
Battilana M	Board Director	0	5	Oct 07- June 08
Eaton E	Board Director	1	8	Oct 07- June 08
Findlater P	Board Director	1	8	Oct 07- June 08
Gillam G	Board Director	1	7	Oct 07- June 08

**BOARD MEMBERS REMUNERATION**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total Meetings &amp; Workshops attended 07-08</b>	<b>Sitting, Stipend Payments</b>	<b>Travel, Accommodation, Incidental Expense Reimbursement</b>	<b>Total \$'s Paid</b>
King, C	22	15,440.00	8,074.24	23,514.24
Marsden, Y	25	10,660.00	3,451.24	14,111.24
Easton, W	11	2,570.00	3,279.20	5,849.20
Eaton, E	28	10,818.00	1,835.40	12,653.40
Brooker, T	3	660.00	497.71	1,157.71
Erickson, G	5	1,030.00	1,750.26	2,780.26
Longman, J	4	880.00	125.00	1,005.00
Dring, G	2	440.00	278.00	718.00
McMorran, C	5	1,100.00	1,146.09	2,246.09
Syme, Peter	2	440.00	123.26	563.26
Gillam, C	6	1,540.00	1,069.59	2,609.59
Battilana, M	4	1,100.00	286.00	1,386.00
Findlater, P	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>				<b>68,593.99</b>

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

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**FINANCIAL REPORT**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008**STATEMENT BY RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE**

The attached financial report of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council being the audited financial report and supporting notes and other information for the financial year ended 30 June 2008 are in my opinion properly drawn up to present fairly the position of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council at 30 June 2008 and the results of the operations for the financial year then ended in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards (except to the extent that these have been varied in the statement of Accounting Policies required by Australian Accounting Standard AAS6 "Accounting Policies" and the accompanying notes to the annual report).

Signed on the .....<sup>19<sup>th</sup></sup>.....day of .....<sup>Sept</sup>.....2008



Alan Bradley  
Chief Executive Officer

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	NOTE	2007/08 \$	2006/07 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash assets		11,911,284	6,234,476
Receivables	3	<u>136,383</u>	<u>595,600</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		12,047,667	6,830,076
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property plant and equipment	4	46,726	48,464
Furniture and fixtures	4	<u>15,034</u>	<u>19,625</u>
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		61,760	68,089
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>12,109,427</u>	<u>6,898,165</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Payables	5	855,664	22,274
Provisions	6	80,513	100,711
Unexpended grants	7	10,913,379	6,625,114
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>11,849,556</u>	<u>6,748,099</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>259,871</u>	<u>150,066</u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained Surplus		259,871	153,066
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u>259,871</u>	<u>153,066</u>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

**OPERATING STATEMENT**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	NOTE	2007/08 \$	2006/07 \$
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>			
Operating Income	2	<u>15,579,543</u>	<u>12,323,929</u>
		15,579,543	12,323,929
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Operating expenses	2	<u>15,472,738</u>	<u>12,318,749</u>
		15,472,738	12,318,749
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>		<u><u>106,805</u></u>	<u><u>5,180</u></u>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	NOTE	2007/08 \$	2006/07 \$
<b>RETAINED SURPLUS</b>			
Balance as at July 2007		153,066	147,886
Net Surplus (Deficit)		106,805	5,180
Balance as at 30 June 2008		<u>259,871</u>	<u>153,066</u>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u>259,871</u>	<u>153,066</u>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

# NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

### 1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The significant accounting policies which have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report are:

#### (a) Basis of Preparation

The financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements. The report has also been prepared on the accrual basis under the convention of historical cost accounting.

#### Critical Accounting Estimates

The preparation of a financial report in conformity with Australian Accounting Standards requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that effect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses

The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances; the results of which form the basis of making judgments about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

#### (b) Goods and Services Tax

In accordance with recommended practice, revenues, expenses and assets capitalised are stated net of any GST recoverable. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of applicable GST.

#### (c) Fixed Assets

Property, plant & equipment and other non current assets are brought to account at cost or at independent or management valuation less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation, amortisation or impairment losses.

#### (d) Depreciation of Non-Current Assets

All non-current assets having a limited useful life are systematically depreciated over their useful lives in a manner which reflects the consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in those assets.

Depreciation is recognised on a straight-line basis, using rates which are reviewed each reporting period. Major depreciation rates are:

Office Equipment	20%
Computer Equipment	40%

#### (e) Impairment

In accordance with Australian Accounting Standards the NACC's assets, other than inventories, are assessed at each reporting date to determine whether there is any indication they may be impaired. Where such an indication exists, an estimate of the recoverable amount of the asset is made in accordance with AASB136 "Impairment of Assets" and appropriate adjustments are made.

An impairment loss is recognised whenever the carrying amount of an asset or its cash generating unit exceeds its recoverable amount. Impairment losses are recognised in the income statement.

#### (f) Investments

All investments are valued at cost and interest on those investments is recognised when accrued.

## NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

### 1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

#### (g) Employee Benefits

The provisions for employee benefits relates to amounts expected to be paid for long service leave, annual leave, wages and salaries and are calculated as follows:

##### (i) Wages, Salaries and Annual Leave

The provision for employees' benefits to wages, salaries and annual leave represents the amount that the municipality has a present obligation to pay resulting from employees services to balance date. The provision has been calculated at nominal amounts based on remuneration rates that NACC expects to pay and includes related on-costs.

##### (ii) Long Service Leave

The provision for employees' benefits for long service leave represents the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made by the employer resulting from the employees' service to balance date.

#### (h) Interest Rate Risk

NACC's exposure to interest rate risk, which is risk that a financial instrument's value will fluctuate as a result of changes in the market interest rates, is considered negligible for all financial instruments other than borrowings.

#### (i) Credit Risk

The maximum exposure to credit risk, excluding the value of any collateral or other security, at balance date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for doubtful debts, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statement. NACC does not have material credit risk exposure to any single debtor or group of debtors under financial instruments entered into by NACC.

#### (j) Fair Value

The fair value of assets and liabilities approximate their carrying values. No Financial assets and financial liabilities are readily traded on organised markets in standardised form. Financial assets where the carrying amount exceeds fair value have not been written down as NACC intends to hold these assets to maturity.

The aggregate fair value and carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities are disclosed in the balance sheet and in the notes to and forming part of the accounts

#### (k) Rounding Off Figures

All figures shown in this financial report are rounded to the nearest dollar.

#### (l) Comparative Figures

Where required, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

## DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	2007/08	2006/07
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Unexpended grants b/f	6,625,114	2,818,400
Project Grants	19,130,708	14,626,931
Interest Income	590,681	249,654
Map Sales	261	537
Insurance recoveries	7,461	2,662
Unspent Grant funds	132,677	1,112,386
Grants receivable	-	138,472
Miscellaneous	6,020	-
Unexpended Grants c/f	<u>(10,913,378.50)</u>	<u>(6,625,114)</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>15,579,543</b>	<b>12,323,929</b>
 <b>Expenses</b>		
Accommodation Expenses	5,217	35,164
Advertising	43,661	17,229
Asset Expense	52,655	-
Audit Fees	31,440	27,050
Bank Fees	649	395
Book purchase	590	2,612
Catering	4,509	25,900
Cleaning	6,105	3,750
Communications	35,209	2,495
Computer Sundries	638	1,193
Consultants Fees	230,355	165,130
Depreciation	11,224	52,211
Electricity	3,429	1,492
Freight	173	569
Housing assistance	7,364	8,421
Insurance	3,106	24,119
Interest Expense	415	126
Internet Expense	6,516	4,279
Loss on disposal of plant	-	839
Meetings	894	3,262
Merchandise	5,990	8,680
Miscellaneous Expenses	5,880	2,843
Mobile phone	16,767	5,052
NACC Chairman Sitting Fees	23,288	22,470
NACC Committee Sitting Fees	23,390	39,550
NACC Committee Travel Expense	28,830	31,198
NACC Committee Expenses	3,622	6,538
NACC Meeting Expenses	24,056	-
Office equipment	87,337	11,172
Office Rent	78,228	37,849
Office Support	95	2,878
Petty Cash	357	696
Postage	10,032	6,515
Printing Costs	13,563	30,768
Project invoices written off	159,867	59,091
Resources	9,753	3,943

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

**DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT [CONT]**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	2007/08	2006/07
	\$	\$
Repairs & Maintenance	4,695	5,302
Seminar/Display Held Exp	15,408	7,023
Seminar Attended Expenses	10,767	180
Sitting fees	2,393	4,287
Sponsorship	1,000	-
Staff Uniforms	2,516	3,144
Stationary/Office Exp	49,346	19,331
Subscriptions	1,416	563
Technical Data Support	24,560	1,870
Telephone	19,002	16,087
Training Costs	102,197	50,481
Council Travel Costs	-	-
Staff Travel Costs	89,166	36,236
Venue Hire	1,930	2,288
Unspent project funds	1,982,499	114,003
Web Site Expenses	1,890	2,210
Mobile Phone	-	-
Employer Expenses	1,205	-
Wages & Salaries	1,252,461	893,378
Superannuation	115,672	80,879
Employee leave entitlements	29,018	5,563
Fringe Benefits tax	15,464	9,260
Workers Compensation	1,597	-
Motor Vehicle Allowance	17,522	18,686
Total Motor Vehicle Expense	183,923	82,688
Project Payments	8,383,012	7,524,619
Project Management Expenses	2,228,876	2,795,196
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>15,472,738</u>	<u>12,318,749</u>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<u><u>106,805</u></u>	<u><u>5,180</u></u>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

## NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	2007/08	2006/07
	\$	\$
<b>2. NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Composition of Net Current Asset Position</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	11,911,284	6,234,476
Receivables	136,383	595,600
	<u>12,047,667</u>	<u>6,830,076</u>
<b>LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Payables and Provisions	936,177	122,985
Unexpended Grants	10,913,379	6,625,114
	<u>11,849,556</u>	<u>6,748,100</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSET POSITION</b>	198,111	81,976
<b>SURPLUS C/FWD</b>	<u>198,111</u>	<u>81,976</u>
<b>3. RECEIVABLES</b>		
Debtors	55,040	460,128
Prepaid Expenses	15,180	
Accrued Interest	65,282	
Other	880	
Over expended grants receivable	-	135,472
	<u>136,383</u>	<u>595,600</u>

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	2007/08	2006/07
	\$	\$
<b>4. NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Property, plant and equipment</b>		
Plant and equipment	131,367	126,475
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(84,641)</u>	<u>(78,011)</u>
	46,726	48,464
Furniture and fixtures	26,333	26,333
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(11,299)</u>	<u>(6,708)</u>
	15,034	19,625
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u><u>61,760</u></u>	<u><u>68,089</u></u>
<b>5. PAYABLES</b>		
Trade creditors	745,192	22,486
GST	28,147	(47,351)
PAYG	36,780	21,318
Superannuation	724	24,905
Business Credit Cards	17,743	
Accrued Expenses	23,592	
Other	3,486	917
	<u><u>855,664</u></u>	<u><u>22,274</u></u>
<b>6. PROVISIONS</b>		
Provision for employee entitlements	62,873	83,911
Provision for fringe benefits tax	-	-
Provision for audit fees	<u>17,640</u>	<u>16,800</u>
	<u><u>80,513</u></u>	<u><u>100,711</u></u>

## NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2008

	2007/08	2006/07
	\$	\$
<b>7. UNEXPEDNED GRANTS</b>		
023232 Northern Local Level Fac Co.	23,582	-
033048 NARFIP	55,361	53,160
033108 Wetlands Assessment	-	7,914
043047 Paleochannels	19,975	-
043048 Perennial Pasture Trials	11,956	11,191
043049 Buntine-Marchage Surface Water	777	-
043050 Surface Water and Erosion	138,976	54,732
043051 Perennials or Annuals	4,929	3,740
043052 Sub Surface Drainage	2,728	-
043053 Downhill Tramline Farming	4,049	2,564
043093 Core Fund for Regional Admin	9,038	16,330
04N1-01 Biosecurity	-	1,854
04N1-02 Coast Seas and Islands	91,676	91,676
04N1-03 Terrestrial Diversity	181	218,436
04N1-04 Forestry	-	369
04N1-05 Healthy Landscapes	-	595,426
04N1-06 Integrated Catchment Management	4,827	197,301
04N1-07 Managing Salinity	-	425,206
04N1-08 Resource Assessment	-	334,856
04N1-09 Indigenous Knowledge	-	244,850
04N1-11 Sustaining Agricultural Production	-	55,740
04N1-12 Using Water Wisely	-	65,008
051 IP2 Management funds	159,551	487,329
051 NRMO	1,289,751	1,215,603
53001 Traditional Owners	51,747	25,396
53018 Community Landcare Coordinator	36,821	-
53064 Long Term Sustainability	1,029	41,745
53065 YY Drainage	41,143	14,642
53070 Benchmarking Saline Land	74,667	635
53076 Reducing Erosion	14,594	32,344
53086 CDI Implementation	730,291	362,107
05N1-13 Targeted Investment Programs	1,455,766	424,853
05N1-14 Soil and Climate	1,100,713	118,465
05N1-15 Drainage	923,272	70,973
05N1-16 Intro Perennials	542,494	109,529
05N1-17 Coastal & Marine	415,576	263,541
05N1-18 Biodiversity	675,100	-
05N1-19 Water	1,276,772	515,911
05N1-20 Comm Leverage	217,548	54,646
05N1-21 Resource Condition	1,295,656	352,347
63045 Creating Productive Saltbush	51,995	-
63046 Buntine Marchagee	4,342	-
63051 Erosion in the Warradarge	290	-
63052 Perennials Lake Indoon	60	-
63053 Soil Type Variability	52,888	-
81001 Slip Officer	38,569	-
NOR1 Grain and Graze	94,688	-
NRMO	-	154,695
	<u>10,913,379</u>	<u>6,625,114</u>





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