

CATCH UP



**NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY**

NEWS FROM THE NORTH EAST CMA LANDCARE CONTRIBUTES TO ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

2006 marks 20 years of Landcare in Australia and volunteers in the North East have made an impressive contribution.

Over the last two decades, Landcare groups and members have contributed an estimated \$60 million in value to resource management in the Region and in excess of 880 years of active service.

"We are committed to supporting the ongoing efforts of Landcare groups, especially by assisting groups to access funding and expertise," said John Riddiford, CMA Chief Executive.



The CMA's Landcare Coordinators are working closely with Landcare groups. Their combined efforts are achieving results;

- Bringing expertise to the Region – more than 150 landholders attended a Soil Health Field Day held at Whorouly in March.
- Involving the community – almost 2000 participants have attended Landcare education and community events in 05/06.
- Additional funding – twelve North East groups attracted almost \$1 million in funding from the Australian Government's 2005/2006 National Landcare Community Support Program.

Tree planting is just one of many contributions made by Landcare.

Landcare members in the North East use less irrigated water per hectare, are twice as likely to belong to an industry group and are more likely to have undertaken stream stabilising works compared with non-Landcare members.*

"Landcare has been contributing significantly to increasing knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices, with the resulting changes in the landscape obvious in many parts of the Region," concluded John Riddiford.

* results from 2004 North East Landholder survey.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2005/06 has proved to be exciting with many projects completed and business systems improved.

The CMA has created three business units -Water Programs, Strategy and Partnerships, and Corporate Services. This structure closely aligns with the roles and responsibilities specified in the Minister's draft Statement of Obligations. Business unit and individual work plans are also closely aligned with the CMA's Corporate Plan. This allows for better accountability and better performance management.

The CMA has accelerated its river health program, with a major on-ground works emphasis. We have increased activity in all 3 major river basins - the Ovens, Kiewa and Upper Murray, with a particular focus on protecting the heritage values of the Ovens River. There has also been broad investment in prioritised land, water and vegetation programs across the catchments with support from our catchment partners - Landcare, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Primary Industries, Goulburn-Murray Water, North East Water and local government. This has combined with a focus of linking natural resource management with sustainable agriculture through the National Landcare Program, funded by the Australian Government, and the implementation of the soil health program.

With the acceleration of works programs and better project completion rates, the CMA has quite significantly reduced its carry forward of projects from one year to the next.

John Riddiford,
CEO



Left: There are over 50 Landcare Groups and Landcare Networks across the North East, comprising some 1700 memberships.



Diverse, Healthy Landscapes, Vibrant Communities

OUR CATCHMENT ASSETS

INLAND WATERS - A SNAPSHOT

The North East Region plays a pivotal role in providing water resources for south-eastern Australia. Although the Region comprises only 2% of the geographic area of the Murray-Darling Basin, its river basins contribute some 38% of total water to the Basin system.

Water is one of six assets listed in the North East Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).

The RCS identifies programs designed to protect the Region's inland waters, including; implementing a river health strategy, water quality projects, education through the Waterwatch program, regulatory projects via works on waterways and permits and statutory planning.

The 2004/2005 Catchment Condition report showed that the CMA and its partners achieved;

- Above target progress in reducing salinity discharge in priority areas;
- Progress in reducing the number of blue green algal blooms; and
- Progress in understanding and protecting river health.

In 2005-2006, the CMA has allocated \$3.3 million to protect North East water assets from threatening processes.

This State and Commonwealth funding is supporting river health works in the three primary river basins – the Ovens, the Kiewa and the Upper Murray.

It is also supporting a sustainable irrigation program, implementation of a water quality program and Round 2 of River Tender – a new auction approach for management agreements to protect riparian vegetation.

Below: The Ovens is the only lowland river in Victoria that is a heritage river for environmental values.



Andrew Briggs
River Health Projects
Manager

FROM THE TEAMS

Water Program

Water Quality – the team is participating in wastewater management planning with Shires and the approvals process for the Barnawartha biodiesel plant. **Water Resources** – An Environmental flows study in the Upper Ovens is progressing well with final recommendations scheduled for September.

Operations – recent highlights include completion of a large rock chute on Croppers Creek to manage bed deepening, completion of 05/06 sand extraction on Reedy Creek, completion of all 05/06 structural works on the King River project.

Strategy and Partnerships

Investment Planning – The CMA submitted its 2006-07 Regional Catchment Investment Plan (RCIP) in April. The Minister is expected to sign-off the finalised RCIP packages by 30 June. **Biodiversity Action Planning** – Planning is underway for a Chiltern Community Firewood Day and the opening of a large stockpile of firewood timber at Yackandandah sourced from the recent storm damage. **Indigenous Liaison** – More than 40 people from the Yackandandah Landcare Group attended a cultural information session and evening under the stars organised by the CMA.

Corporate Services

Human Resources – The team is exploring recruitment options, including use of Career Hub – a free, on-line employment notice board for La Trobe Uni students. The CMA could utilise this service to advertise positions and search for volunteers.

KEY DATES

JULY New CMA Board to be announced.

19 JULY Community Water Grants Info Session, Comfort Inn & Suites Blazing Stump – Embers Room, Tallangatta Road, Wodonga @ 2pm. For more info tel: Judith Samways – (02) 6024 9108.

24 AUGUST North East Soil Health Forum, Civic Centre, Wodonga



Did you know ?

There are eight nationally important wetlands in the North East – Davies Plain, Mount Buffalo Peatlands, Lake Hume, Ryans Lagoon, Black Swamp, Lake Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta River and the Ovens River.