

CATCH UP



**NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY**

NEWS FROM THE NORTH EAST CMA NEW NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR THE NORTH EAST

The Minister for Environment and Water, John Thwaites, recently announced a new Board for the North East Catchment Management Authority.

The Board members were appointed for three years and bring broad experience to the CMA, ranging from strategic planning and organisational governance through to environmental management, primary production and community engagement.

The Board includes four new appointments;

- Mr Greg Hayes – a primary producer and land management/agricultural consultant from Talgarno.
- Mr Anthony (Tony) Jarvis – a farmer from Cudgewa in the Upper Murray, Tony is involved in beef, agro-forestry and seed production. He has also been a member of the North East CMA's Land Advisory Committee.
- Mr Ray Park – has extensive experience in local government in North East Victoria and runs a small beef property in the Ovens Valley.
- Ms Rhonda Serpell – runs a berry farm at Dederang in the Kiewa Valley and has also been a member of the North East CMA's Land Advisory Committee.

Wandiligong land management consultant, Sarah Nicholas, was reappointed as Chair.

Other reappointments were; Lyn Coulston (Nursery operator-Shelley); Anthony Griffiths (Farmer – Greta); Terry Hillman (Academic); Peter Roper (Farmer – Tawonga); Kevin Ritchie (Department of Sustainability & Environment) and Brian Thompson (Department of Primary Industries)

Sarah paid tribute to the four outgoing Board members (Lindsay Jarvis, Mac Paton, Sarah Crooke and Johanna Barker) for their contribution to the work of the CMA and its achievements to date.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am honoured to have the opportunity to continue to lead a team that is dedicated to protecting and improving the natural resources of the North East.

Over the next three years, the North East CMA will work with communities to develop the strategic direction for our Catchment.

We will undertake practical actions in partnership with local landholders, community organisations, agencies and researchers across the Region to improve and maintain water quality and biodiversity and reduce the reach of salinity.

We will concentrate on delivering direct improvements to the land to deliver economic and environmental balance. Engaging with the community to support practice change and to identify ways to address increasingly erratic climatic conditions will be a vital component of our work. For example, we are planning to hold a summit on Climate Change early in 2007.

There is a great mix of skills and experience on the new Board and I look forward to a productive three years that will see our Catchment prosper, both economically and environmentally.



Sarah Nicholas,
Chairperson



Left: Members of the North East CMA Board – Rhonda Serpell, Brian Thompson, Peter Roper, Anthony Griffiths, CEO John Riddiford, Greg Hayes, Sarah Nicholas, Ray Park, Lyn Coulston, Tony Jarvis and Kevin Ritchie. (Picture: RAY HUNT, Border Mail)

Diverse, Healthy Landscapes, Vibrant Communities

OUR CATCHMENT ASSETS

BIODIVERSITY - A SNAPSHOT

Climate change, the removal of native vegetation and habitat decline are significant threats to biodiversity in North East Victoria. Despite recent management efforts, populations of many endangered flora and fauna species continue to decline.

Only 62 per cent of native vegetation that was present in the Region in 1750 remains. The decline of native vegetation is most extensive on private land, with only 17 per cent remaining. Biodiversity is one of six assets listed in the North East Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).

The RCS identifies programs that are designed to protect the Region's biodiversity assets including;

- whole farm planning;
- market based investment systems (such as River Tender) ;
- grants through Trust for Nature;
- protection of threatened species delivered through the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE);
- Care of Remnants Incentive Scheme (CORIS), and
- statutory planning processes.

The Region's Biodiversity Program provides extension activities and incentives that are designed to protect, enhance and restore priority native vegetation. Through it, DSE and the CMA work together to implement threatened species recovery plans and action plans and facilitate a strategic approach to implementing the RCS's biodiversity priorities.

The 2005/2006 Catchment Condition report shows that the CMA and its partners achieved ;

- Progress in increasing the extent of native vegetation in the Region ; and;
- Progress in reducing the impact of pest animals on private land

However, the quality and extent of native vegetation in the Region declined over this period.

The CMA will continue to work with land managers and community groups to achieve results that will protect biodiversity and boost sustainable agricultural production.

Geoff Robinson
Manager of Regional
Catchment Strategy
Coordination

FROM THE TEAMS

Strategy and Partnerships

Regional Catchment Investment Plan (RCIP) - The Victorian Government has signed off RCIP packages with approval pending from Australian Government Ministers. **Improving regional NRM Co-ordination** - The CMA is seeking to increase its understanding of and engagement with local government. Initial meetings have been held with Alpine, Indigo, Wodonga and Wangaratta Shires. **Celebrating 20 years of Landcare** - The 2006 North East Landcare Awards were a great success. Congratulations to all Award winners and nominees.

Water Program

Willow removal and management; The team is forging ahead on the Ovens Seedling willow project with all major structural activities, including fencing, already completed for 06/07. Extensive weed and stabilisation management works have been completed on the Mitta Mitta River for this season, paving the way for those sites requiring revegetation. **River Tender** - The team has completed and mailed out Management plans to all successful tenderers for this year's River Tender project. **Waterwatch** - the CMA has delivered the 'Run of the River' board game developed by Waterwatch Victoria to Secondary Schools across the Catchment. Students and Waterwatch staff have been undertaking site assessments on existing Waterwatch monitoring sites.

Corporate Services

Reporting - The CMA's Annual Report and 2005/06 edition of the Catchment Condition Report are in production with their release scheduled for October. **Caring for our staff** -The majority of CMA staff completed First Aid training in July. Medical examinations for field staff are underway, covering visual acuity, colour vision perception, visual skin checks and spirometry.



Above: The Spotted Tree Frog – an icon threatened species in North East Victoria (pic courtesy of Glen Johnson, DSE)




Natural
Heritage
Trust
*Helping Communities
Helping Australia*
A Commonwealth Government Initiative

Congratulations to 2006 North East Landcare Award winners;

• Agency Award – Rural City of Wangaratta, • Community Group Award – Mudgegonga and District Landcare • Indigenous Landcare – Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation (Wodonga), • Individual Landcarer – Lyn Coulston, Shelley, • Landcare Education – Beechworth Primary School • Nature Conservation – Baranduda Landcare Group • Sustainable Agriculture Award – the Humphry family, 'Avondale' Springhurst