



Building regional capacity.

PHOTO: South Coast NRM.



SOUTHERN PROSPECTS 2011-2016

Regional Capacity

REGIONAL CAPACITY

This section describes the importance of regional capacity on the management of natural resources. The main components of regional capacity are described and factors affecting it are discussed. Aspirations (25+ years), Goals (10+ years) and Outcomes (one to five years) are outlined in a Program Logic Summary (See section 4.7).

Regional capacity is defined as the combination of people's commitment and skills to build on strengths within the community to address problems and respond to opportunities. Regional and community capacity is often stretched to the limit due to volunteer burnout, the fact that a few people shoulder more work than they can handle, and limited resources.

ASPIRATION: *Healthy, resilient and sustainable communities sharing a strong 'sense of place' and accepting a shared responsibility to provide a legacy of a healthy, natural environment for future generations.*

4.1 Principles

The principles for building community capacity are to:

- consult and engage with the community
- support the community to undertake priority NRM activities
- value the priceless resource of community capacity
- celebrate achievements.

Regional capacity impacts on the ability to deliver outcomes for the five theme areas. For this reason, regional capacity is considered in this section as well as in each of the other theme sections where specific needs have been identified.

In this instance 'community' relates to the broader community of landowners and managers, all levels of government and organisations with an interest in NRM. The South Coast NRM Region has a long history of participation in understanding and managing natural resources. A greater awareness and appreciation of community capacity has emerged in recent years as without it, NRM is severely hindered.

The following are important points to consider in integrating capacity building into NRM planning:

- capacity building is a process - a means to an end - by which individuals, groups and communities further develop their understanding, ability and motivation to undertake actions leading to sustainable NRM

- capacity building should not be considered in isolation from on-ground actions. Rather it should specifically support effective on-ground implementation and uptake of NRM practices.
- given that strategic NRM outcomes will only be achieved in the longer term, capacity building provides important short to medium term outcomes related to attitude, behaviour and practice change, and increased engagement in sustainable NRM.

The full range of capacity building activities can be considered under the broad headings of awareness raising, information and knowledge, skills and training, and facilitation and support. Together these activity areas aim to build people's ability to act as well as their motivation to act, and this should contribute to greater and more effective community engagement in the development and implementation of regional NRM plans.

4.1.1 Awareness

Awareness promotes behaviour change and uptake of NRM best practice. To be in a position to take action, individuals need to be aware of NRM issues, and understand the links between these issues and the long-term viability of the community and the region's natural resources.

Community-based organisations, networks and local events; communication; and formal and informal education can all contribute to the community's awareness and understanding of NRM issues and their importance.



An increased effort in raising awareness will assist in involving more people in NRM and therefore creating cohesion. It will also help to ensure that NRM is not just left to the dedicated few. It is particularly important that awareness is raised in urban areas, where the higher populations have the greatest potential to ensure that NRM becomes a more urgent issue at all political levels. Building better understanding and awareness of the values of natural resources, their interrelationships, and the causes and costs of degradation is essential to achieving the changes in uses and management practices that are needed to maintain the region's natural resources.

4.1.2 Information and knowledge

Managers and users of natural resources need to be able to access the necessary information, data and best practice methodology to make sound NRM decisions. Sound collection, storage and dissemination of information also allows us to measure our success and to fine tune future efforts.

The following activities need to be undertaken to strengthen community capacity:

- collecting and disseminating information and data
- undertaking research and incorporating a civic science approach

- identifying and valuing the sources of knowledge (including local and Aboriginal knowledge)
- developing and using models and decision-support systems
- sharing of information in suitable formats for users
- developing approaches to encourage innovation and adoption of best practice all contribute to increasing the information and knowledge base and its use in decision making.

The review of the *Southern Prospects 2004-2009* (SCRIPT, 2004) has shown that there is now a much improved knowledge of NRM resources. However, there are still gaps in the knowledge base and in making information easily accessible to the community. There have been difficulties in integrating information collected at a variety of scales and held in a variety of formats.

Aboriginal knowledge is being increasingly identified, accessed and valued. The development of general and technical support to regional and local groups is needed. Mechanisms to support full participation by all community members, including Aboriginal people, local governments and industry bodies need to be developed. The community needs to expand by reaching out beyond those who are already involved and committed.

Working with local government and landholders to protect conservation values.



PHOTO: South Coast NRM.

4.1.3 Skills and training

Managers and users of natural resources often need training in the planning, technical and management skills needed to participate in sustainable NRM at property, local and regional levels.

Training in the range of skills necessary to implement NRM can involve training institutions, industry and other organisations. The region has the advantage of the presence of the University of Western Australia, Great Southern Institute of Technology, Departments dedicated to NRM and well-developed programs through organisations like Green Skills (a registered training organisation) and South Coast NRM that are already contributing to skills development.

4.1.4 Facilitation and support

The provision of adequate government and non-government support within the region is acknowledged as a serious and widening gap. One of the most valued support mechanisms is the employment of locally-based NRM officers under secure employment contracts. Of equal value, support to local groups for administrative functions helps to keep people's energies directed to on-ground actions rather than being consumed by bureaucratic procedures.

Children learning the importance of dieback prevention.



PHOTO: South Coast NRM.

The role of community-based organisations such as catchment groups, other non-government organisations, coastal action groups, weed action groups and others in building and maintaining social cohesion in rural and regional communities should not be underestimated. Protocols and other arrangements for respectfully sharing that knowledge are needed.

Support systems that are in place need to be continued and additional systems identified and expanded to ensure participation, motivation and ownership of NRM decision making and implementation.

4.2 What we know – values and threats

The following headings have been used to summarise the current status of community capacity and identify actions to help build capacity of the South Coast community to meet the NRM targets set in this strategy:

- Governance
- Support networks
- Community involvement
- Knowledge and skills
- Integration and coordination
- Innovation
- Target development
- Local governments.

These categories are inter-dependent and complementary, and need to be considered together in developing an over-all strategy for improving the region's capacity for NRM.

4.2.1 Governance

South Coast NRM has consolidated its role in representing the South Coast community for natural resource management issues. The governance structure consists of a skills-based Board of Management that oversees an NRM Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Business Development Committee and a Deductible Gift Recipient Account Committee. Supporting the NRM Committee are a suite of theme-based Reference Groups (representing Aboriginal Interests, Biodiversity, Coastal, Community Involvement and Change, Land, Water and Marine), and Technical Advisory Groups (for Monitoring and Evaluation, Invasive Species and Carbon Sequestration).

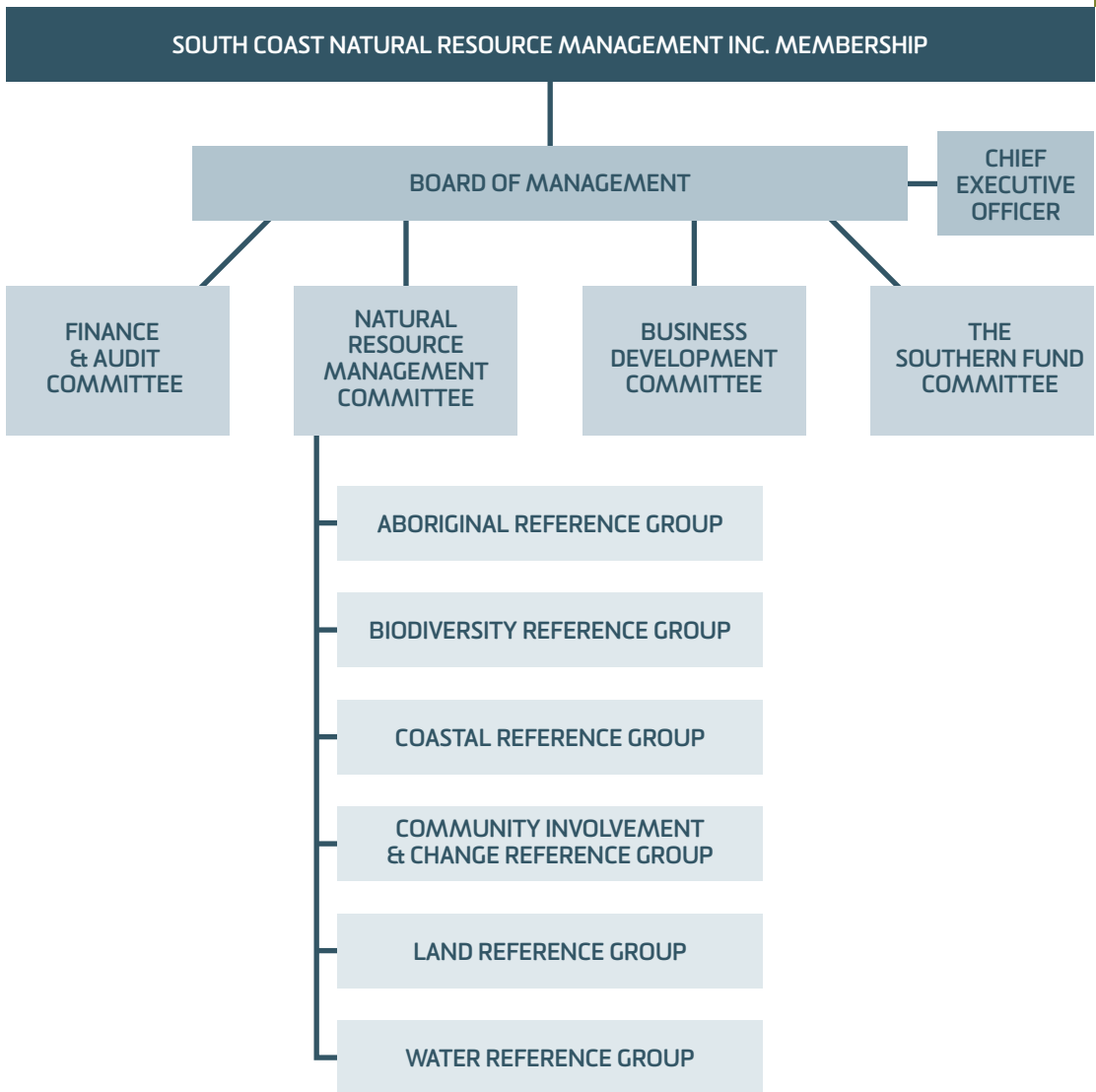


Diagram 2: South Coast NRM Governance Structure

The Board of Management, all committees and groups are chaired by community members. The membership is skills-based and ensures appropriate representation by key stakeholders. As far as practical, the membership of committees and groups consists of majority community-based representatives. Sub-regional representation is provided through representatives on the NRM Committee. The sub-regional representatives provide a collective input for catchment groups, production groups and non-government organisations that exist within their sub-regional areas.

Strategies to address aspects of good corporate governance, including numerous mechanisms to ensure risk management, accountability and transparency have been specified in organisational and operational planning, and are supported with established policies and procedures.

Corporate governance training has been conducted for members of the Board, Senior Managers, and some sub-regional representatives.

To comply with auditing and contractual requirements of various funding bodies (State agencies, Australian Government and philanthropic) South Coast NRM has developed effective financial management systems overseen by an experienced Finance Manager and supported by a contracts management team. South Coast NRM utilises both internal and external auditors to regularly review and improve processes and policies, and to ensure fiduciary standards are maintained.

A monitoring and evaluation process is in place to ensure that sub contracted activities are delivered as contracted, ensuring maximum outcomes for the investment made on behalf of the community.





PHOTO: South Coast NRM

Stakeholder involvement in innovative soil management techniques.

A great strength of South Coast NRM is its ability to reflect regional needs and involve stakeholders appropriately. However, there is a need for accountability and transparency so that funding and resources are fairly distributed and to meet commitments to funding bodies, the regional community and partners.

Corporate governance is a significant area for South Coast NRM, its Board and partners. Good corporate governance involves the inclusion of mechanisms to reduce and manage risks, clearly show accountability and transparency, and support best practice governance through appropriate policies and procedures.

South Coast NRM will prepare an Investment Plan to guide how this strategy is implemented at the project and activity level. The preparation of a draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement Plan (Cook, 2010) will ensure that there are measures to show how projects have performed and allow for meaningful evaluation and learning.

Timing of grant deadlines has caused some concern in the past, due to limited time frames or seasonal requirements of projects. Investment planning and timely channelling of funds will help to alleviate these issues.

4.2.2 Support networks

One of the main requests from sub regional NRM Groups during the preparation of *Southern Prospects 2004-2009* (SCRIPT, 2004) was the provision of NRM officers to provide support and assistance to the community across the region.

Prior to *Southern Prospects 2004-2009* (SCRIPT, 2004), a number of NRM officers were employed throughout the region by community organisations with funding from NHT and support from Local Government Authorities and State Government. This resulted in the perception of:

- inequities in employment conditions and salaries across the region and between regions
- an uneven spread of Coordinator positions within the region
- loss of skills and experience as people have moved away from the region or into more reliable employment
- difficulties in recruiting skilled and highly qualified people into positions, particularly in smaller centres.

With the more cohesive approach of *Southern Prospects 2004-2009* (SCRIPT, 2004), Regional



NRM Facilitators were employed on three year contracts which allowed for better program delivery. A core team of NRM officers and associated support positions are currently employed to undertake:

- delivery of capacity building activities within the subregions
- management or assistance with delivery of projects identified under the strategy and Investment Plan
- assistance with undertaking monitoring and evaluation
- development and delivery of projects within the subregions.

In addition, the region has received scientific and technical support for land managers and sub-regions through State Government Departments and other organisations for:

- hydrological monitoring and interpretation
- soils, agronomy, livestock, and farming systems (including tree cropping and alternative land uses) advice
- water quality and water use options, including surface water management options
- ecological requirements for species and communities and their management in a landscape context
- ecological requirements for marine species and communities and their management.

The regional delivery model has been flexible to allow response to changing needs. The model presently supports both regional positions, sub-regional positions and more specialised support positions that deliver the following outputs:

- delivery of capacity building activities within the subregions
- management or assistance with delivery of projects identified under the strategy and Investment Plan
- assistance with meeting regional monitoring and evaluation requirements as appropriate
- development and delivery of projects within the subregions
- facilitate community participation through reference groups, working groups and advisory groups.

4.2.3 Community involvement

Community involvement is central to the achievement of all other NRM outcomes, but will only occur if community members have enough awareness to be concerned about the place they live in or visit, and are supported in their involvement in NRM to make a difference to the outcomes for those places.

Consultation and active participation in planning and decision making is necessary for the community to be involved in NRM. This needs to be balanced with a respect for the time and financial costs to individuals who are involved in a voluntary capacity, and the tendency for a small number of people to take on a large proportion of the consultative roles.

Communication networks are vital to information and knowledge exchange and can increase the community's ability to participate. Too much information supplied in inappropriate formats or language can also be off-putting for many individuals.

The introduction of increased accountability, legislative requirements and workplace regulations has increased the administrative workloads for many voluntary, not for profit organisations. The secondary effect is an increasing difficulty for such organisations to recruit office bearers, particularly chairpersons and treasurers. South Coast NRM has incorporated a regional model for sharing resources to allow for administrative and accounting support, while respecting sub-regional and local group autonomy.

4.2.4 Knowledge and skills

Knowledge and skills building are crucial to the effective implementation of many management actions. There is a need to increase the NRM information base so that the condition, trends and effectiveness of management of land, water, biodiversity, coastal and marine systems can be better understood. Knowledge is accumulated in more than the formal collection and interpretation of data. Inspiring stories from the community demonstrate that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience held by individuals and groups within the region. A significant amount of traditional knowledge is held by the Aboriginal community. A number of organisations have assisted in recording collections of oral histories and stories of people's experiences and recollections of living in the region.

Recognising, valuing and using all sources of knowledge is a strong basis for 'locally adaptive management'. Incorporation of anecdotal information as part of a longer term monitoring of people's perceptions of the region and its management will be considered as part of the regional monitoring and evaluation framework. Training to raise the level of skill is an important part of capacity building for NRM practitioners.

The South Coast NRM Region has significantly increased its NRM knowledge base through investment in the *Southern Prospects Strategy* over the past seven years.

4.2.5 Integration and coordination

During 2009, the State NRM Office carried out a review which confirmed that regional NRM groups deliver good value and play a critical role in supporting the delivery of NRM across WA (interPART and Associates et. al., 2009). It was found that regional NRM groups add value in delivering NRM outcomes by:

- integrating national and State policies and translating them into regional plans
- providing a community led and supported platform for NRM planning
- integrating scientific and local knowledge to inform NRM planning and implementation
- leveraging investment from diverse sources
- driving more coordinated and accountable provision of NRM-related services
- tackling cross-boundary issues
- accessing and building regional capacity, networks and partnerships.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State's six regional NRM Groups is in place. The MOU is an important tool that helps all parties to be clear about the support they can offer to each other and the communication and consultation that is required. MOUs have been established with Government agencies, non-government groups, and sub-regional NRM groups on an as-needs basis. Integration and coordination occurs across regional boundaries with the six regional NRM bodies communicating through the Regional Chairs Group. A number of cross-regional agreements and projects have been developed.

Integration and coordination within the South Coast NRM Region across and within sectors

(e.g. community, Government, non-government organisations) is essential to ensure activities are complementary, create synergy and ensure that duplication is avoided. South Coast NRM provides support within the region to assist with ongoing coordination and ensure effective engagement, representation and delivery of NRM outcomes.

At the local level, the challenge is to improve integration across the spectrum of community and regional services and infrastructure. Many comments made during the consultation sessions for the development of the strategy related to broader community concerns about community resilience, information, education, awareness and employment. These areas can only partly be addressed by actions in this strategy. However, by taking into account opportunities to work with other sectors, *Southern Prospects 2011-2016* will contribute to the community's ability to achieve sustainable natural resources outcomes.

Integration of NRM and other areas of community interest may best be served through the development of a Regional Sustainability Strategy. The State Sustainability Strategy (Government of Western Australia, 2003) identified that the development of regional sustainability strategies could achieve positive behavioural change in many areas. However, indications are that the community may be approaching 'strategy overload' and may prefer to see present strategies put into action rather than more planning. *Southern Prospects 2011-2016* may deliver on enough sustainability actions to avoid the need to create a new Regional Sustainability Strategy. The development of an NRM Report Card, amongst other strategies, will allow outcomes to be measured against sustainability goals.

4.2.6 Innovation

A common theme in the initial consultation period for the development of the strategy was the need to find new ways of thinking and new solutions for the problems affecting natural resources. This might include looking at sources of solutions to problems in other sectors (including business, the arts and academia), other areas or other cultures. It could also include facilitating events within the region to encourage more creative or lateral thinking amongst the regional community generally and natural resource managers in particular.

Alternative land uses, mostly based on the commercial use of locally-native plant species, is being explored by Greening Australia (WA) and the

Centre for Excellence in NRM. High value-adding ventures under trial in parts of the region include truffle farming, inland aquaculture and commercial saw log production for specialised uses (e.g. furniture making). Developing the business and entrepreneurial skills to identify industry and market potential is as important as developing the technical skills required for the particular land or water use and management.

The Steering Group on Incentives for Private Conservation, a coalition of the Australian Bush Heritage Fund, Greening Australia and the Trust for Nature (Victoria) commissioned The Allen Consulting Group in 2002 to produce a discussion paper, *Building a Stronger Social Coalition*. This discussion paper proposed measures to encourage increased philanthropy to benefit the environment and create a stronger civic culture in Australia. The paper was partly commissioned in response to the Federal Coalition's announcement in 2001 that it would investigate further tax options in the current Parliament to promote philanthropy, including 'living bequests'. Tapping into new and different opportunities will provide more flexibility for resourcing NRM activities to ensure the positive outcomes.

Nature based tourism is one avenue of raising awareness about NRM while supporting the local economy. Many visitors come to the South Coast region because of its natural assets. While these visitors are welcomed, their activities sometimes introduce NRM challenges, especially in fragile areas. The region could work together to promote innovation in creating visitor experiences that benefit NRM. Western Australia has a nature based tourism strategy (Tourism WA, 2004) which provides strategic direction for Government and tourism industry practitioners, including:

- promotion of innovative product development
- support of Aboriginal tourism product development
- support of accreditation schemes
- fostering of strategic research
- facilitation of education and training
- pursuit of marketing opportunities.

This has been complemented by a pilot program (funded by *Southern Prospects*) to develop sustainability indicators for the tourism industry.

4.2.7 Target development

A survey of stakeholders (The Hub Marketing Communication, 2009) indicates that the following points are a starting point for the development of targets for building community capacity:

- gauge the level of awareness, interest and engagement of stakeholders relating to NRM activity in the region
- identify what the South Coast community perceives NRM to be
- identify current and potential audiences
- identify current and potential ways to engaging potential audiences
- identify real and perceived barriers to becoming engaged in NRM activity
- determine knowledge and skill gaps in target audiences in relation to NRM and associated activity

Helping community revegetate the Lake Warden catchment, near Esperance.



PHOTO: South Coast NRM.

- assess any gaps in communication and identify areas in which we can improve
- develop marketing and communication strategies for raising awareness, interest and involvement of target audiences
- identify additional strategies for implementing a targeted Education Strategy through different theme sectors.

4.2.8 Local Government Authorities

Through their local planning responsibilities, Local Government Authorities have the ability to influence NRM outcomes at least as much as the other tiers of government. Moreover, they are the most visible level of government in regional rural areas, and councils are often made up of the land managers and other people most affected by and involved in NRM. Some of the region's Local Government Authorities have either a small rate base, decreasing populations and/or large areas to service (see Table 1).

Local governments have had differing levels and methods of involvement in NRM. Most provide some level of support for NRM officers based in their areas. Some Local Government Authorities such as the City of Albany and Shires of Denmark and Esperance have NRM related officers. However, the level of integration of NRM with other local government functions is variable.

Most of the region's Local Government Authorities have expressed a desire to be more involved in decision making and implementation of NRM within the region, but are concerned about taking on additional responsibilities without the necessary resources. To alleviate this, some share personnel and other resources (e.g. NRM officers).

A mechanism to engage and build capacity for NRM in Local Government Authorities would assist in the identification of the abilities, requirements and responsibilities, particularly in relation to:

- maintenance of roadside vegetation
- drainage and infrastructure impacts of changed catchment hydrology
- invasive species identification and management
- coastal and vegetation planning and management
- fire management services
- information needs, access and technical analysis.

4.2.9 Threats

The following represent identified threats to community capacity:

- poor knowledge, appreciation and involvement of NRM by the broader community
- inadequate or uncertain funding for development of regional capacity

The number of Aboriginal people involved in projects is increasing.



PHOTO: Charlotte Powis

- excessive dependence upon volunteers ('burn out' in enthusiasm and fragility of community groups)
- high administrative and financial burden on sub regional NRM groups
- disparity between Australian, State Government and regional priorities and interests
- staff turnover causing loss of experience, skills and knowledge
- lack of succession planning for effective leadership.

4.3 Achievements

The following provides a short summary of achievements relating to regional capacity that have occurred through NRM partnerships (a more complete description of achievements has been compiled in a status report [South Coast NRM, 2011]):

- involvement of urban and peri-urban people has been greatly improved
- volunteers have commenced and/or continued involvement in NRM projects
- community play a vital role in the determination of NRM investment throughout the region via the Reference Groups, Technical Advisory Groups, NRM Committee and the South Coast NRM Board of Management
- strategic catchment projects have developed partnerships, plans and on-ground works to address identified needs. Interested community and landholders contribute significant time, energy and effort to plan and implement these works at the local level.
- applications for small grants have increased by over 100% from between 2005 and 2007, demonstrating the increased community involvement in on-ground works outside Strategic Catchments. Since 2007, devolved grants have funded a diverse range of on-ground activities (biodiversity, waterway protection, coastal, soil health, land initiatives and weed management) for land holders and community groups.
- the number of Aboriginal people involved with on ground projects is increasing, including Elders who are now working more closely with mainstream educational initiatives and project planning
- local community updates have been held to provide broader community access to South Coast NRM staff and projects and opportunity to have involvement in NRM issues

- UWA has launched a Sustainability Foundation to promote research into sustainability issues
- the Denmark Education and Innovation Centre and Green Skills Inc. has been instrumental in developing the Centre for Sustainable Living in Denmark and other regional initiatives towards sustainable futures
- development and implementation of the South Coast NRM Communications and Community Engagement Plan 2009 - 2010 has included a review of community engagement procedures. Stakeholder needs and perceptions have been assessed and targets set for non-traditional NRM activities and new target audiences (Green Skills, 2009; The Hub Marketing Communication, 2009). Tracking perceptions and achievements in the identified areas can now occur to provide direction for future strategies and projects.
- development of an NRM Learning Centre at South Coast NRM offices will provide a hub for information dissemination and possible co-location for community groups. This project has commenced and is ongoing.
- update of the South Coast NRM website and the continuation of fortnightly production of the E-News bulletin and quarterly hardcopy newsletter
- a regional road show visiting Ravensthorpe, Esperance, Bremer Bay, Cranbrook, Albany, Mount Barker, Denmark, and Borden fostered community engagement and gathered valuable feedback on NRM activities in each sub-region
- engagement of the business sector (e.g. through events with Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
- community groups are increasingly using the South Coast NRM office for meetings, lectures and AGMs
- networking and collaboration via the South Coast Management Group and the Government Officers Technical Advisory Group.

4.4 Regional Partners

A summary of the major NRM stakeholders in the South Coast NRM Region is provided in Table 3. Many of these groups have roles in strategic planning, engagement, education, training and/or on-ground works.





Table 3: Major stakeholders involved in NRM

LAND MANAGERS	
Individual landholders and land managers are the key group impacting on catchment health through their use of resources. They all have a duty of care to ensure that land, water and the associated natural resources are managed in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable way, to avoid ongoing degradation. These stakeholders hold the key to action and on-ground achievements.	
REGIONAL COMMUNITY	
Partnerships and networking with the regional community are critical to the achievement of good outcomes for our land, water, biodiversity, cultural heritage and regional capacity. Significant numbers of active voluntary individual residents, groups and visitors are involved in NRM activities. In addition, there is a range of active voluntary NRM groups in the region.	
COMMUNITY GROUPS	
Community groups play an active role in on-ground work programs for environmental improvement. Types of groups include Catchment, Bushcare, Coastcare, Friends of, Cultural, Landcare and Weed Groups.	
MAJOR SUBREGIONAL GROUPS	
Albany Eastern Hinterland Inc (AEH)	The AEH is a not for profit community group that aims to foster, initiate and coordinate activities that lead to an improvement in the AEH environment. The group also aims to promote and extend information that will increase sustainable production and increase awareness of environmental issues. While currently in recess, this group hopes to recommence activities when resources are secured.
Esperance Regional Forum (ERF)	Works with the community to plan, manage and improve Esperance’s unique environment for the benefit of the community.
Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Inc (FBG)	The FBG is a not for profit grower and NRM group operating within the Shire of Jerramungup. The group works with farmers, researchers, industry groups and Federal and State agencies to address local production issues (e.g. diseases, pests and nutrient limitations) and NRM issues (i.e. salinity and soil acidification) to ensure the long-term sustainability of the agricultural industry and the communities within the region. The group is focused on research, marketing, education and the environment.
Gillamii Centre, Cranbrook	The Gillamii Centre aims to lead and inspire the agricultural community and the community at large to be involved with sustainable land use through training, education and knowledge. They aim to encourage and lead in the efficient use of resources across the community while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.



Table 3: Major stakeholders involved in NRM

MAJOR SUBREGIONAL GROUPS (continued)	
North Stirlings Pallinup Natural Resources Inc (NSPNR)	The group aims to bring together people, organisations and information, so that communities in the North Stirlings Pallinup sub-region are able to drive the better management of Natural Resources, resulting in social, economic and environmental sustainability. They work to inspire current and future generations through coordination, education and examples of the benefits accruing from sustainable management of the region’s natural resources.
Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc (OHCG)	OHCG aims to increase community participation in NRM within the catchment and encourage the incorporation of NRM concerns within planning strategies at all government levels. The catchment group also aims to promote ecologically and economically sustainable farming practices.
Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network Inc (RAIN)	RAIN is a not-for-profit community group promoting responsible NRM and long-term sustainable agricultural systems in the Ravensthorpe district. RAIN supports the community and other stakeholders in a wide range of NRM activities including the planning and implementation of on-ground activities; coordination of trials, research and education, and providing a forum for NRM issues.
South Coast Management Group (SCMG)	The SCMG is a local government-based regional representative body of coastal planners and managers and the lead body responsible for the development and implementation of Southern Shores, a strategic guide for regional coastal and marine planning and management on the South Coast. The SCMG has strong community representation, as required by its constitution, and has a vision that communities of the region will work in partnership to improve the quality of the coastal and marine environment. SCMG provides a bi-monthly forum for the discussion of issues relating to coastal and marine planning and management and also actively promotes best practice coastal management in the region.
Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee Inc (WICC)	WICC is the peak community based organisation within the Wilson Inlet catchment. WICC is involved in all areas of integrated catchment and Natural resource management, achieving on-ground results with land managers and owners.
South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc (South Coast NRM)	South Coast NRM is the peak regional body that brings people, organisations and information together so that the regional community can drive sustainable management of natural resources with positive social and economic outcomes. It is an incorporated body, managed by a Board. South Coast NRM is responsible for coordinating the development of <i>Southern Prospects</i> and associated Investment Plan, and for subsequent reporting on investment outcomes

Table 3: Major stakeholders involved in NRM

MAJOR SUBREGIONAL GROUPS (continued)	
Local Government	Local governments have an important influence on NRM through their responsibilities for land use planning, development approvals, and provision of a variety of services, such as road construction and maintenance, waste management, and pest control. Local governments also own and/or manage large areas of land. Councils with jurisdiction across the South Coast region are Albany, Broomehill - Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Esperance, Jerramungup, Gnowangerup, Kent, Kojonup, Lake Grace, Manjimup, Plantagenet and Ravensthorpe.
Other Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	NGOs cover a broad field of activities. NGO's roles and responsibilities include on-ground actions, policy development and promotion, and representation of particular interest groups. These include the Malleefowl Preservation Group (MPG), Gondwana Link Inc., Green Skills, Greening Australia (WA), Progress Associations, Denmark and Albany Environment Centres and Centre for Sustainable Living (Denmark).
Research and Development Groups	Regional organisations involved in research and development (R&D) such as the Centre of Excellence for NRM (CENRM) and universities (UWA, Murdoch, Curtin), are important bodies to fill information gaps across the region. Research outcomes and expertise are accessible to a variety of groups.
Educational Institutions	University of WA (UWA) Albany Centre, Edith Cowan University (ECU), Curtin University of Technology (Centre for Regional Education), Great Southern Institute of Technology and Esperance Community College are educational institutions operating in the region. They have a vital role in producing graduates with extensive knowledge of natural management issues.
Industry Groups	Industry groups have a significant responsibility to develop and promote operating procedures and best practice management in NRM. They are responsible for implementing systems to promote sustainable practices and support regional health initiatives. There are a number of industry groups established at the national, State and regional levels. Examples of industry groups include the Grower Group Alliance, Southern Dirt, Evergreen, Stirlings to Coast, South East Premium Wheat Growers Association, Pastoralists and Graziers Association, Western Australia No-Till Farmers Association, WA Farmers Federation, Oil Mallee Association and private agricultural consultants.
Aboriginal Groups	Aboriginal people have a long history in the region and possess intricate knowledge of traditional ecological and sustainable land management practises. Their knowledge needs to be recognised, valued and protected. There are approximately 20 major Aboriginal groups in the region who need to be involved more broadly to ensure preservation of cultural practices, languages and culturally important places. These include the Native Title claimant groups, reference groups, Aboriginal Corporations, Goldfields Land And Sea Council (GLASC), Southern Agricultural Indigenous Landholder Service (SAILS) and South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC).



Table 3: Major stakeholders involved in NRM

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	
<p>The Australian Government provides high level policy and guidance on matters which have national significance, and is involved in the delivery of Australian Government programs. Key Australian Government Agencies involved with NRM matters are Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry Australia (AFFA), Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and Regional Development Australia Great Southern WA Inc.</p> <p>Various State Government departments and agencies are involved in NRM and related activities in the region, and commit significant resources to those activities. These departments include.</p>	
Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA)	DAFWA delivers services to assist the State’s agriculture, food and fibre industries through information, science and innovation, responsible management of the resource base and policy and regulation across all elements of the supply chain.
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)	DEC has lead responsibility throughout the State for conserving our rich diversity of native plants, animals and natural ecosystems and many of our unique landscapes for their intrinsic values and for the benefit of present and future generations of the people of WA. On behalf of the Conservation Commission of WA, DEC manages national parks, nature reserves, conservation parks, State forests and timber reserves. In addition, on behalf of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority, DEC manages marine parks and marine nature reserves. DEC also has some responsibility for weeds, introduced animals and pre-suppression fire activities on unallocated crown land outside of town-sites. DEC contributes to the conservation of cultural heritage and to national and international programmes including the IUCN (the World Conservation Union) and international conservation treaties. DEC has an important role in tourism and recreation as the conservation estate attracts thousands of visitors every year.
Department of Water (DoW)	The DoW is responsible for the management of water resources to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the community. Water resources include groundwater, rivers and estuaries. The DoW licences abstraction in proclaimed areas, plans and protects public water sources, provides information on water resources and facilitates the management of priority rivers and estuaries.
Department of Fisheries (DoF)	DoF is responsible for the management of the State’s commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries, development and promotion of the State’s aquaculture industry, and management and conservation of fish and fish habitats. As part of its responsibilities, DoF undertakes fisheries research, surveillance, enforcement and education in marine parks and reserves.
Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)	DIA aims to achieve a society where Aboriginal people determine their lives and where there is social and economic equity, respect and value for land, Aboriginal heritage and culture.

Table 3: Major stakeholders involved in NRM

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES (continued)	
Department of Planning (DoP)	DoP supports the WA Planning Commission to develop integrated planning and infrastructure programs. It provides population projections/forecasts and a forum to coordinate communications between planning bodies and supports the development and implementation of DoP and the Western Australian Planning Commission statutory and strategic land use planning initiatives. In addition, the Regional Services division for the Great Southern region works with the community to plan for the delivery of quality land use.
Department of Regional Development and Lands (DRDL)	DRDL manages major regional projects, coordinates regional development policy and operations and manages unallocated crown land
Forest Products Commission (FPC)	FPC is the WA Government trading enterprise for plantation management and commercial production from renewable timber resources.
Goldfields Esperance Development Commission (GEDC) and Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC)	GEDC's and GSDC's role is to encourage, promote, facilitate and monitor the region's economic development. The organisations' objectives are to maximise job creation and improve career opportunities, develop and broaden the economic base of the region, identify infrastructure services that promote economic and social development, provide information and advice to promote business development, ensure that regional government services are comparable to the metropolitan areas, and coordinate linkages between relevant statutory bodies and State government agencies.
Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA)	MRWA is responsible for the management of transport related services and infrastructure (e.g. roads). MRWA works in conjunction with local government and its local road network in order to create an integrated transport network.
Regional Development Australia – Great Southern (RDAGS) (Australian Government Agency)	The RDA network has been established throughout Australia to provide a strategic framework for economic growth in each region. The key roles of the national network of RDA committees are to advise, consult and undertake community engagement, to contribute to regional planning, to be the first point of contact of Australian Government activities, to promote government programs and to facilitate community development.



4.5 Gaps

The following issues need to be addressed if community capacity is to be strengthened and recognised:

- resources (funding and human resources) are needed to increase capacity beyond planning and assessment to adaption and/or implementation
- to achieve more consistent results, NRM issues need to be considered in strategic and statutory planning
- NRM information needs to be more readily available across the region, through collation and dissemination of data, reports and information
- increase the capacity of Local Government Authorities in the area of NRM planning and implementation (especially in inland areas)
- community understanding would be increased through the preparation of concise 'state of the environment' reports for theme areas and awareness raising in urban areas where there is a higher percentage of the population. Building community capacity through knowledge and skill building is crucial to the effective implementation of NRM activities.

Building community capacity with Great Southern women, 2011



PHOTO: Jenelle Carter.

4.6 Program logic summary - Regional Capacity

ASPIRATION (25+ YEARS)

Healthy, resilient and sustainable communities sharing a strong ‘sense of place’ and accepting a shared responsibility to provide a legacy of a healthy, natural environment for future generations.

- Awareness of the region’s natural resources and their values, understanding of management required and a demonstrated willingness for behaviour change
- Community with capacity, resilience and willingness to adapt to change, and with confidence in their future
- Diverse range of people, groups and organisations informed and engaged in NRM activities through strong partnerships and with support systems
- Increased knowledge base shared between all involved people and organisations
- Equitable decision making that considers all the stakeholders
- Aboriginal community with capacity to engage in all areas of NRM
- Businesses/industries and residents utilising and promoting sustainable management.

GOALS (10+ Years)

Goal R1. Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement Support regional capacity by improving monitoring, evaluation and condition reporting (using quadruple bottom line principles).

Goal R2. Leadership and advocacy Community to have strong leadership and advocacy within the region and outside, to influence funding, policy and legislation.

Goal R3. Integration and partnership Integration and partnership of NRM across local government, State government, Australian government and community groups to implement 80 cross organisation projects for sustainable management of NRM resources by 2020.

Goal R4. Awareness and recognition of significant assets Raise the profile and awareness of the value of NRM assets (Biodiversity, Coastal and Marine, Cultural Heritage, Land and Water) in light of State, National and International frameworks both across our region and in State, Federal and International spheres by 2015.

Goal R5. Change management and innovation Building the capacity, willingness and resilience of the community to meet future challenges together through adaptation and innovation.

Goal R6. Regional sustainability Support the development (by 2015) and implementation of a Regional Sustainability Strategy by 2020.

Goal R7. Governance Maintain a network of responsive, well governed NRM organisations across the region to ensure active participation in decision making and implementation of NRM works.

Goal R8. Retention of knowledge Facilitate ongoing research and retain brains trust for benefit of the community and on ground implementation.

Goal R9. Education and training Develop and implement an NRM education and training framework (integrated across themes) and develop biannually reviewed education and training strategies by 2020.



OUTCOMES (1-5 Years)

MEASURES AND MONITORING

Outcome R1. Set social and economic targets within an environmental sustainability framework
Set regional social and economic targets that relate to NRM by 2012. To be reviewed by 2015 with key targets reported on to community as a report card every two years.

ON GROUND ACTIONS

Outcome R2. Supported sustainable NRM industries and businesses Identify and support key businesses (of all sizes) to incorporate environmental sustainability into their practices (National Industry Standards, Environmental Management Systems) and encourage quadruple bottom line reporting of 10% of key sectors by 2015.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Outcome R3. Improved governance Provide continued support for sub-regional and community NRM Groups with governance structures for funding, administration, insurance, human resource management and executive support reviewed annually.

Outcome R4. Facilitated change management Assist South Coast community to identify, plan and implement changes to address climate change and other key challenges on a landscape scale basis by 2015.

Outcome R5. Increased self-reliance Increase self-reliance for funding, resourcing, energy and community capacity by 10% across the region by 2013.

Outcome R6. Develop and implement an education and training framework Develop Regional NRM education and training framework by 2012. Review and support the development of educational and training tools for education institutions, the rural sector, Local Government Authorities and the community to increase knowledge, awareness and best practice management of natural resources. Sustainability principles to be taught in 80% of educational institutions across the region by 2015.

Outcome R7. Improved community engagement and leadership Demonstrate and support leadership, increase awareness and involvement of key audiences including youth, seniors, rural, urban and peri-urban landholders, business owners and Aboriginal community reviewed annually.

PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Outcome R8. Review of agreements Review of existing and development of new partnership agreements and/or Memorandums of Understanding between South Coast NRM, regional offices of State Government agencies, Local Government Authorities, Regional Development Commissions, Aboriginal land managers and other regional organisations outlining roles, responsibilities, processes for consultation and integration of planning outcomes by 2012.

4.7 Measures and indicators

Use of the following indicators and measures (Table 4) as a guide will assist in setting targets for projects and programs and allow for standard approaches to measurement. Indicators should

be selected according to the principles of cost, simplicity, consistency, practicality and capacity to deliver information across the region.

Table 4: Measures and indicators – Regional Capacity

ASSET	INDICATOR HEADING	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS
NRM capacity - individuals and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of individuals and communities to change and adopt sustainable management practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of change in aspirations of resource managers Capacity of regional decision makers Attributes of management practices Regional livelihood context Extent and type of enhanced capacity of resource managers to undertake sustainable resource management practices Level of resource managers skills and knowledge to promote sustainable NRM Extent of adoption of recommended sustainable NRM practices by resource managers Number of sub regional groups Number of members of groups Number of people attending events Outcomes of Communication and Engagement Plan (The Hub Marketing Communication, 2009) Number of people receiving South Coast NRM E-news letter Number of events held to recognise achievements of individuals or groups for projects or best practice in NRM.
NRM capacity - institutions and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRM capacity in institutions and organisations to change and adopt sustainable management practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of educational institutions with educational or training programs that incorporate NRM themes Best practice business management (capacity) Number of partnerships (engagement) Extent of leverage (partnerships/recognition) Quality of partnerships between parties to NRM program agreements Number of resource managers accessing NRM programs Effectiveness of knowledge distribution systems Number of Aboriginal organisations accessing NRM opportunities.



Table 4: Measures and indicators – Regional Capacity (continued)

ASSET	INDICATOR HEADING	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS
Sustainable Industries	NRM capacity in Industry and Business sectors to change and adopt sustainable management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry awareness of NRM issues and sustainable practices Extent of adoption of sustainable NRM practices Level of productivity of resource industries.

(Based on Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2007) Note: These indicators can be used for theme areas, where appropriate.

4.8 Trade-offs

Coordination and integration are essential, but require that time and resources are spent on communication and on planning across sectors and geographical areas. As the complexity of issues increases and more people and organisations become involved in NRM, the time spent in coordinating and integrating their efforts can seem overwhelming and lead to the perception that these activities are an end in themselves. The strategy has identified proposed

actions under the categories of measuring and monitoring; on ground actions; capacity building; and planning and policy frameworks; so that conscious decisions by the community can be made about the relative effort that is made in each area. A balance between types of activities, and particularly between planning and on ground management, needs to be addressed during the development of the Investment and Action Plan and reviewed during implementation of the strategy.

South Coast NRM staff coordinate field trips such as "Witches in Ditches".



PHOTO: South Coast NRM.