



NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

MEDIA RELEASE

26 January 2006

New report rates condition of natural resources in North East

The environmental health of streams and rivers in North East Victoria is improving and the incidence of water salinity and gully erosion is reducing.

But the quality and extent of native vegetation in the Region declined over the last year.

These are just some of the findings from the 2004/2005 Catchment Condition Report recently released by the North East Catchment Management Authority.

The report is the first of its kind in Victoria.

North East CMA Chief Executive, John Riddiford said the new Report was like an annual health check on the Region's key natural resources.

"Through this new Report, we can measure the annual progress of our work and report back to the community on the effectiveness of the approaches we are using to address important issues like salinity, pests and weeds," said Mr Riddiford.

The new Report rates the condition of land and water resources in North East Victoria against targets outlined in the North East Regional Catchment Strategy and recommends future actions for resource management.

The Regional Catchment Strategy guides the annual investment decisions of the North East CMA and details community-endorsed actions in six key areas: Land, Water, Biodiversity, People, Climate and Atmosphere and Built Environment.

Mr Riddiford said highlights from 2004/2005 Catchment Condition report included;

- ❑ Above target progress in reducing salinity discharge in priority areas – works undertaken in the region reduced salt loads in North East Streams by 300 tonnes in 2004/05;
- ❑ Progress in improving surface soil acidity – the CMA (through the DPI) is helping to build community knowledge about this issue, with more than 160 landholders attending training and field days through the Soil Health Program;
- ❑ Progress in reducing gully erosion –52 gullies were treated in 2004/05;
- ❑ Progress in addressing pests, including rabbits, wild dogs and foxes –more than 6,500 hectares of rabbit control and more than 9,100 square kilometres of baiting were undertaken.

"Much of the work was undertaken by the CMA's partner agencies including the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Primary Industries, as well as Landcare groups. River health works were carried out by the CMA." said Mr Riddiford

"We're largely pleased with the progress made in 2004/05 but we were disappointed with results in the area of native vegetation. Throughout 2006, we will continue to work with land managers and community groups to achieve results that will protect our natural resources and boost sustainable agricultural production. "

The Australian Government and Victorian State Government have invested almost \$12 million last financial year for the implementation of works outlined in the North East Regional Catchment Strategy.

The North East Catchment Management Authority (North East CMA) is responsible for co-ordinating integrated catchment management and sustainable land and water use across the Region.

For further information about the findings of this Report or to arrange an interview with John Riddiford, please contact Mary-Anne Scully, Media and Communications Consultant.

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The North East CMA region – key facts:

- covers approximately 1.9 million hectares of North East Victoria;
- contributes an estimated \$3.24 billion to the National economy each year;
- supplies 38% of total water to the Murray Darling Basin;
- key industries include agriculture, forests, tourism and valued added processing;
- more than 55 per cent consists of public land.