

NEW funding programmes

announced by the Victorian & Australian Governments:
Caring for Our Country and the Victorian Investment Framework.
For more information visit
www.nrm.gov.au or
www.necma.vic.gov.au

CATCH UP



**NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY**

Issue 11 December 08

NEWS FROM THE NORTH EAST CMA DROUGHT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME OFFERS PRACTICAL SUPPORT

**We can't
make it rain,
but we can
offer you
some relief.**

Despite recent rainfalls, the ongoing dry is taking a toll on farming families, livestock and crops in the North East.

That's why the North East CMA is encouraging people to apply for work through the Victorian Government's \$10 million Drought Employment Programme.

"We'll be employing people to undertake work that makes good business and environmental sense," explained CEO, Mr John Riddiford.

"We'll firstly help eligible applicants to develop a work schedule that is suited to their expertise and addresses potential environmental degradation issues in their area."

The CMA then pays participants an hourly rate and can also reimburse people for materials such as chemicals, fuels and oil and fencing materials. Please contact the CMA if you would like more information about the Drought Employment Programme, including application details.

In 2006/07 and 2007/08, the North East CMA employed 218 rural people through the Drought Employment Programme. Most people were employed on a part-time basis so that they could also continue with farm or other work.

- Beef cattle farmers, Omeo area - weed spraying on public land
- Beef/sheep farmers, Upper Murray & Mitta Valley - fenced out remnant vegetation
- Dairy farmers, Mitta Valley - fenced out waterway
- Beef/grapes, Whitfield/Markwood area - fencing to prevent stock access to waterways
- King Valley Vignerons - undertook Environmental Management Systems (EMS) training and works like fencing out waterways

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A community survey conducted earlier this year sought to track community awareness and perceptions of Victoria's CMAs and to identify community priorities for the future.

Market researchers surveyed 1802 respondents by telephone across the State, with 201 of these coming from the North East.

Some of the key survey findings for our region were:

- Landcare – North East respondents showed strong top-of-mind awareness of Landcare at 39%, compared with a 16% statewide average;
- Natural resource management issues of importance – 82% of people nominated water-related issues, while 61% nominated drought as the most prominent issue;
- Preferred means of communication – 57% of respondents indicated they would prefer to receive communication from the CMA via the post.

The high level of awareness of Landcare in our region is a tribute to the many groups who voluntarily work to protect the natural resources in our region.

Protection of water quality and river health is core to our CMA's work. Our region contributes 38% of water for the Murray Darling Basin, so we were pleased to see that water-related issues rate highly with our community.

Finally, we have acted on the preference for print media from those surveyed. We recently posted information about our Drought Employment Programme to all rural mail boxes across our region.



Sarah Nicholas,
Chairperson



Left: Jack Larkin, Dederang – Drought Employment Programme participant 2007.

Diverse, Healthy Landscapes, Vibrant Communities

OUR CATCHMENT ASSETS

Improving how we connect with our community

The resources and networks of the North East CMA have been boosted with eight members appointed to a new Community Liaison Reference Group.

The Group will provide advice to the CMA about how best to tailor engagement and consultation activities to individual communities in the North East region.

Each member was appointed on the basis of their community engagement skills and links to community networks across the North East. They are:

Trudy Anderson, Michelle Cowan, Debi Gadd, Lindsay Jarvis, Pamela McKimmie, Thomas Moritz, Mac Paton and Jane Roots.

An Induction Day for the Group was held in November. It included discussions with Sarah Nicholas – CMA Chair, John Riddiford – CEO, Jeff Taylor – Manager Strategy & Partnerships and Judith Samways – Community Liaison Facilitator.

In their first meeting, the Group focused on community engagement for the Ovens River Native Fish Demonstration Reach project, with a view to raising awareness of the project.

The Community Liaison Reference Group will help ensure the CMA's engagement and consultation activities are: tailored to individual communities, meaningful to community participants, and capture local knowledge and ideas from a broad cross-section of community members.



Emma Russell (right), CMA Waterwatch with Amy Gibson, St Bernard's PS, Wangaratta, one of the winners in a National Water Week poster competition run by the CMA.

FROM THE TEAMS

Corporate

Reducing water and Energy Usage - the team is investigating the installation of solar panels at our two depots and rainwater tanks at the Kiewa depot. The CMA has installed rainwater tanks at Everton depot.

Occupational Health and Safety - Our HR Team Leader is working with the Waterways Project Officer/Quarry Manager to develop an induction guide for the CMA's quarries.

Strategies and Partnerships

Regional Catchment Strategy review - we are compiling information about activities undertaken in our region since 2004 so that it can be used to inform the review and future renewal of the RCS.

Regional Landcare Support - Congratulations to Lyn Coulston, Lindsay and Ian Humphry who were National Landcare Awards finalists. The CMA sponsored the attendance of three Landcare Facilitators and four Community Landcare Coordinators at the Victorian Landcare Network Forum in Port Fairy, an annual professional development opportunity for Landcare employees and volunteers.

Water

On ground works - the team has been watering all large-scale revegetation sites to ensure survival rates.

Native Fish Demonstration Reach project - Ovens River - the CMA is placing large woody debris into the river to create fish habitat. This work has provided good opportunities to work with other stakeholders such as the Alpine Shire, Spotless Defence Services Bandiana and private landholders.



KEY DATES

2 FEBRUARY 2009

World Wetlands Day. Free field tours, children's activities and information sessions during February. Contact Sarah Daniell for details. Tel: (02) 6043 7627

6 MARCH 2009

Deadline for Caring for our Country investment proposals Tel: 1800 552 008



The team at the North East CMA would like to wish you a very happy and safe New Year.

With support from



Australian Government

You can contact the North East CMA in many ways. Tel: (02) 6043 7600, email necma@necma.vic.gov.au or visit www.necma.vic.gov.au