



NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

MEDIA RELEASE

7 November 2006

New drought employment scheme designed to generate income and protect environment

North East residents with reduced income due to drought could soon find work protecting important environmental works in the Region.

The North East Catchment Management Authority is encouraging landholders and rural contractors to find out more about work available through the Victorian Government's \$36 million Drought Employment Scheme.

CMA Chief Executive, Mr John Riddiford, said some priority environmental projects and important environmental assets in the Region were now under threat due to the ongoing drought conditions.

"We know that landholders are suffering hardship but the drought is also taking a toll on our Region's natural environment," said Mr Riddiford.

"This new Drought Employment Scheme is designed to protect and maintain high priority environmental works undertaken by the CMA, landholders and community groups so that these works survive the severe conditions we're experiencing. We are looking at employing up to 125 part time workers to undertake a range of activities on their own farms in the main, or possibly farms nearby."

Through the Drought Employment Scheme, contracts will be available for people able to undertake work such as:

- Weed control to protect revegetation areas on properties or along waterways;
- Emergency watering of revegetation sites;
- Fencing to set up stock watering points along waterways; and
- Soil conservation work.

Eligibility criteria apply. This includes those people who have suffered financial hardship due to the drought.

People interested in finding out more about the Scheme can contact the North East Catchment Management Authority on (02) 6043 7600.

Interview/photo opportunities:

For additional information or to arrange an interview with John Riddiford please contact,

Pam Mace, CEO Exec Assistant on: (02) 6043 7611 or

Mary-Anne Scully, CMA Media & Communications Consultant: 0408 685 225