



Looking to the future, consolidating the past

2007-08 ANNUAL REPORT



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority

The communities we serve

Patho Mincha Torrumbarry Bald Rock Pyramid Hill Yarrawalla Wharparilla Roslynmead Echuca Mologa Yarrawalla South Kotta Kanyapella South Mitiamo Pine Grove Simmie Hayanmi Strathallan Lockington Ballendella McColl Prairie Nanneella Calivil Tennyson Milloo Fairy Dell Rochester Diggara West Dingee Yallook Hunter Tandarra Kamarooka North Drummartin Kamarooka Kamarooka East Elmore Mayreef Summerfield Runnymede Raywood Neilborough East Creek View Colbinabbin West Sebastian North Huntley Bagshot North Yarraberb Goornong Campbells Forest Myola East Myola Barnadown Derby Huntly Woodvale Muskerrey East Leichardt Sailors Gully Myers Flat Toolleen Epsom Eaglehawk California Gully White Hills Marong Long Gully Wilson Reef Maiden Gully Bendigo Junortoun Golden Square Kennington Flora Hill Axedale Woodstock Kangaroo Flat Strathfieldsay Spring Gully Axe Creek Lockwood Mandurang Knowsley Shelbourne East Emu Creek Eppalock Lockwood South Shelbourne Mandurang South Derrinal Sedgwick Ravenswood Heathcote Pilchers Bridge Argyle Nuggetty Ravenswood South Porcupine Flat Harcourt North Sutton Grange Maldon Harcourt Culferne Koondrook Teal Point Gannawarra Koroop Kerang East Milnes Bridge Mead McMillans Macorna North Wee Wee Rup Horfield Macorna Mincha West Leitchville Gunbower Cohuna Woorinen North Tyntynder South Beverford Tyntynder Central Speewa Kunat Tresco West Tresco Fish Point Benjeroop Winlaton Murrabit West Westby Mystic Park Beauchamp Lake Charm Lalbert Korrak Korrak Bael Bael Fairley Capels Crossing Annie Tittybong Pyramid Creek Yeoburn Myall Murrabit Gonn Crossing Kerang South Tragowel Dingwall Langville Appin Appin South Leaghur Canary Island Normanville Quambatook Towaninny Meering West Oakvale Towaninny South Ninnebrook Gredgwin Lake Boga Kerang Swan Hill Budgerum Budgerum East Sandhill Lake Barraport Loddon Vale Canary Island South Minmindie Gladfield Bunguluke Glenloch East Morton Plains Wycheproof Catumnal Thalia Warmur Boort Durham Ox Glenloch Watchem Narrewillock Boort East Lake Marmal Corack East Chirrup Watchem West Teddywaddy West Teddywaddy Massey Mysia Fernhurst Wooroonook Buckrabanyule Charlton Barrakee Jeffcott North Wychitella Carron Jarklin Litchfield Borung Bears Lagoon Woosang Yeungroon East Donald Korong Vale Lawler Dooboobetic Laen East Kinypanial South Laen North Yeungroon Richmond Plains Fiery Flat Serpentine Wedderburn Nine Mile Wedderburn Junction Powlett Plains Cope Cope Gooroc Coonoor Bridge Rich Avon Swanwater Berrimal Kurraca West Glenalbyn Salisbury West Avon Plains Slaty Creek Gowar East Kurraca Kurting Banyena Fentons Creek Traynors Lagoon Gre Gre North Inglewood Gray Bridge Burrum Wehla Bridgewater on Loddon St Arnaud St Arnaud East Kingower Logan Banyena South Kooreh Raluana Gre Gre Rheola Burkes Flat Marnoo Marnoo East Arnold West McIntyre Beazleys Bridge Arnold Carapooee Cochranes Creek Wallaloo Emu Llanelly Moliagul Newbridge Murphys Creek Rostron Tottington Kanya Tarnagulla Wallaloo East Bealiba Poseidon Callawadda Stuart Mill Winjallock Riachella Paradise Goldsborough Archdale Waanyarra Woodstock West Laanecoorie Morri Morri Dunolly Eastville Bromley Archdale Junction Eddington Moyreisk Dunluce Betley Bet Bet Redbank Natta Yallock Baringhup West Havelock Timor West Rathscar Moonambel Timor Baringhup Wareek Bowenvale Simson Harcourt Redesdale Perkins Reef Muckleford North Barkers Creek Toobarac Muckleford Castlemaine Golden Point Welshmans Reef Chewton Campbells Creek Elphinstone Muckfield South Emu Flat Green Gully Strathloddon Yapeen Taradale Strangeways Guildford Fryerstown Metcalfe East Vaughan Langley Sandon Green Hill Clydesdale Malmsbury Eberys Yandoit Pastoria East Riverview Bald Hill Drummond Lauriston Kyneton Pipers Creek Shepherds Flat Denver Kooroocheang Glenlyon Spring Hill Hepburn Springs Woodend North Coomoora Daylesford Tylden South Woodend Kangaroo Hills Little Hampton Eganstown Fern Hill Musk Blampied Ashbourne Muskvale Lyonville Trentham Trentham East Bullarto Mount prospect Borlands Sailors Falls Bullarto South Newbury Rocklyn Newstead Carlsruhe Cadello Faraday Clarkes Hill Coghills Creek Ascot Lawrence Ullina Strathlea Moolort Carisbrook Maryborough Homebush Moores Flat Joyces Creek Majorca Bung Bong Warrenmang Addington Waubra Glendaruel Tourello Mount Beckworth Clunes Lexton Burnbank Dunach Caralulup Lillicur Green Hill Creek Lamplough Amphitheatre Golden Point Daisy Hill Adelaide Lead Moonlight Flat Lower Homebush Percydale Tanwood Newlyn North Newlyn Campbelltown Springmount Creswick Smeaton Talbot Avoca Dean Allendale Broomfield Evansford Amherst Craigie Bald Hills Alma Mount Lonarch

Cover image

The Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus*
by David Kleinert

Like this small bushland bird that is looking out to the future, the North Central Catchment Management Authority is also looking to the future, consolidating our past work and taking a fresh new approach to the management of our region's natural resources.

The Superb Fairy-wren usually lives in a family group and works together to achieve the success of their species. In many ways this is similar to the North Central Catchment Management Authority with a team of dedicated staff working with our partners to achieve better outcomes for the natural environment.

Images used in this report

The North Central Catchment Management Authority gratefully acknowledges the contribution of images used throughout this report from the following people; Adrian Martins, Michelle Bills, Melanie Barrot, Heidi Kleinert, Melanie Tranter, David Kleinert, Hugh McGregor, Sonia Robinson and many others.

Seeing the region through their camera lens contributes to the visual story of the North Central Region.

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Printed on recycled paper.

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ISBN: 978-0-9803311-5-8

We're in this together



CHAIRPERSON AND CEO'S SUMMARY


The North Central CMA (CMA) has continued to strengthen its role in coordinating the protection of the region's high value environmental assets. Against a backdrop of severe ongoing drought the North Central CMA set an organisational record by investing \$25 million in environmental activities. The organisation also took a range of strategic decisions to enhance its long-term effectiveness and confirm it as a leading natural resource management practitioner in Australia.

The organisation set out to better understand our community and our catchment over the past year. This focus resulted in the establishment of the Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC), a sub-committee of the Board comprising sixteen members with various skills and interests drawn from across the north central region. The NRMC replaced the previous three Implementation Committees (ICs) and has the primary function of recommending investment priorities to the Board and taking carriage of the organisation's community engagement strategy.

One of the key activities undertaken to better understand our catchment was the continuation of collaborations with key research organisations. Of particular note is the adoption of a new methodology for making environmental investment decisions (referred to as 'INFFER').

'Investment Framework for Environmental Resources' combined with a review of the organisation's mission has resulted in a strong focussing of the organisation's investments in order to maximise the public good river health outcomes of our direct activities. The organisation also continues its strong regional role of monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS).

The North Central CMA's role as Caretaker of River Health has reached a new level of maturity through the drought. The CMA has worked with drought-stressed communities to produce significant environmental outcomes for water-stressed environmental assets in the Campaspe, Loddon and Murray River systems respectively. The Gunbower Forest received the largest environmental water volume in the state with over 1,000 Ha of forest being inundated



with nearly 8,000 ML of water through a newly constructed environmental water regulator. On the Loddon River, drought refuges such as Little Lake Boort were supplied with environmental water while cooperation with regional water authorities resulted in some mutually beneficial outcomes for the environment and other users on the Campaspe River.

21 years of Landcare was celebrated in the North Central region during the year and a very successful \$2.4 million Drought Employment Program (DEP) was also implemented in conjunction with regional partners this year. The organisation has continued to demonstrate its commitment to its people through investing in post-graduate education, a well being program and other professional development initiatives.

In the coming year, the North Central CMA will continue to enhance its understanding of the community and

its catchment through commencing the renewal of the RCS. The planning horizon for the RCS will require the region to collectively understand and address the threat posed by climate change to the region's environmental assets.

We recognise and respect the great contribution of landholders actively working toward environmental outcomes as well as the many outstanding partnerships we have with regional, state and national level partner organisations.

We acknowledge the leadership of the Board which continues to challenge itself and the organisation, the skills and dedicated performance of our staff and the knowledge and strategic clarity contributed by the NRM. Together the three 'branches of the CMA family' are committed to the best outcomes for natural resource management in the north central region.

It is with pride that we present the results of our activities in this report to our many stakeholders.

In accordance with the FMA 1994, I am pleased to present the Report of Operations for the North Central CMA for the year ending 30 June 2008.



Ian MacBean
Chairperson



Damian Wells
Chief Executive Officer

Leadership at North Central CMA



OUR BOARD

The North Central CMA Board provides strategic leadership for the organisation.

Ian MacBean (Chairperson)

Ian MacBean has a long interest in regional environmental issues dating back to his youth on a salt-affected farm in the Barr Creek catchment.

He has had many involvements in regional and community development, and natural resource management in central and northern Victoria, and was employed at La Trobe University, Bendigo in senior academic and management roles.

He was awarded an OAM in 1993 for services to town and regional planning and the environment.

John Brooke

John Brooke is a beef and walnut producer who farms near Pyramid Hill. A former Loddon Shire Mayor, he has experience in local government, he is also a director of Goulburn-Murray Water and the chairman of Coliban Water.

A member of CPA Australia and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, he has wide experience in business management.

Stuart McLean

Stuart, a primary producer from Wycheproof, has been appointed for his third term on the North Central CMA Board. He has valuable experience in local government and is a councillor with the Buloke Shire. He also chairs the Northern Grampians Buloke Shire Landcare Network and the Central Victoria Area Consultative Committee.

On a broader level, Stuart is the Vice President of the Livestock Saleyards Association of Victoria and a Board member of Workspace Australia. Stuart is very interested in integrated planning in natural resource management and sees this as a priority for the current Board.

Board Attendance

There were 11 meetings held during the 2007-08 financial year.

Board Member	No. Attended	No. Possible
John Brooke	10	11
Noel Harvey	4	5
Jane Holt	10	11
Jock Leishman	9	11
Ian MacBean	11	11
Stuart McLean	11	11
Yvonne Postlethwaite	9	11
Jean Sutherland	11	11
Jenny Williams	11	11

NB: Noel Harvey resigned at the end of Nov. 07

Audit Committee

An active and effective Audit Committee serves the Board in its governance responsibilities. The Audit Committee consists of five Board Members who have been considered independent by the Board. Using an enterprise wide, risk-based approach, the Committee focuses on corporate risks and business and financial performance.

Independent internal audit services, rigorous project management monitoring, and the development of corporate risk management are key tools of the Committee.

Attendances at the 11 meetings held during the reporting period were:

Board Member	No. Attended	No. Possible
Jane Holt (Chairperson)	11	11
Jenny Williams	9	11
Jock Leishman	10	11
John Brooke	6	11
Ian MacBean	8	11

All Board Members are considered by the Board to be independent.

Jean Sutherland and Yvonne Postlethwaite exited the Audit Committee at the July 2007 meeting.

◀ (left to right)

Jean Sutherland, Jenny Williams, Jane Holt, John Brooke, Ian MacBean, Stuart McLean, Yvonne Postlethwaite, Jock Leishman.

Jane Holt

Jane along with her partner established Berrys Bridge Vineyard in 1990 and Berrys Bridge Wines in 1997. Jane has an Associate Degree in Viticulture, a Bachelor of Science in Wine Science from CSU, and has been a self-employed book keeper for nearly 20 years.

Jean Sutherland

Jean lives at Cohuna and is involved in auditing superannuation funds. She is also a Board Member of Ambulance Victoria and Bendigo Health Care Group.

Jean's interests include the effect of water trading, the drought and future land use, improving irrigation practices and linking the use of irrigated water to land use and the future of irrigation structures.

Yvonne Postlethwaite

Yvonne is a prominent member of the St Arnaud community, where she is business manager of a grain farm. She is involved in a range of community groups including Business Manager of the St Arnaud Community Resource Centre and was a former North Central CMA Implementation Committee member. Yvonne has a strong commitment to natural resource management through sustainable agricultural practices. She was awarded a PhD in that field and is a past Victorian Rural Woman of the Year for services to agriculture.

Jenny Williams (Deputy Chairperson)

Jenny has been a bookseller in Echuca for 24 years and has over four generations of family connections to farming in the district. Prior to bookselling she was a secondary school teacher with qualifications in environmental studies and commerce. She is actively involved in a number of community organisations and was a co-founder and is current President of the Echuca Landcare Group. Jenny has a strong commitment to ensuring that great ideals are converted into practical action on the ground.

Jock Leishman

Jock is a farmer from Ullina, near Clunes. He wants to help give the community a greater say in natural resource management and would like more effective on ground works.

A community affair

A photograph of a man and a woman standing side-by-side, looking thoughtful. The man is wearing a red polo shirt and a yellow baseball cap, with his hand near his face. The woman is wearing a pink polo shirt and sunglasses, also with her hand near her face. They are standing in front of a white vehicle with some text on it, including 'SLS'.

Partnerships

As an important natural resource manager in north central Victoria, we take our community and our environmental responsibilities very seriously.

Our region is rich in natural assets; it's also dependant on being managed appropriately to ensure its regional and international significance is maintained. To achieve this we continue to be actively involved in the whole of government and community approach to natural resource management.

Fundamental to our achievements over the last decade has been our commitment to establishing ongoing partnerships with landholders and the broader community that have primarily been accomplished through our three geographically based Implementation Committees.



Natural Resource Management Committee

Member	Location
Malcolm Brown (Chairperson)	Leichardt
Ken Coates	Natte Yallock
Ann Dunstan	Donald
John Knight	Quambatook
Rob Loats	Donald
Laurie Maxted	Durham Ox
John Storey	Wycheproof
Doug Streeter	Avoca
David Jones	Bendigo
Shane O'Loughlin	Laanecoorie
Diane Bunnett	Bridgewater
Ron Cosgrave	Creswick
Marie Jones	Castlemaine
Christine Brooke	Pyramid Hill
Dan Halloran	Kyneton
Charlie Gillingham	Kerang

The newly formed NRMCMet met nine times between November 2007 and June 2008 financial year, convening in the Bendigo area.

The NRMCMet is committed to better understand the north central catchment. They toured the irrigation area in February 2008, followed by the Avoca region in June 2008. Subsequent tours have been scheduled for late 2008 in other parts of the Region. These tours also provide a valuable link to the community.

Key Achievements:

- The NRMCMet was fundamental in identifying areas for investment under the Regional Catchment Investment Plan guided by the new INFFER and Salinity Investment Framework v.3 (SIF3) process.
- A significant achievement for the committee has been its adaptability and success in forming one Committee from the previous three separate committees.
- Driving the development of the North Central CMA Community Engagement Strategy.
- Representation on a number of local, state and regional committees and forums.

This year saw a review process conducted of our three established Implementation Committees to refine their charter and accountabilities. The review process highlighted the need for defined roles, responsibilities and a more strategic focus from within our committees. The decision to form one Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMCMet) occurred in November 2007.

The committee's membership represents the entire region of the north central catchment.

This newly formed NRMCMet have been charged with adding community input into our Regional Catchment Investment Plan and developing a Community Engagement Strategy over the past 7 months.

The North Central CMA values the NRMCMet's contribution to the organisation and they are a vital aspect of connecting landholders and communities' views into our processes.

Our Natural Resource Management Committee

The NRMCM is a sub-committee of the North Central CMA Board. The NRMCM advises the Board in relation to environmental investment priorities in the region with a primary emphasis on protecting the region's rivers.

In November 2007 the North Central CMA continued the development of its advisory committee structure by launching the new NRMCM, which is an evolution from our previous Implementation Committee structure.

The key role of the NRMCM is to provide community and local perspectives on the projects and functions of our organisation that have direct public benefits for current and future generations.

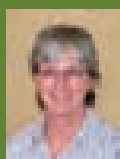


**Malcolm Brown
(Chairperson)**

Malcolm is a communications professional, who also owns a farm forestry and prime lamb enterprise. Mal is also an active member of the Northern United Forestry Group.

Malcolm's passion for natural resource management comes from his involvement in working for the Victorian Government implementing salinity management plans and developing Landcare policy.

As the Chairperson of the NRMCM, Malcolm's vision is to increase community participation in natural resource management.



Christine Brooke

Christine runs a beef cattle and walnut enterprise with her husband John on an irrigated property near

Pyramid Hill. Christine is currently Mayor of Loddon Shire and is involved in many other community groups and activities.

Christine has a passionate interest in the health of our environment, as well as a desire to ensure we have a sustainable future in agriculture.



Charlie Gillingham

Charlie is an irrigation / dryland farmer from Lake Charm. He is a past member of the Loddon

Campaspe Irrigation Implementation Committee and currently a member of the Torrumbarry Water Services Committee.

Charlie is enthusiastic about encouraging greater community participation in all natural resource management issues, and hopes that this will assist the North Central CMA deliver appropriate and meaningful outcomes when protecting the region's environmental assets.



Ken Coates

Ken is a mixed farmer from Natte Yallock producing grain, wool and prime lambs. He is currently

Treasurer of his local Landcare Group and has been actively involved since its inception.

Ken sees his involvement on the NRMCM as vital to having input into programs resulting in the general health and wellbeing of the catchment for all users.

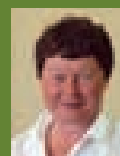


Ann Dunstan

Ann is a partner in a dryland farm enterprise near Donald with a record of conservation and

sustainable land management practices.

Ann has a longstanding record of participation in the social and political life of her community and has a genuine appreciation and concern for our region's unique natural environment and how it will be managed into the future.



Marie Jones

Since moving to Central Victoria 12 years ago from a teaching background, Marie has become involved in the

local environmental movement.

Marie's strong commitment to community, biodiversity and water quality, as well as her belief that working in partnerships is the key to improved natural resource management, will help deliver real outcomes across the catchment.



John Knight

John is a fourth generation farmer at Quambatook whose property borders the Avoca River. He is a

previous Member for the Avoca and Avon Richardson Implementation Committee.

John sees his new role on the NRMCM as an opportunity to increase the profile of the North Central CMA, its roles and responsibilities; importantly create greater community participation in the projects and programs that are implemented so that our prized waterways are utilised as a recreational outlet for the community to enjoy.



Ron Cosgrave

Ron operates a small farming enterprise at Smeaton in the upper catchment and is a member

of Landcare.

Ron is an active community member who has a dedicated interest in natural resource management, with a strong passion towards water quality and river health.



Diane Bunnett

Diane has been a dryland farmer for over 30 years at Derby near Bridgewater, growing grain and prime

lambs. As an active community member, Diane is involved in a number of rural and conservation networks.

Diane is keen to lend her knowledge and passion to the NRM around the effects of drought on groundwater usage and the land, viewing her role on the Committee as working towards preserving the assets in the north central catchment and to increase public awareness of the North Central CMA.



David Jones

David is currently the Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo. David has a long interest in natural resource management and the environment and is an AI Gore accredited ambassador.

With a background as a teacher in economics, politics and history at Bendigo Senior Secondary College, David will provide depth and analytical skills to the important issues faced by this committee.

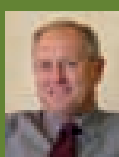


Shane O'Loughlin

Shane brings a wealth of experiences to the NRM as a member of the Laanecoorie Foreshore

Committee of Management and is a past member of North Central CMA Implementation Committee.

Shane sees a role of the Committee to continue to have the issue of chemical residue and pollutants entering our waterways addressed. Together with well researched on-ground programmes and inclusive community participation, he is confident in a sustainable future for our regions important waterways and wetlands.



Laurie Maxted

Laurie runs a mixed farming enterprise near Durham Ox; he also has a dairy farm at Calivil and a mixed farming

enterprise at Sipton in the Western District.

Laurie brings a broad knowledge of irrigation with sustainable farming practices, and has a desire for the NRM to work towards leaving the land in a better condition for the next generation.



Rob Loats

Rob is a dryland primary producer from Laen and is actively involved as a member of a number

Victorian Fisheries Committees. He is also a past member of the Avoca/Avon-Richardson Implementation Committee.

As an NRM member, Rob hopes to help identify and implement community-identified restoration projects that provide long-term benefits for the regional community, especially projects that enhance our riverine, floodplain and wetland systems.



John Storey

John is a primary producer from Glenloth, near Wycheproof and was previously a member of the

Avoca/Avon-Richardson Implementation Committee.

John views his strong interest in the environmental health of the Avoca catchment and the floodplain outlet as beneficial to the new Committee delivering river health outcomes.



Denise Acocks

Together with her husband and sons, Denise runs a farm at Rochester as well as leasing and share farming

in a number of locations in the region, where they currently grow cereal grains, fodder and produce prime lambs and beef steers.

Denise's family has generational attachment to the Campaspe River, which has always been important to their farming and recreational lives.

Denise sees her role on the NRM as being able to extend on her interests around community actions and Landcare to deliver lasting riparian protection works, revegetation and off-stream stock watering systems.



Dan Halloran

Raised on the family farm in Kyneton, Dan is tertiary educated in Agricultural Management. This was

followed by an extended career in the nation's primary industry including the horticulture, fodder, crop and livestock sectors.

Dan has a strong understanding and experience in sustainable farm systems and natural resource management programs. He is seeking to share his skills and knowledge with the Committee to deliver on the catchment's broader stakeholder interests. Dan's goal is to ensure that investment in the catchment's assets returns a positive dividend to the region.

Our region



The region comprises the four major river catchments of Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and Avon–Richardson. The Campaspe and Loddon rivers drain directly into the Murray River. The Avoca River drains into a series of terminal lakes and wetlands (the Avoca Marshes). During flood events it may drain to the Murray River and a further series of terminal lakes. The Avon–Richardson catchment is internally drained, with most surface water draining into Lake Buloke in the north of the catchment. The rivers are the lifeblood of the region and its people. They have helped shape, grow and sustain communities including Bendigo, Bridgewater, Donald, Echuca, Kerang, Kyneton and Swan Hill. We at North Central CMA recognise that we have a responsibility to look after our precious waterways and their surrounds for the use and enjoyment of our future generations.



Rainfall ranges from 300 mm per annum in the north-west of the region to 1,200 mm per annum in the south-east. There are substantial groundwater and surface water resources. Groundwater is used extensively to irrigate horticultural crops and pastures in the south. Mineral springs in this area are also utilised and support the processing and tourism industries. The two major storages are Lake Eppalock on the Campaspe River and Cairn Curran reservoir on the Loddon River. Irrigation water supplies from the Murray and Goulburn systems and stock and domestic supplies from the Wimmera system supplement the region's surface water resources.

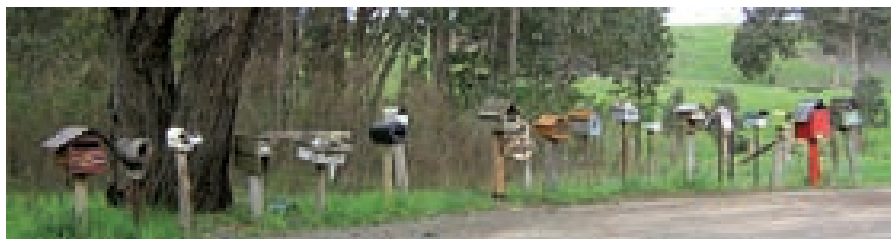
The majority of soil types in the region are fragile, shallow, have poor fertility, and are prone to degradation. Nevertheless, the region is agriculturally diverse. Irrigated production occurs on much of the lower Loddon and Campaspe riverine plains, with dairying and mixed cropping as the main enterprises and horticulture continuing to rise.

The indigenous inhabitants of many tribes occupied this region for many thousands of years. They were the original 'caretakers' of the land, water and the life that sprang from them. Their relationship and co-existence with the natural resources in this region has, in many valuable ways, helped shape the North Central CMA's values.

Improved irrigation technology and tradable water entitlements have encouraged the rapid expansion of horticulture outside traditional irrigation areas. Dryland agricultural areas are characterised by broadacre activities such as cropping and grazing.

Land close to major centres is being increasingly developed for horticulture, viticulture, new and emerging agricultural commodities, and "lifestyle" farming. Intensive animal production industries are also represented.

The most intensive forest operations are concentrated in foothill forests and softwood plantations in the south. A range of products are obtained from forests and woodlands in the north, including firewood, posts and poles, furniture timbers, honey and eucalyptus oil.



Approximately 13% of the region is public land with much of this reserved and managed for multiple purposes. Forested public land in the region is highly valued for its environmental significance as well as its social and economic values – heritage, recreation, timber and firewood, honey production and fossicking.

The north central region of Victoria is a place undergoing significant transformation. This transformation is being driven by a combination of natural and man-made factors. We've seen significant urban and agricultural growth in the region. North central has become one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria, and more than 230,000 people now call this region home.

With this growth there has been, and continues to be, 'growing pains' such as demographic changes in the north of the catchment and peri urbanism in the south.

We must ensure that our legacy for future generations is one where respect and partnership is at the forefront of managing our region's precious natural resources. Its rich natural assets are dependant upon being managed sustainably to ensure its attractive regional and international values are maintained.

The North Central CMA is always close to the communities we serve with strong links to the community programs of Landcare and Waterwatch. Equally, we continue to adapt to the way we deliver the science behind what we do to meet the changes and the challenges they have brought by striving to deliver significantly 'bigger and smarter' natural resource management projects to the people of north central Victoria.

We take pride in our region, as well as the role we play in managing our region's rivers and the communities that depend on them; after all it's our backyard. This pride, together with our ongoing commitment is what will ultimately support our efforts in sustaining our region's social, economic and environmental wellbeing for future generations to live, work and play.



About us

The North Central CMA is the lead natural resource management agency in north central Victoria for coordinating and monitoring natural resource management programs.

We do this by employing best practice principles in managing and protecting the region's diverse environmental assets and striving to create a healthy and sustainable environment for the communities of north central Victoria.

The region takes in more than 13% of Victoria, and with a population of over 230,000 people; the region has become one of Victoria's most rapidly growing areas in terms of urban and agricultural activities over the last 5 years.

The North Central CMA was established in 1997 under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 and also has powers and functions under the Water Act 1989. During the reporting period the responsible Ministers for our organisation were The Hon John Thwaites, Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change from 1 July 2007 to 29 July 2007; The Hon John Brumby, Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change from 30 July 2007 to 2 August 2007; The Hon Gavin Jennings, Minister for Environment and Climate Change from 3 August 2007 to 30 June 2008; and The Hon Tim Holding, Minister for Water from 3 August 2007 to 30 June 2008.

While delivery of the North Central RCS (2003) remains a core business function of our organisation, integral to our role as 'caretakers' of our river health is our leadership and business performance including the management of the Environment Water Reserve created under the Water Act. This is made possible through our coordination, development and implementation of key on-ground programs in partnership with our communities and continues to be the cornerstone of what we do.

We achieve this either directly or through our partnerships with the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Trust for Nature, local government, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, Water Authorities, educational institutions, research institutes, the private sector and of course our communities.

These important relationships allow the North Central CMA to continue to deliver significantly 'bigger and smarter' natural resource management projects to the people of north central Victoria for projects relating to:

- Waterways
- Water quality
- Biodiversity
- Environmental water reserves
- Landcare support and funding coordination
- Floodplain management and regional drainage
- Regional responses to climate change
- Salinity
- Threatened species recovery
- Pest plants and pest animals
- Vegetation enhancement and restoration
- Soil health
- Cultural heritage
- Community capacity development
- Decision support.



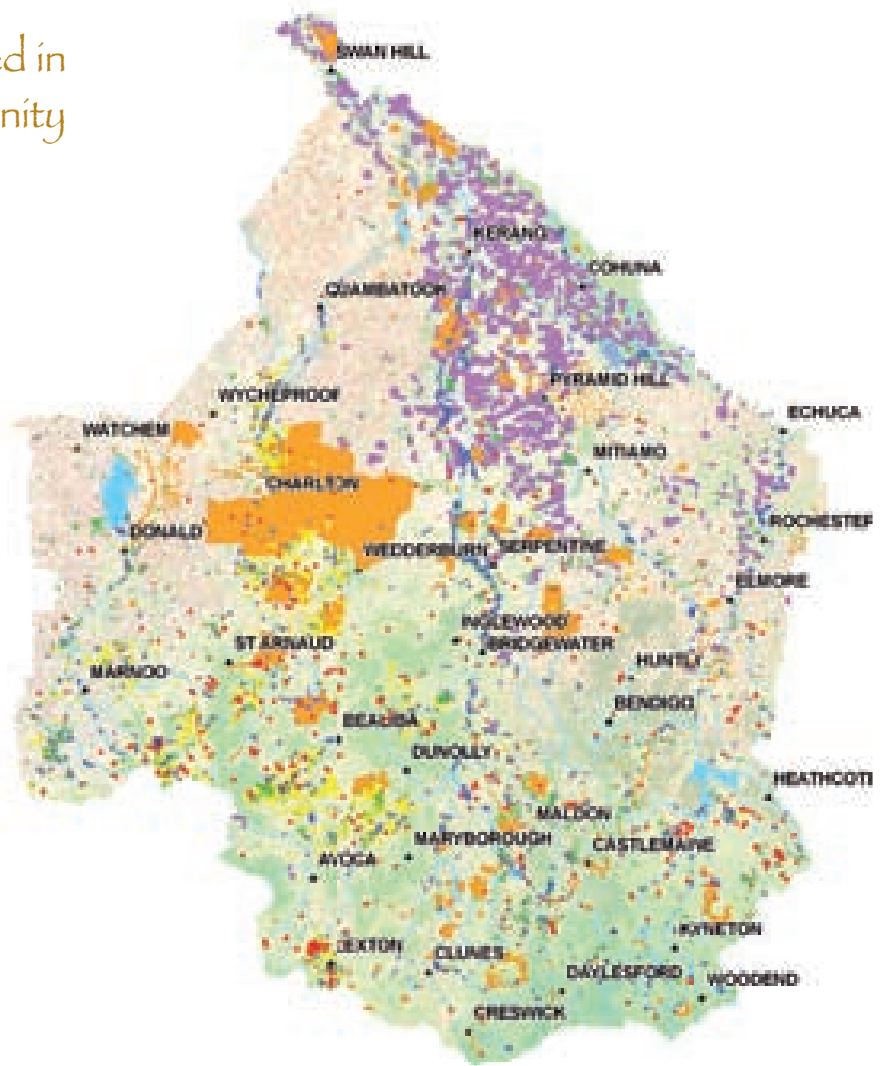
We take pride in the role we play in managing our region's natural resources – land, water, biodiversity and climate – it is what will ultimately support our efforts in sustaining our region's social and economic wellbeing for future generations.

On-ground works completed in partnership with the community and other agencies

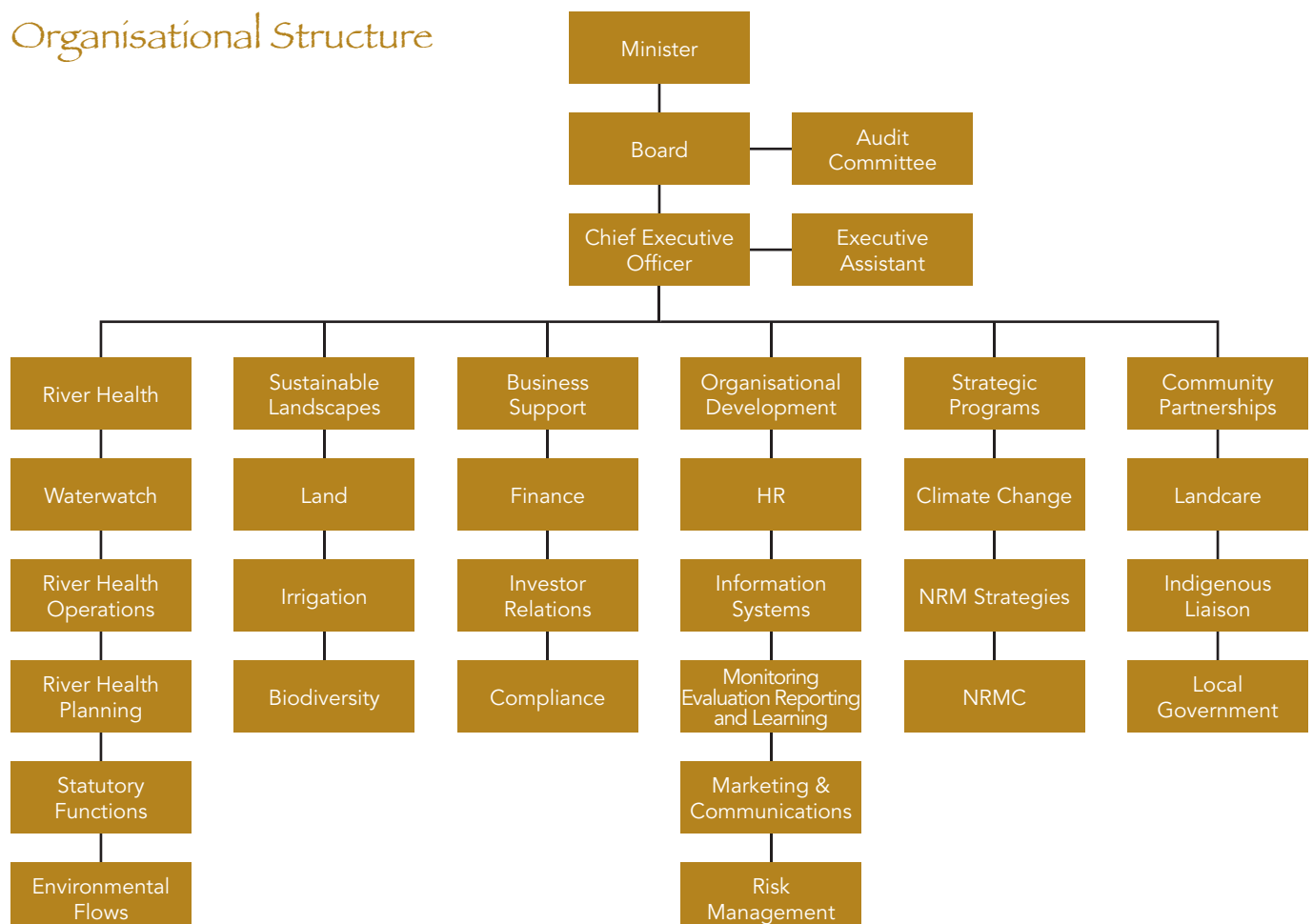
July 1997 to June 2008

Legend

- Main Towns
- Main Wetlands
- Watercourses
- Revegetate with indigenous vegetation
- Conservation Agreements
- Fenced terrestrial remnant vegetation
- Waterways and wetlands protected and enhanced
- Erosion control
- Sustainable irrigation and whole farm planning
- Salinity discharge and recharge control
- Pest plant and animal control



Organisational Structure



The year at a glance

The 2007-08 financial year was a year that brought many challenges to the North Central CMA and the communities of north central Victoria, none more so than the region dealing with the lingering effects of one of the worst droughts on record.

Yet despite this, the communities we serve continued to demonstrate their proud history of positive action in relation to working in partnership with us. We enjoyed considerable success across a number of key natural resource management projects, and the following is a snapshot of our business performance against Corporate Plan targets and on-ground outcomes for the year.

The CMA delivered a record \$25 million of environmental investment for the year and achieved its budget targets in full. This level of achievement would not have been possible without the assistance of our major agency and community partners. Together we achieved much for the environment in the North Central CMA region. The capacity to deliver this quantum of projects has been built over the past five years through investments in our people and our systems.

The planning and monthly performance monitoring resulted in 123 projects completed for the financial year which resulted in a net loss of \$4.9 million. The majority of the loss was contributed by completing carried forward on-ground projects for 2006-07 in September 2007 but also finalising current year projects within the same financial year (refer to the detailed financial information in this report for more information).

Climate change will throw up increasingly difficult challenges for environmental managers however the organisation is well positioned to continue to deliver strong results with its community and agency partners.

Corporate Funding & Expenditure Summary

State Government	\$11,764,317
Commonwealth	\$5,039,410
- NAP	\$2,732,750
- NHT	\$2,017,750
- NLP	\$288,910
Other	\$3,283,239
Total Funding	\$20,086,966
Total Expenditure	\$25,015,609
Total Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$4,928,643)

Summary of outputs achieved

The table below shows outputs achieved in the 2007-08 financial year through the delivery of Regional Catchment Investment Plan projects. These figures exclude projects relating to White Paper investment.

Type	Output	Actual
Capacity Building	Number of awareness raising events held	875
	Number of skills & training events held	501
	Number of institutional partnership agreements established	28
	Number of community group publicity material (news articles, newsletters, factsheets, pamphlets)	847
	Number of community action plans in force	65
	Number of community groups supported (Landcare, Waterwatch etc.)	1,521
	Number of community projects supported (Landcare, Non-government organisations etc.)	712
	Number of sites monitored by community groups (Landcare, Waterwatch)	527
	Number of FTEs to support community groups	17
On-ground works	Area of priority pests treated (ha)	118,202
	Area of terrestrial indigenous revegetation (ha)	561
	Area of riparian indigenous revegetation (ha)	1,045
	Area of wetlands revegetated with indigenous vegetation (ha)	35
	Area of perennial pastures established (ha)	2,468
	Area of plantation established (ha)	64
	Area of terrestrial remnant vegetation fenced (ha)	432
	Area of riparian remnant vegetation fenced (ha)	2,892
	Area of wetlands fenced (ha)	238
	Number of irrigation re-use systems installed	24
	Volume of water saved from the installation of irrigation re-use systems (ML)	1,724
	Area of land manged to land class via fencing (ha)	69
	Number of stream bank stabilisation (gully battering, rock beaching etc.) structures	15
	Number of stream bed stabilisation (rock chute etc.) structures	57
	Length of buffer strips established (km)	76
	Number of off-stream watering points established	112
Planning	Number of action plans and statements completed	65
	Number of guidelines and codes completed	34
	Number of guidelines and codes updated	20
	Number of community driven plans completed	7
	Number of irrigation (broadacre) property management plans developed	17
	Number of irrigation (IDEP) property management plans developed	17
	Number of dryland whole farm plans developed	419
	Number of conservation agreements between landholder and agency	390
	Number of legal covenants / agreements on property title	14
Resource Assessment	Number of research & development studies	6
	Number of investigations (surface water, groundwater, vegetation, salinity etc.)	118
	Number of review & evaluation studies	40
	Number of decision support tools (models, information management systems) developed	115
	Number of asset condition sites (surface water, groundwater, vegetation, wetlands etc.) monitored	4,858
	Number of asset condition monitoring reports produced	20
	Number of asset condition databases maintained	11

Delivering on our Statement of Obligations

The Corporate Plan sets direction for the business. The Ministerial expectations of CMA's are articulated in the Statement of Obligations which drive both compliance and initiative objectives in the Corporate Plan.

Our performance against the 2007-08 Corporate Plan is detailed below.

Statement of Obligation: Part 1 ~ High Standards of Governance

Objective 1: Effective and Efficient Planning

Ref. No.	Performance Area	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievements
1.1.1	Local Government planning relationships	Completion of situation analysis outlining how we can best influence statutory planning	Sept 07	Local Government Action Plan endorsed by Board in February 2008 which included options on planning issues that the Authority may be able to influence.
		Number of high profile joint projects completed	2 projects completed by June 08	A Memorandum of Understanding between four organisations including City of Greater Bendigo has been signed in relation to managing the impact of dams on water yield and river health in the upper catchments. This project is on-going.
1.1.2	Develop transition plan to larger projects	Increase in the size of projects managed (=reduction in number of smaller project)	8 key program / project areas	The adoption of the INFFER investment approach has enabled larger more targeted projects.
1.1.3	Develop, implement and review of key organisational plans including corporate and business plans	Corporate plan developed and approved by the Board	By 30th April annually	Completed 30th April 2008.
		Regional Catchment Investment Plan endorsed by the Board	Submitted to investors on time	Submitted to investors on time.
		Budget prepared and endorsed by the Board	By 30th June	Budget prepared and approved by Audit Committee 17th June 2008 and Board 4th July 2008.



Objective 2: Effective monitoring of implementation of plans and statutory obligations

1.2.1	Internal Audit	Review and renewal of internal audit contract	July 07	The internal audit contract was extended until August 08.
1.2.2	Performance Monitoring	Progress towards implementation of the Corporate plan reported to the Board via Project Performance Panel and Audit Committee	Performance Panel reports reviewed and endorsed by the Board.	11 Performance Panel reports were reviewed and endorsed by the Board.
		Delivering quarterly targets in Service Level agreement with Government	90% of Projects with an Earned value + or – 10%	As at 30 June 08 92% of Projects had an Earned value + or – 10%.
		Project performance panel processes audited	Audit completed by third party November and May	Internal Auditors completed PPP audit in November 07.
		Remuneration Committee to review CEO's performance	Completed as per employment contract	Completed as per employment contract.
		Complete board member performance review	By 30th June 2007	The Board Member performance reviews were completed in June 07 and a final report submitted to DSE in September 07.

Objective 3. Reporting

1.3.1	Completion and submission of the Annual Report the Minister	Annual report submitted to the Minister	By 30th September	30th September 2007.
1.3.2	Milestone reports to government.	Completion and submission of reports to Governments	On time 100% of time	All reporting milestone reports were submitted on time.
1.3.3	Submission of financial statement to the Auditor General's Office	Statements submitted as per Government Guidelines	Zero qualifications to statements Favourable overall audit assessment from Auditor General	Zero qualifications to statements. No material findings from the External Audit.

Statement of Obligation: Part 4 – Community Engagement

Key result area: functioning advisory committee structure

Objective 1: A community well-informed about NRM

Ref. No.	Performance Area	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievements
4.1.1	Advisory framework	Determine the optimum governance/operational model for maximising community engagement effectiveness and ensuring sustainable implementation of CMA programs.	July 07	The Landcare Support review was completed in July 07 and the Implementation Committee review was completed in October 07.
		Review of IC and Landcare support	July 07	Complete.
		Transition plan presented to the Board	July 07	Complete.
		New framework in place	August 07	The 'Natural Resource Management Committee' (NRMC) was established in November 2007.
4.1.2	Corporate plan communicated to the broader community	Corporate plan distributed to key stakeholders	Distribution in July	Complete.
4.1.3	Regional Catchment Investment Plan communicated to the broader community	Summary document produced and distributed to key stakeholders and community groups	Within one month of the investment plan being endorsed.	Complete.
4.1.4	Community engagement policy	Community engagement policy reviewed by the Board	December	The Board endorsed the community engagement policy in May 08.
4.1.5	Awareness of CMA	Awareness level of CMA maintained	70% of total community aware of the CMA and its functions	From the Client and Community satisfaction survey, 15% of total community are aware of the CMA and its functions. In response to the results the Authority commenced a process to examine its branding.

Objective 2: Appropriate consultation

4.2.1	Marketing strategy	Board endorsement of Marketing Strategy		The Board endorsed the marketing strategy in April 08.
		Customer satisfaction survey completed	Survey completed and report submitted to the Board July 08	The Client and Community satisfaction survey was completed in May 08.

4.2.3	Community Engagement Policy	Review of Community Engagement policy	By 30th September annually	The Board endorsed the reviewed community engagement policy in May 08.
		Level of community satisfaction with CMA interaction or contact as measured through client feedback surveys	Minimum satisfaction level of average or above	Client feedback survey process has not been completed.
		Level of awareness of local environmental issues as measured through community survey.	5% improvement on previous years results	There was a 3% improvement on previous years results.
		Increase in profile of CMA	5% improvement on previous years results	There was a 2% improvement on previous years results.

Objective 3: Effective partnerships with the community

4.3.1	Performing partnerships with community groups	Number of joint projects with community groups including Landcare.	Develop appropriate benchmark and target by September	A benchmark and target of 100 projects was set in September 07 and achieved.
4.3.2	Partnership Policy review	Effectiveness and compliance with policy	December 07	The partnership policy review was completed in March 08.
4.3.3	Local Government	15 Local Governments briefed on activities of the CMA	Meet with all CEOs and Mayors	Engagement with CEOs and Mayors will be focussed around environmental assets and area of mutual interest. All Local Governments have been involved in the RCIP process through local forums.
		Number of projects specifically with Local Government	10% increase on 2004/2005 number of projects	There was no increase on 2004/2005 number of projects but project outcomes are improving such as the dams MoU with City of Greater Bendigo and other agencies.
		High Profile Planning project with Local Government	Special Area Plan Complete by 2007 .	Produced Special Area Plan technical supporting documents in June 08. A Memorandum of Understanding with City of Greater Bendigo and other agencies has been finalised in relation to the impact of dams on water yield and river health.

Statement of Obligation:

Part 5 – Integrated Regional Planning and Coordination

Primary Objective: Delivery of the Regional Catchment Strategy

Ref. No.	Performance Area	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievements
5.1.1	Actively manage the delivery of the regional catchment strategy	Management Action Targets and Catchment Condition Targets	+/- 10% of Targets set in the Regional Catchment Strategy	A Monitoring Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework which will inform RCS achievements has been developed. The review of the RCS will be completed by June 09 which will set targets.
5.1.2	Coordinate the implementation of the RCS	Contracts in place with all providers	Operational by the end of Sept 07	The review of the RCS will be completed by June 09 as directed by DSE.
5.1.3	Coordinate the review of the RCS	Review to incorporate: Meaningful targets Climate Change Soil Health Environmental Reserve manager	Dec 07	The review of the RCS will be completed by June 09 as directed by DSE.
5.1.4	Catchment Condition Report	Review of Catchment Condition Report to more clearly articulate our contribution to landscape targets and the assumptions upon which they are based.	Feb 08	Results logic for 6 key asset projects was completed in February 08.
		Trial program logic for biodiversity projects	Feb 08	Project logic was trialled for 6 key asset projects in February 08.
5.1.5	Soil Health	Development of framework for the management soil health	As part of review of RCS	A framework was developed in December 07. INFFER classifies soil as a 'dispersed asset' and as such further work on the viability of potential interventions is required.
5.1.6	Climate Change	Development of framework for CMAs contribution to Climate Change mitigation	Sept 07	A framework was developed in December 07 which incorporated a number of actions which were endorsed. Climate change considerations are now part of project planning processes.

5.1.7	Private Investment	Review of Prospectus for private investment in Natural Resource Management Programs	Oct 07	Interactions with non-traditional investors and scoping of potential projects has commenced. The final form of the Emissions Trading Scheme will influence this area significantly.
		Development of framework for investment in delivery of Carbon Credits to ensure multiple environmental Outcomes	Oct 07	The Authority reviewed the options for Catchment Management Authorities in the carbon market in July 07. This work is on-going and the final form of the Emissions Trading Scheme will be a key driver in this area. The Federal Government has released a green paper on emissions trading.

Statement of Obligation: Part 6 - Caretaker of River Health

6.1.1	Development and implementation of on-ground river restoration works programs	% of projects/studies etc delivered to time, quality and cost parameters	90% of Projects with an Earned value + or – 10%	80% of Projects (20 out of 25) had an Earned value + or – 10%.
6.1.2	Authorisation of works on waterways permits	Breaches of statutory requirements	Nil	Nil
		No of days to process permits	Not more than 30 working days	All 88 waterway permits were processed within statutory timeframes.
	Referral Authority for any works on or in relation to a dam.	No of days to process referrals	Not more than 30 working days	All 50 planning referrals were processed within statutory timeframes.
6.1.3	Management of the Environmental Water reserve	Reduction in the number of fish deaths Increase in water quality	90% of Projects with an Earned value + or – 10%	75% of Projects (3 out of 4) had an Earned value + or – 10%.
	Management of environmental entitlement (under delegation by Minister for Environment or through Bulk entitlement process)	Development of environment operating strategies and annual watering plans	All operational plans reviewed annually	Loddon plan reviewed according to Government guidelines.
6.1.4	Provide advice about flooding and controls on scheme amendments, planning and building approvals to local councils in the capacity as a referral authority.	No. of days to process a referral	Not more than 30 working days	All 393 flood level advice and 484 planning referrals were processed within statutory timeframes.
	Provide technical advice to councils and the community on flooding.	No. of days to process floodplain inquiries	Not more than 30 working days	All 1,241 enquiries and inspections were processed within statutory timeframes.

Statement of Obligation: Part 7 – Innovation and Knowledge Sharing

Objective 1: Innovation

Ref. No.	Performance Area	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievements
7.1.1	North Central Research and Development strategy	Strategy developed incorporating identification of information gaps, key providers, strategic partnerships.	By Dec 07	A Knowledge strategy was developed in April 08 which incorporated the Research and Development strategy.
7.1.2	Balanced programs across the innovation cycle	Guiding policy developed for innovation	Dec 07	A Knowledge strategy was developed in April 08 which incorporated Innovation.
		Percentage of projects considered conceptual	10%	30%
		Percentage of Projects considered mature	80%	50%
		Percentage projects requiring review	10%	20%

Objective 2: Knowledge

7.2.1	Technology development	Technology development projects resulting in a return on investment	100%	Knowledge management was improved with the successful completion of Information Technology projects.
7.2.2	Information Access	Information management strategy	Initiatives completed on time and on budget	A Knowledge strategy was developed in April 08 that highlighted initiatives to be completed. The Authority is currently working through the initiatives.
		Natural resource management information service provided by the CMA to the broader community	Service operational by December 07	The Authority implemented the new website and are currently finalising the development of iMAP which is an interactive tool for the community to gain information regarding NRM investment in the region.
7.2.3	Knowledge brokering	Establishment of a knowledge brokering framework that clearly links with VCMC Knowledge Project	Nov 07	A Knowledge strategy was developed in April 08 that incorporated a knowledge brokering framework.

Statement of Obligation: Part 8 – Compliance

8.1.1	Financial Management	Compliance with Financial Management Compliance Framework	100%	99% compliant. The Business Continuity Plan is Partially Compliant.
8.1.2	Risk Management	Implementation of Risk Management Strategy	100% of risk Treatment Plans developed and implemented	100% of high and medium risk treatment plans have been developed and implemented. 100% of low risk treatment plans have been developed. All risks are due for review in October 08.

8.1.3	OH&S	Identification and management of OH&S risks	Risk identified, action taken and reported within 1 week Nil time lost to OH&S	The OH&S Committee identifies and actions risks within 1 week. There were nil time lost to OH&S incidents.
8.1.4	Establish and implement policies and procedures to comply with risk and financial management	Compliance to risk management plan Review of governance policies and practices	5% variation By 30th June annually	There was 100% compliance to the risk management plan. All governance policies were reviewed annually.

Key result area: Part 9 – Organisational Development

Objective 1: Board Professional Development

9.1.1	Development of options available and promoted to all Board members	Training calendar developed with high attendance rates	95% of Board members to have attended at least 2 training seminars.	90% of Board members attended at least 2 training seminars.
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Objective 2: Attracting high Quality staff

9.2.1	Attracting high quality staff	Participation in graduate placement programs Remuneration packages in the top 5%	0% staff lost through head hunting or dissatisfaction with benefits/recognition/opportunities	0% staff were lost through head hunting or dissatisfaction with benefits/ recognition/ opportunities.
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Objective 3: Career Development

9.3.1	Development of options available and promoted to all, implementation committees members and staff	Training calendar developed with high attendance rates	95% of all CMA members to have attended at least 2 training seminars.	93% of all CMA members attended at least 2 training seminars.
9.3.2	Clear roles, accountabilities and banding in place	Inductions and performance reviews conducted on time	85% of performance reviews completed on time & 40% completed before the anniversary date.	100% of performance reviews completed on time in October 07 to align to the new EBA.

Objective 4 Capability

9.4.1	Timely Recruitment	Vacancies filled within 3 months (following review of organisational need)	100% of the time	All vacancies were filled within 3 months where organisational need was resolved.
9.4.2	An identified group of ready and capable potential future leaders	A plan in place to ensure that NCCMA are identifying and developing people into key roles	Plan/policy developed by Feb 07	The new Human Resources Manager will develop and implement this plan/policy next financial year.

Objective 5: Culture

9.5.1	Values and Behaviours are central to our business and built into performance reviews	Values and Behaviours review & integration into new performance review process	Completed by Nov 07	The values and behaviour review was completed in June 08 and will be incorporated into the performance review process in October 08.
9.5.2	Ecological footprint	Reduction in organisational ecological footprint	Targets to be endorsed by Board by December	The Authority engaged a consultant to determine the organisational ecological footprint in February 08. The report set targets for the Authority to achieve.



Reflecting on the past year

The following case studies
provide an insight into
some of the work that was
achieved this year



Drought Employment Program

The challenge

The first hurdle was achieved with our successful funding tender to the Victorian Government for \$2.4 million as part of its drought relief efforts, which was used to create the Drought Employment Program (DEP). The next was to make it all happen before the end of June 2008 – a lot to do in six months!

The purpose of the DEP was to employ people in crews of two to five people, to provide human resources and on-ground assistance to existing environmental projects with material resources available. In this way, projects that were already planned and in place would be actioned and benefit communities throughout the region.

Setting up the Program

Landholders, farm employees and others adversely affected by the drought were employed to create 20 crews on a flexible basis, allowing participants to work in a way that suited them best. Many worked full time for the length of the DEP, whilst others were engaged on a part time or casual basis to fit in with life on the land and seasonal commitments.

Crews worked in partnership with various organisations from across the region including Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Goulburn-Murray Water, Northern Grampians, Loddon and Buloke Shires, Parks Victoria, local Landcare and environmental groups and other community organisations.

Full induction and training was provided to each crew member including OH&S education, chemical handling certification, machinery and tools training, full personal protective equipment and team vehicles. And whilst essential to do the job, the training would also help each member down the track.

Many hands make a difference

Each DEP partner took the opportunity to get essential activities done by the DEP crews. The programs were varied, but whether it was weed control, fencing to protect habitat or planting trees, all the activities focused on providing benefit to local communities and their environments.

Impressive results were achieved throughout the region. Some of the outcomes included over:

- 3,017 Ha of weed control on 79 sites including blackberry, gorse, paterson's curse, willow, wheel cactus and others
- 3,065 Ha of fox and rabbit control on four sites
- 4 Ha of buffer strips established
- 394 Ha of terrestrial and riparian zones revegetated with indigenous vegetation including 35 Km of fencing and covering 32 Km of river
- 1,065 Ha of remnant vegetation fenced in terrestrial and riparian zones including 144 Km of fencing and covering 31 Km of river
- 17 Ha of engineering works and fencing to treat for soil erosion at two sites



- 213 water wheels rehabilitated
- 25 bird boxes installed
- 1080 bait endorsement and Farm Chemical User Permit courses with 300 landholders attending
- plus many other activities including stock containment areas, rubbish collection and signage works.

Win-win outcome

Feedback following the finalisation of the DEP project reflected its great success from all points of view. Beyond the expansive volume of work completed, all DEP partners were ecstatic with the outcomes achieved by the program.

All the works undertaken by the DEP crews were aimed at providing benefit to community members and the environment they live in.

Local communities have responded positively to the DEP's efforts to improve the local landscape. Economic benefits resulted through regional employment and local equipment purchases.

We hope that there will be an opportunity to continue the DEP in future years and build upon the important work that has been completed to date. It has been an exercise in community spirit and the results speak clearly for themselves in terms of output to the environment.



Water Wheel Rehabilitation



"With the drought we have had staff shortages, but work to ensure our infrastructure is sound and our customers are well looked after is still essential.

The DEP crews were a great on-ground resource to complete essential irrigation works. Around 213 Dethridge Meter Emplacements were inspected and rehabilitated by the crews. They also sprayed weeds, repaired and constructed fences, and assisted with many other activities.

Their work was invaluable to GMW, and allowed us to get things done that we would otherwise not had people on the ground to achieve."

Dale McGraw, Goulburn Murray Water

Wheel Cactus Control



"Our local DEP crew had a big job to clear wheel cactus from Mount Buckrabanyule – a mammoth task.

Controlling wheel cactus is quite difficult and labour intensive. They spread easily from a fallen leaf, so have to be killed from the top down by individually spearing all the top leaves.

Two years ago a comprehensive weed strategy was developed by the Shire to tackle the problem at a community level. Our DEP crew worked with local Landcare and Green Corp groups to tackle Mount Buckrabanyule, one of the last large infestations in the area.

The difference is remarkable and really helps us see that the effort was worthwhile. It's made a big difference and is a great example of what can be achieved when the whole community is involved."

Trevor Barker, Landcare Coordinator, Loddon Shire

Elm Sucker Control



"The Elm Leaf Beetle can devastate elm trees. Those lining the main street of Maldon had produced suckers, providing additional habitat for the beetle. We needed to clean them up, and the extra hands provided by the DEP really helped get the job done.

A couple of the crews helped cut the suckers back to ground level to stop their spread. Work like this had not been done for quite a few years, and will now only need a tidy up every couple of years to control the suckers.

The hand we received from the DEP guys helped us protect the elm trees before it became a big problem. It's also improved the streetscape and opened up an area of historical interest, which will now be more accessible to the local community."

Noel Muller, Parks Victoria

Fox Control



"A fox infestation problem was raised by a farmer at his local Landcare meeting. He coordinated his neighbours and DEP resources were provided to support their need.

The local DEP crew set up 1080 fox baiting in a coordinated effort of around eight neighbouring farmers south west of Wycheproof. 65 stations were set and covered over 3,000 Ha.

Results were immediate with the farmers surprised with how big their fox problem was, given the large number of baits being taken. They estimated their lambing rates were up by 10-15% on the previous year, with one saying he hadn't lost any.

With the DEP crew able to coordinate the baits, it freed up the farmers to get on with what was a very busy time of year."

Kevin Spence, Landcare Coordinator, Northern Grampians & Buloke Shires

Weed & Pest Control



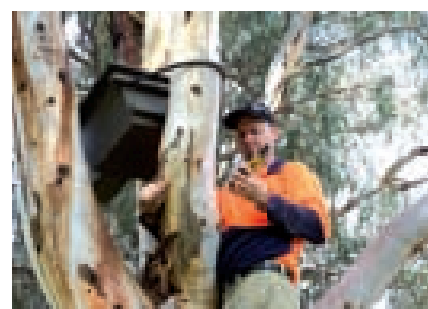
"We were lucky enough to have four DEP crews assist us around Castlemaine, Kyneton, Maldon and Mt Alexander. They helped with critical habitat works. We wouldn't have been able to achieve our on ground targets for the year without them.

The guys worked on weed control, containment fencing, rabbit and fox control programs, and revegetation activities. In one major revegetation program they planted 5,000 seedlings.

We were able to cross a few things off our 'wish list' – things that needed to be done, but we were not able to with our current staffing levels. They worked to a detailed plan, to ensure the activities they completed achieved the best ongoing outcomes for the local community."

Brendan Smith, Parks Victoria

Installation of Bird Boxes



"In a joint effort with local volunteers, one of the DEP crews installed 25 bird boxes in the Gunbower Forest.

Various sized bird boxes were built by the local Men in Sheds group, volunteering their time and using materials provided by the Living Murray Program. The DEP crew proved an essential resource, installing the boxes at key sites along Gunbower Creek and around Cohuna, Koondrook and Gunbower townships.

The boxes are an important nesting habitat for birds, especially in areas where there are younger trees with fewer natural hollows. They provide protection to native birds and encourage population growth.

It was ideal that we could link DEP resources with community needs to achieve a great outcome."

Melanie Tranter, Gunbower Forest Project Manger, North Central CMA

Roadside Management Plans

There are 44,500 Km of roadsides within the North Central CMA area – that equates to 3% of the region.

Our roadsides across north central Victoria are one of our greatest natural resources, and in many places, our finest examples of vegetation that previously existed across the landscape.

It's important we understand the biodiversity values offered by these corridors and manage them to protect and enhance the vegetation they contain.

For the past three years the North Central CMA has conducted a Roadside Conservation Project. It involved the assessing and mapping of almost all roadsides' vegetation and habitat values throughout the region – a mammoth task.

The ultimate goal

The ultimate goal of the project was to improve the condition and extent of native vegetation on roadsides by developing and implementing Roadside Management Plans (RMPs) and Roadside Conservation Mapping for all Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the north central region.

The main aims were to:

- Develop and implement a consistent and reliable assessment method across the region
- Develop Roadside Conservation Value mapping that incorporates the assessment data and principles of the Native Vegetation Framework
- Develop a RMP template and implement this within all local government areas across the region
- Deliver specialist training for Local Government roadside managers and workers
- Develop and distribute information and education materials through the media and workshops.

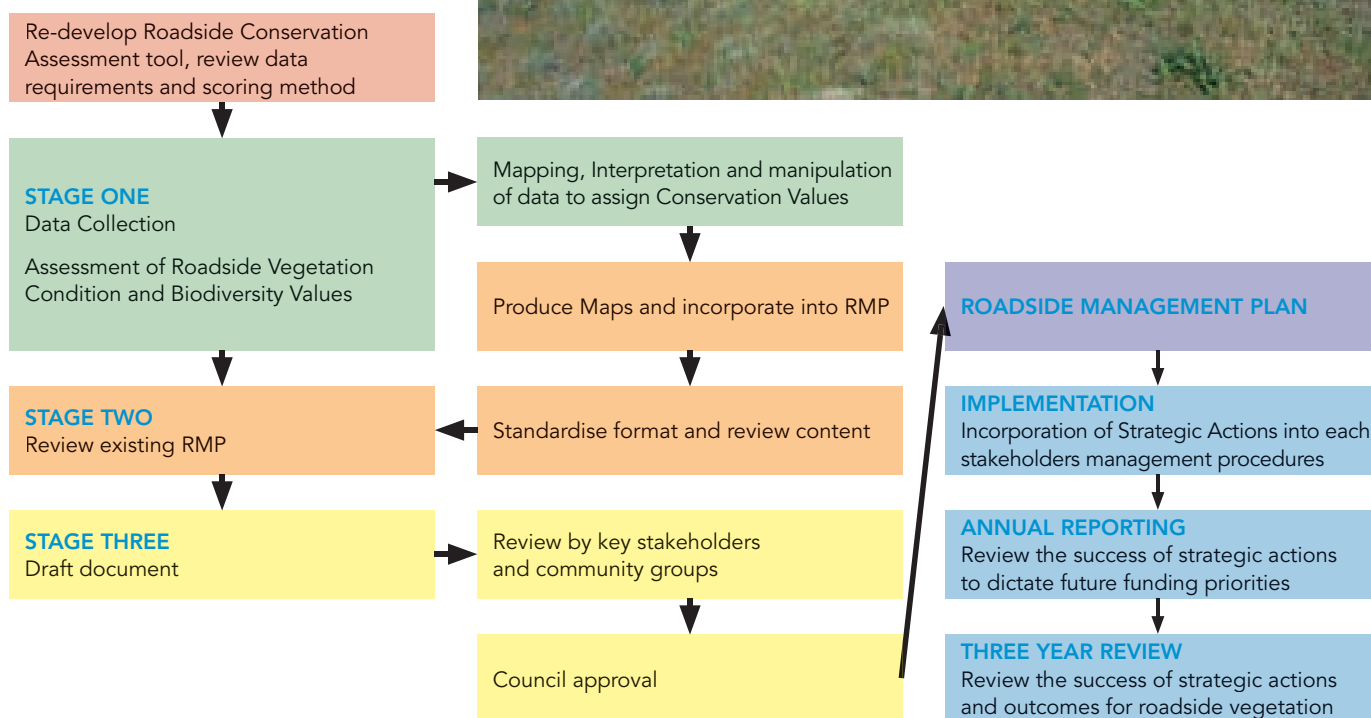


Roadside Management Plans

The project incorporated a review of existing RMPs in the region for effectiveness and degree of implementation with the aim to:

- Develop a standard for RMPs to ensure a consistent level of content and detail, including consistent format mapping to enable region-wide consolidation
- Revise all regional LGA RMPs to the new standard.

The RMP reviews were conducted in three main stages.



Roadside Conservation Values

Almost all shire-managed roadsides throughout the region were assessed and mapped. The information collected formed the basis for determining new evaluation methods for Roadside Conservation Values.

To provide a standard across the region a new Roadside Conservation Assessment tool was established. It reviewed existing tools and methods of data capture for roadside assessment and incorporated the best aspects of these into a new database application.

A Roadside Conservation Value map was created to display the outcomes of combining all the scores and significances assessed. Interactive layers of the map include condition scores, canopy continuity, habitat values, adjoining vegetation and other assessment data.



Training and development

As part of developing capacity and knowledge in LGAs in relation to roadside vegetation management, training in Environmental Care and Roadside Best Practice Management was provided to over 200 engineers, managers, planners and roadside workers of the LGAs.



A coordinated approach for the community



The road network provides valuable habitat and linkages for native plants and animals. Maintaining these habitat values, such as large old trees, fallen timber on the ground, a mixed understorey of shrubs and grasses, can help secure the future of our native plants and animals.

To ensure a consistent approach to roadside management one of the original project objectives was the standardisation of RMPs. With assistance from the North Central CMA each shire developed their own RMP in consultation with the community and relevant stakeholders.

The interactive Roadside Conservation Value map is also publicly available, via the North Central CMA website, allowing engaged community members such as Landcare groups, farmers and other interested people to access the assessment information.

Ideally, this will ensure that any conservation activities on land abutting our region's roadsides, regardless of who is undertaking them, can be complimentary to preserving and enhancing the health of the important natural resources found beside our roads.

The Roadside Mapping Project has seen a collaborative approach towards understanding and protecting one of our most important, but largely overlooked, natural resources. The North Central CMA and the Local Government Agencies now have a greater understanding of the roadside vegetation values within our region and how to protect these.

Victoria's Native Vegetation Framework

Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for action (the Framework) is the Victorian Government's strategy to protect, enhance and revegetate Victoria's native vegetation.

Its main goal is to achieve a reversal, across the entire landscape of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation, leading to a net gain.

The framework has four guiding principles:

- Retention and management of remnant native vegetation to conserve biodiversity
- The maintenance of catchment processes to conserve native vegetation and habitat
- Equitable sharing of costs according to benefits gained by the landholder, community and region
- A landscape approach to planning native vegetation management is required and with priorities based on bioregions within CMA regions.

Courtesy of Department of Sustainability & Environment– www.dse.vic.gov.au

Road networks provide important biodiversity links

You may not have thought about it, but the vegetation found on the sides of our roads provide important links between areas of bushland that would otherwise be separated by cleared farm land or urban developments. They are essential wildlife corridors and in many places preserve native plant species representative of the original landscape prior to European settlement.

What makes them so important is their range of coverage, forming a web of diverse vegetation passages connecting one area of the environment to another. This network has been identified as important in terms of climate change, helping with the movement of species into different locations as climatic conditions alter.

Shires included in the project

Central Goldfields Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, Gannawarra Shire, Hepburn Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Mount Alexander Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, Shire of Campaspe, Buloke Shire, Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Roadside conservation management aims

To preserve...

- Links in the landscape
- Large old trees
- Habitat for wildlife and threatened species
- Buffer planting
- Native understorey
- Roadside signs
- Fallen timber and logs.

To manage...

- Fire control
- Road maintenance.

To control...

- Ripping and ploughing
- Grazing of livestock
- Garden waste and weeds
- Littering
- Tree removal
- Pest animals.



Environmental Flows in a Time of Drought

Facing the challenges of drought

As caretaker of river health in north central Victoria, the North Central CMA's water management objective during dry times is to ensure the ongoing protection of the critical environmental values in our rivers and wetlands. Our highest priority is to ensure that the plants and animals that live in our rivers and wetlands survive through these ongoing drought conditions and can flourish into the future.

During such extreme and dry conditions we do not aim "to provide a flow regime that increases the long-term health of the river, but to support the critical values of the river in the short term, providing the opportunity for the river environment to recover into the future."

Specific river and wetland management priorities during drought in the north central region are to:

1. Avoid loss of species/communities (e.g. maintaining River Blackfish in Tullaroop Creek)

2. Maintain key aquatic refuges (e.g. Gunbower Island wetlands and Little Lake Boort for waterbirds)
3. Avoid catastrophic events (e.g. fish kills and algal blooms).

As the severity of the drought reduces and there is more water in the landscape the approach to management changes. We manage our river and wetland areas to:

1. Encourage recolonisation by water-dependent plants and animals
2. Provide sufficient water flows to promote breeding and recovery
3. Provide all aspects of the flow regime to improve the whole system.

With detailed knowledge and observation of the health of our rivers and wetlands during dry times so critical in managing drought impacts, observations from the local community become an invaluable tool to assist targeted and timely management of environmental flows.

As delegated Environmental Water Reserve Manager for the region, the North Central CMA used this approach and local community knowledge to deliver a number of thoroughly-planned and closely-managed environmental watering actions during the year, with significant impact.

The Campaspe River: Smart and efficient use of consumptive water to deliver environmental benefits

In conjunction with Goulburn-Murray Water, water that was delivered to irrigators on the Murray system was released down the lower Campaspe River to help provide a freshening environmental flow. This critical flow maintains water quality conditions to support Murray Cod populations in the River over a long, dry summer. This Inter-Valley Transfer is smart use of limited water; it delivers an environmental benefit to the Campaspe River while en-route to other water users downstream.

Little Lake Boort: Big watering boost for drought refuge

Maintaining the level and quality of water in Little Lake Boort over summer in 2007-08 was a priority for the North Central CMA. Two small deliveries of water provided important drought refuge in an otherwise dry landscape, habitat for a range of threatened plants and animals and also helped prevent a fish death in the Lake.

The initial fill and later top up exposed and re-wet mud flats around the

One person can make a difference

Our job is made significantly easier and more satisfying and enjoyable by the enormous contribution made by the community.

One such contributor is Waterwatch monitor Anne Hughes, who has kept a close eye on Middle Creek near St Arnaud for the past four years. She is also a founding member and heavily involved in the Carapooee Landcare Group.

After a downpour last summer Anne came across a near pristine stretch along a tributary of Middle Creek where there was plenty of streamside vegetation and good quality water.

However, just 100 metres downstream the situation was totally different, with infestations of spiny rush and rabbits and

foxes abounding. The further downstream she went, the greater the increase in the salinity level. Around 2.5 Km from the pristine water the EC reading was up to 61,000 EC (seawater is about 50,000 EC).

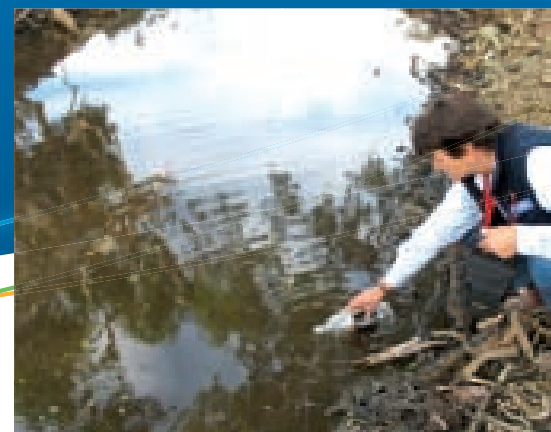
Anne was jolted to act. With help from North Central CMA's Waterwatch program and Northern Grampians & Buloke Shires Landcare, she set out to improve the condition of the creek. A season by season action plan for the Reclaim Our Creeks project has been developed to focus efforts.

Assisted by one of the Drought Employment Program work crews from St Arnaud, spiny rush was sprayed last autumn and previously fenced-off sites targeted for immediate vegetation. Other areas have been identified for future action.

These types of works are not simple, especially when salinity is involved. It requires ongoing monitoring, weed control and other inputs to ensure desired outcomes are achieved. It will take several years for the water quality benefits of Anne's initiative to be realised.

Anne and her fellow Landcarers live at the head of the Middle Creek and believe they have a duty of care to those living downstream to fix the current problems. They have taken it upon themselves to improve the creek's condition.

Reclaiming our creeks is imperative if we want our land in good shape.



Lake and provided critical habitat for numerous wading water birds. Grebes, carpet pythons, grey-crowned babbler, pelicans, turtles and water rats have been sighted at the lake in the 2007-08 season. We have also observed Swans feeding on the lake bed: this is a great indicator of the health of the lake and the benefits of this watering event.

Tullaroop Creek: securing water to protect a creek during drought

The low levels in Tullaroop Reservoir, in central Victoria near Maryborough are of concern to all users who rely on this water source; people in towns, rural landholders and the Tullaroop Creek downstream. In 2008, the North Central CMA, Goulburn-Murray Water and Central Highlands Water worked together to develop a solution that provides more water to priority water users (e.g. primary urban water and domestic and stock supplies) while protecting the critical values of the creek at the same time.

Tullaroop Creek supports one of the few remaining populations of regionally significant River Blackfish in the North Central region. A comprehensive risk assessment reviewed the risks of reduced flows in Tullaroop Creek to the survival of its River Blackfish. This assessment

concluded that while lower flows in the Creek would place the River Blackfish population at greater risk, there were options available which will maximise the chances of Blackfish survival through the drought until conditions improve. This formed the basis for a temporary, modified water sharing plan for Tullaroop's water resources that provides more water for critical human use.

Managing the small amount of water available specifically for the creek to provide for the River Blackfish basic requirements of permanent water to provide habitat and acceptable water quality is critical to their protection. The North Central CMA is observing the creek closely and working in partnership with water users to ensure the best and most efficient use of the water available during drought.

The Coliban River: Important adaptive management

During 2007-08 passing flows to the Coliban River were ceased to save water for consumptive use and a reserve of water was established to manage risks to the river's environmental values.

The North Central CMA and Coliban Water obtained independent scientific

advice to help develop a plan to protect the Coliban River's environment and fish habitat when water quality deteriorates. The release of flows is part of the river protection plan and showed real improvements to the environment.

Producing important research

Whilst the work in looking after our rivers during these dry times has been challenging, we have learnt a lot. The North Central CMA shared our knowledge with others at the Riversymposium, held in Brisbane in September 2007. We presented a paper, Adaptively Managing Rivers for Resilience and Recovery during Drought, detailing our approach to the management of rivers and wetlands during drought conditions to enable survival and recovery during wetter times. This work and research is informing the management of other river systems in Australia facing the challenges of the same dry times.



Gunbower Forest

Gunbower Forest is a large River Red Gum forest situated on the River Murray floodplain in Northern Victoria between Torrumbarry and Koondrook. Covering 19,450 Ha, it is bounded by the River Murray to the north and Gunbower Creek to the south and forms part of the Living Murray Gunbower-Koondrook-Perricoota Icon Site.

The unique values of Gunbower Forest relate to the diversity of habitat areas contained within the forest. In particular, it is set aside from other icon sites by the diversity and rarity of wetland habitats it contains. The wetlands which have retained some resemblance of a natural wetting and drying cycle are so intact they provide an ecological reference for other wetlands on the River Murray floodplain.

The forest area surrounding these wetlands forms part of the second largest River Red Gum forest in Australia and contains a number of vulnerable and endangered ecological vegetation classes. It supports a host of ecological processes fundamental in supporting waterbird breeding at the site, including migratory birds listed under international treaties with Japan and China.

Flooding Enhancement of Gunbower Forest project

The floodplain ecosystem of Gunbower Forest relies on flooding to maintain its communities in a healthy condition. The reduction in flooding resulting from regulation of the River Murray poses a key threat to the health of the forest.

To address this threat, water management options are being investigated to identify ways to deliver environmental water to increase the frequency and extend the duration of flooding across the forest.

The water management options are assessed against their ability to achieve the First Step Living Murray ecological objectives set for the site, being:

- 80% of permanent and semi-permanent wetlands in healthy condition
- 30% of River Red Gum (RRG) forest in healthy condition
- Successful breeding of thousands of colonial waterbirds at least three years in ten

- Healthy populations of resident native fish in wetlands.

Detailed hydraulic models that simulate forest flooding scenarios support the assessment. Model outputs show how water will move across the Forest, using different regulating structures and volumes of water.

Four regulators to enable the efficient delivery of environmental water to the wetland areas have already been constructed and additional water management options will proceed to construction with funding provided by the Living Murray initiative.

The ability of the water management options to satisfy the First Step Living Murray ecological objectives has resulted in the Gunbower Forest works package being recognised as the priority icon site for investment. This arose from the Murray Darling Basin Commission's (MDBC) 2008 review of the cost:benefit analysis of the proposed works packages across the Living Murray program.

Several water management options are at various stages of development from investigation to design and construction. Lower risk options that water the wetland areas are being fast tracked



to implementation. Other approaches designed to deliver large volumes of water to create widespread flooding of red gums are higher risk and are still at the development stage.

Water deliveries

Gunbower Forest received 7,700 ML of environmental water in autumn 2008 which flooded approximately 1,000 Ha of wetlands and River Red Gum forest.

(images of Little Reedy Lagoon pre and post flooding, as supplied by Heidi)

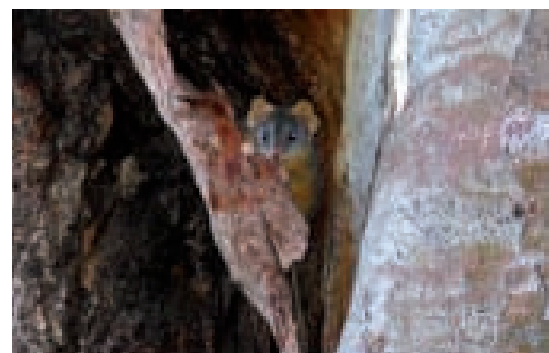
Watering of this environmental asset was considered important as it would:

- Provide significant and unique habitat in the northern part of Victoria
- Extend resilience of rare wetland types
- Maintain Ramsar status of the site.

Monitoring the condition of the floodplain flora and fauna communities and their response to environmental water allows the project to demonstrate ecological accountability. The monitoring includes vegetation, fish, frog and bird surveys.

Since the delivery of water, the following ecological outcomes have been recorded:

- Five species of native fish have been recorded in the wetlands so far, including Australian Smelt, Carp Gudgeon, Unspecked Hardyhead, Crimson-spotted Rainbowfish and Flat-headed Gudgeon. European Carp have also been recorded
- Waterbirds have commenced returning to the area including species such as Swamp Harrier, Mountain Shell Duck, Hoary-headed Grebes and numerous common duck species. This response is expected to increase in spring
- Vegetation and wetland surveys were conducted in autumn, prior to watering and will be repeated in spring this year when a greater response is expected. Aquatic plants are already responding, including Nardoo and Common Water milfoil
- Broad-Shellled tortoise (a threatened species) has bred since watering commenced.
- Murray Darling Freshwater Research surveying macro invertebrates and their role in floodplain ecosystems
- Arthur Rylah Research Institute to assess the movement of native fish between waterways and floodplains.



Rare find

During this year's autumn flora survey conducted by Australian Ecosystems Pty Ltd, the Spotted Grass Blue Butterfly (*Zizeeria karsandra*) was recorded. This species has not been recorded in Victoria for 15 years (Fabian Douglas, Riverine Entomologist pers. comm). The butterfly feeds on only one species of wetland plant, the Hairy Carpet-weed (*Glinus lotoides*), which grows around the edge of wetlands.

Research opportunities

The team has used the watering event to encourage research opportunities in the Forest. Two key studies underway include research projects with:

Community engagement

Community involvement and engagement is key to the success of the Flooding Enhancement of Gunbower Forest project. Information about the project has been made available through local meetings, newspaper and radio.

The Gunbower Forest – Flooding for Life DVD was launched in 2007, and over 1000 copies have been distributed so far. The DVD celebrates the Forest and community members who use it. It also explains the use of environmental water and its importance to protect waterbirds, wetlands and the iconic river red gums in the Forest.

The team is recognised in the local community as they participate in and support local events. In November 2007 the team was invited to launch the official opening of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games fish relocated to Gunbower Creek.

The profile of the project has been raised within the broader community with articles in national newspapers and television coverage.

The Living Murray initiative

Gunbower Forest was identified as a Living Murray icon site in 2003 as part of the Gunbower-Koondrook-Perricoota floodplain system.

The Living Murray program was established in 2002 in response to evidence showing declining health of the system and is Australia's most significant river restoration program. It is a partnership between Australian, NSW, Victorian, South Australian and ACT governments and aims to achieve a healthy working Murray River system for the benefit of all Australians.

The system is currently experiencing its lowest in-flows to the Murray on record and periods of drought need to be considered in delivering the program. Funding is targeted toward the provision of infrastructure to deliver water to the sites and monitoring to determine ecological responses to environmental water deliveries.

As key ecological assets of the Murray River, Icon Sites are given high priority for conservation and rehabilitation through improved site water management.

More information can be found at www.thelivingmurray.mdbc.gov.au



Thirsty Eagle Tree gets a drink

Gunbower Forest's iconic Eagle Tree is around 50 meters high and estimated to be over 1,000 years old. However, due to extremely dry conditions and old age, its health was declining.

In a true example of what can be achieved with cooperation of community members and groups, the Eagle Tree received a much needed drink in early 2008.

Although watering a single tree is a little outside the normal parameters of managing the Gunbower Forest, the significance of the Eagle Tree spurred the community into action.

A local landholder started the process by contacting the North Central CMA wishing to donate water for the Tree. From there the project snowballed:

- Local irrigation and soil services businesses assisted the team to work out the best way to water the tree
- Volunteers from the Kerang State Emergency Service (SES) unit sand bagged an area around the tree to deliver the water into, using sand donated by a local resident

- Murray Goulburn Milk Cooperative offered to deliver the water to the tree free of charge
- Local groups offered financial assistance to help with the running costs of the project
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Cohuna oversaw the set up activities and arranged for delivery of water to the tree using DSE fire crew and tankers.

While the ecological benefits may be short term, this Eagle Tree symbolises the plight of the River Red Gum forests suffering from a lack of water due to lower rainfall and reduced flooding. The project helped to raise awareness of these forests and the benefits of water donations in helping to save areas such as these.

The project received a huge amount of publicity through the media including radio, newspapers, television and even a cartoon.

The willingness of everyone to help get this project off the ground was a wonderful example of community partnerships delivering real on-ground outcomes that benefit the forest and those that use it.

Urban Salinity Guidelines for the City of Greater Bendigo

Planning Guidelines for Urban Salinity in the City of Greater Bendigo



An acknowledgement by the North Central CMA, the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) and the Department of Primary Industries to be proactive about salinity in urban areas rather than reactive progressed the partnership to develop urban salinity guidelines. For the past three years, work has been progressing on the development of planning guidelines for use by the CoGB with regard to managing salinity in urban and peri-urban areas of the City.

Planning Guidelines for Urban Salinity in the City of Greater Bendigo was finalised in early 2008. The purpose of the report was to provide the CoGB planning staff with a set of guidelines specifying a suite of clear protocols to be followed when assessing development applications for land thought to be affected by salinity.

Understanding the impact of urban salinity is important

Bendigo has long had problems with land impacted by salinity. Saline affected landscapes can cause problems for urban development including damage to building foundations, roads, public and private gardens, underground services and recreational facilities. It is crucial that all facets of any proposed development are carefully managed.

There are a number of indicators that can be used to help identify salt prone lands including:

- The presence of plant species that thrive in saline soils such as Spiny Rush, Sea Barley Grass and Buckshorn Plantation
- Salt efflorescence on the soil surface which shows as a white film on bare patches of earth
- Damage to roads, pavements, bridges and other concrete infrastructure
- Simple soil tests to identify whether salt is present.

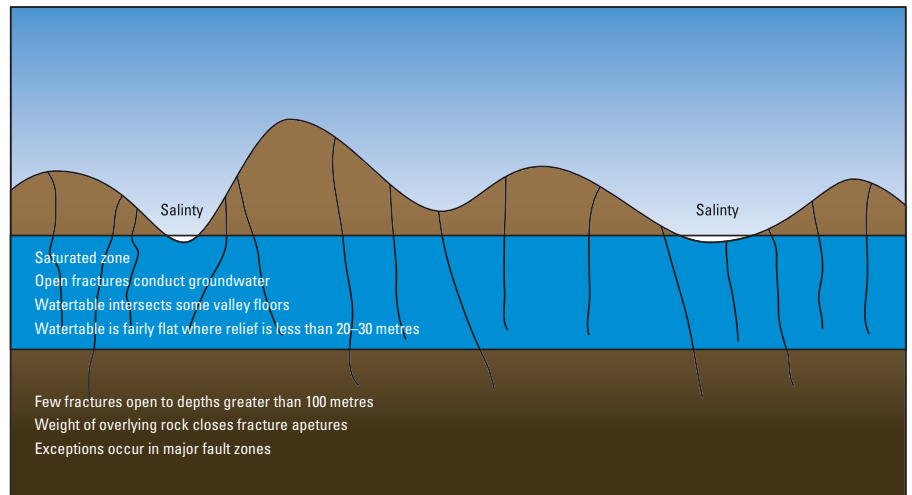
How land is affected by saline groundwater

Salinity occurs where the watertable lies sufficiently close to the land surface to allow for saline groundwater to discharge. It is often drawn to the surface through capillary action and subject to the nature of the geological character of the groundwater system.

Bendigo and much of its surrounds sits on ancient marine sedimentary rocks that have been folded and fractured into a tightly folded rock mass. These fractured rock aquifers, assisted by the flooded passages of old mine workings under the city, allows the saline groundwater to flow down the landscape (south to north) through the fracture set and discharge at low points in the landscape.



Schematic diagram illustrating the occurrence of salinity in regions where the watertables intersects the land surface



What the planning guidelines do

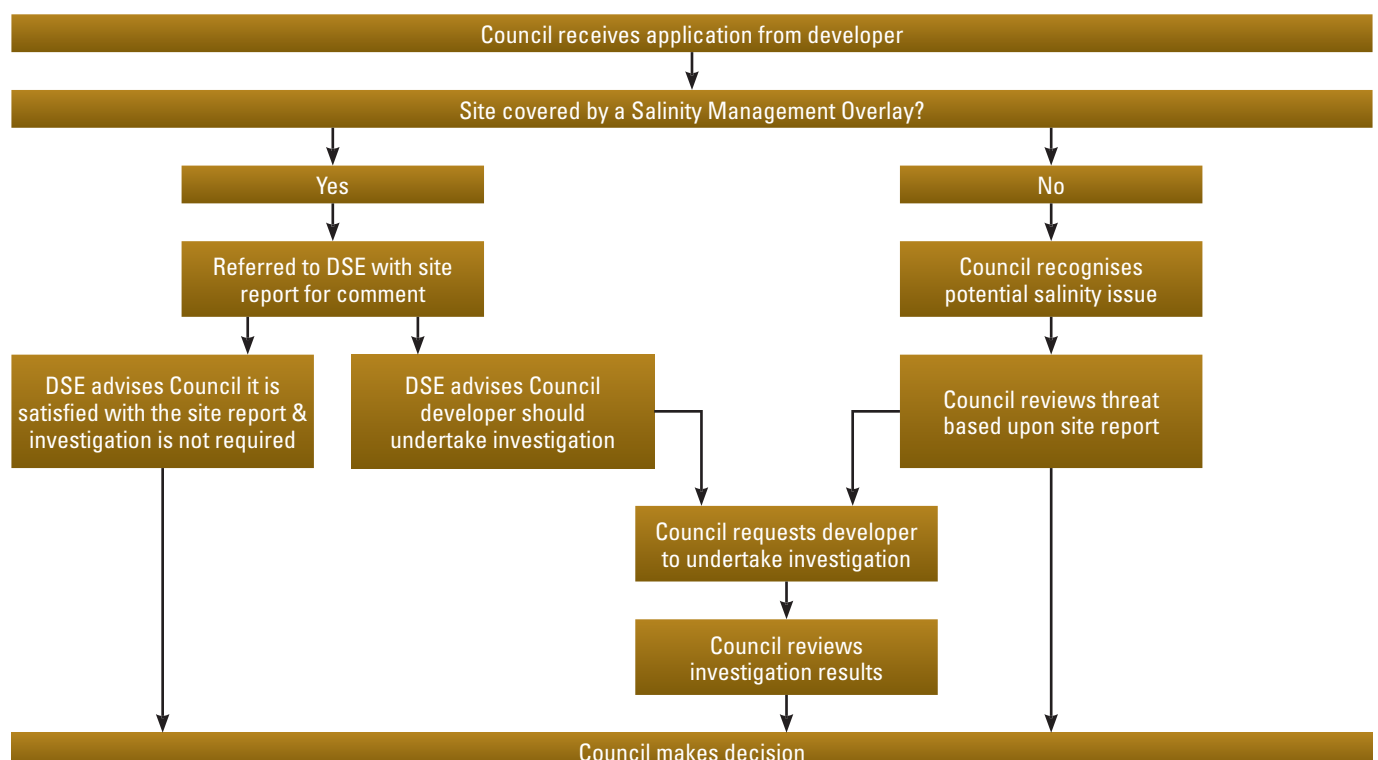
The guidelines provided in the report provide a specific course of action for planning staff where a proposed development falls within an area subject to a Salinity Management Overlay or is believed to be affected by salinity.

Many factors are crucial when assessing a development and must be completed in line with accepted hydrogeology standards. One of the crucial factors when interpreting the results of an urban salinity investigation for a proposed development is the depth to the watertable and how this is likely to change over time.

Just the beginning

Much more needs to be understood about the urban water balance as it applies to interactions between surface water management and groundwater response. Further research has already commenced. The information gained from these new investigations will be crucial to our understanding of relationship between Bendigo's watertable, natural seasonal variances and urban activities.

Protocols for planning applications in land subject to salinity





On-ground work starts with a... gush!

On-ground work aimed at providing more accurate data regarding the factors influencing changes to the watertable below Bendigo finally got underway in June 2008. And it was quite an experience!

Three bores were drilled in Bendigo at Jackass Flat, Kennington and Golden Square. The bores had to be deep enough to sit within the rock below the city, estimated to be 30-50 metres down.

Electronic monitoring equipment was installed in each bore to measure groundwater salinity and water pressure every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Bore locations were at strategic locations along the groundwater's natural flow from higher elevations at the south of Bendigo to lower-lying regions in the north. The southern-most bore at Golden Square was a surprise – even for experienced hydrogeologist and project manager, Phil Dyson.

The first rock fractures were struck at only nine metres with a flow of about 10,000 litres per hour. At 15 metres another fracture set was struck and water flow doubled, followed by set after set of fractures every couple of metres with doubled water flow each time. Drilling stopped at 25 metres as the bore was lifting all the water it was capable of handling.

A one in a hundred bore – something most hydrogeologists can only dream of.



21 years of Landcare



It all started here...

Many people may not be aware that the Landcare movement, now a standard feature of environmental management throughout Australia, started here in north central Victoria 20 years ago.

In 1986 the first Landcare group was officially formed at Terry Simpson's property at Winjallock near St Arnaud. It was an appropriate breeding ground with various natural resource management issues in the area and an already active local community, committed to solving and managing the problems they faced in their local landscape.

Landcare now has over 3,000 groups across the country. It is a force for positive environmental change where farming, life-styler and urban community members are able to care for and repair our landscapes and waterways.

Landcare in north central Victoria today

There are currently over 120 active and committed Landcare groups in north central Victoria, assisted by eight coordinators based out of local shire offices.

The work being undertaken by these groups reflects the diverse environmental requirements of the region. Groups focus their efforts in different ways, depending on the needs of their area. Some of the Landcare activities they engage in encompass:

- Rehabilitation of wetlands, waterways, riparian zones and erosion affected property including fencing, stabilisation, revegetation and protection
- Sustainable and profitable farming practice investigations to reflect a holistic approach to the land, assess the benefits of different farming methods, work to reduce the use of chemicals, and so on
- Establishment of native trees and grasses to provide linkages and wildlife corridors between existing bushland areas

- Weed control on both an intensive and ongoing basis, including the revegetation of treated areas
- Fox and rabbit pest management programs
- Education programs with schools and other community groups to raise awareness and understanding of their local environmental issues and responsibilities.

As well as the environmental benefits realised by Landcare, there are important social and broader community benefits for members. It is a way to bring people together to provide a healthier and richer community.

There are regular meetings and public forums involving local members and guest speakers, along with field days and community events. Landcare groups apply for grants and sponsorship to help them achieve their goals.

In 2007 the Landcare Support Review began its assessment of the North Central CMA's Landcare support structure. Public workshops were held around the catchment to gain community opinion, with findings of the review to form the basis of Landcare support as part of the next Regional Catchment Investment Plan.



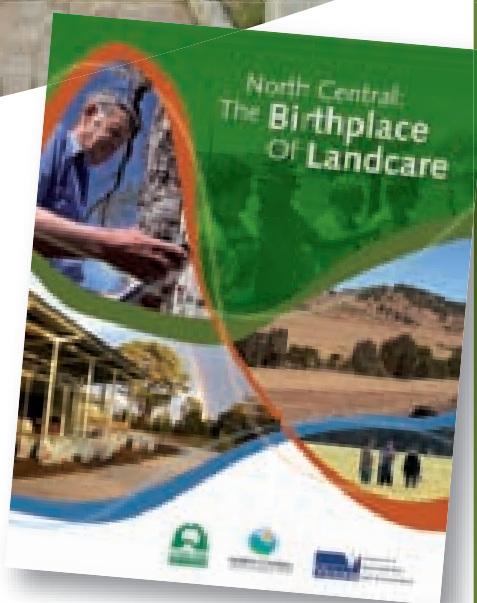
The birthday celebrations

To commemorate Landcare's 20th birthday a number of events were held to recognise the dedication, commitment and contributions of all our volunteers to the health of the catchment.

Anniversary events included group dinners, a commemorative planting at Winjallock and various family days throughout the region.

Celebrations culminated in the official launch of the North Central: The Birthplace of Landcare DVD held at Sutton Grange Winery on 14 March 2008. Around 240 people attended from across the catchment representing all regions. Guests were welcomed to country by Aunty Lyn, and North Central CMA Chair Ian MacBean and ABC personality Libby Price officiated the day.

It was a fitting way to acknowledge and thank all those involved in creating the vibrant and enthusiastic Landcare groups in our region.



Thanks

Twenty years of Landcare is a great milestone, and a great time to reflect on the differences that have been made through the willing participation of our local communities.

We are very proud of our dynamic and high achieving Landcare scene and take our hats off to our hard-working and committed volunteers.

The important roles of our investors, sponsors and partner agencies are greatly appreciated. And without our committed Landcare support staff, our great results would not have been possible.

Here's to another 20!

North Central's Second Generation Landcare Grants 2007-08

The Second Generation Landcare Grants are funded by the State Government of Victoria, and delivered regionally through Victorian Catchment Management Authorities. It provides an opportunity for Landcare and other community groups to undertake an integrated approach to natural resource management issues through the one application process. In the 2007-08 round, \$340,000 was available to assist with group maintenance, promotion of Landcare, education of members and the broader community, and grants of up to \$10,000 to enable groups to undertake on-ground environmental works.

In 2007-08, with the assistance of these grants, Landcare groups achieved the following on both private and public land:

- 170 Ha of terrestrial land revegetated, protected and enhanced with additional vegetation
- 61 Ha treated for pest animals
- 2,984 Ha treated for weeds at 132 different sites
- 6 Ha of wetland protected or enhanced
- 66 Ha of waterways revegetated and protected
- Approximately 25,000 people educated about / involved in projects
- 82 awareness raising events held
- 14 skills and training events held
- 34 monitoring sites established
- 216 demonstration sites established
- 7,257 items of publicity material (fact sheets, news articles and newsletters).

A big impact for a small grants program!

A snapshot of our Catchment's condition

Biodiversity

Goal

The ecological function of indigenous vegetation communities will be maintained and, where possible, improved. Populations of threatened native plant and animal species will be restored to viable levels. Threatened vegetation communities will increase in extent and improve in quality to achieve a net gain.

Biodiversity Catchment Condition

An increase in vegetation protection, enhancement and restoration activities have contributed towards meeting regional targets. Combined with improved mapping, native vegetation cover is nearing the regional target of 20%. While vegetation condition remains variable, we continue to improve our methodology for assessing condition.

The recent review of the Muckleford Landscape Zone concluded that although significant works had been undertaken to protect and enhance native vegetation the overall trend of native vegetation was still declining although works have contributed to slowing the decline.

Land

Dryland

Goal

The use and management of the land resource for agriculture, rural living and other purposes will be consistent with its capability, will be undertaken in an ecologically sustainable manner and provide economic and social benefits.

Dryland Catchment Condition

As a result of the long dry period, the impact of salinity on the catchment has been somewhat negated. Regional groundwater levels have been falling, stream salinity levels remain high due to the concentrating effect of low water levels, however due to those low stream flows the overall salt loads leaving the catchments remain low.

While investment in increasing the area of perennial vegetation to mitigate salinity has seen significant benefits locally for river health, biodiversity and improved condition of farmland, the drop in the regional groundwater is primarily due to drought conditions.

The new Dryland Region Management Plan will change the focus of salinity investment to protect specific assets and by undertaking research into understanding the salinity processes, we will be able to achieve more targeted results and ensure that the best public benefits is derived from NRM investment.

Irrigated Land

Goal

The use and management of land for irrigated agriculture, rural living and other purposes will be consistent with its capability to support those uses. The use and management of both land and water provides sustainable economic and social benefits and improves environmental values.

Irrigated Land Catchment Condition

The price of water per/ML is increasing, while water tables and salt exports from the catchment are falling. An improvement in planning, monitoring and management, along with market forces and drought has contributed to a significant change.

Despite the drought impacting on the condition of some natural assets, the overall condition of land across the irrigation region is improving. Watertable levels are falling below the critical depth of 2 metres from surface, therefore lessening the likelihood of capillary actions bringing salt to the surface and effecting environmental assets and agricultural land. For example the area with groundwater within 2 metres of the surface has decreased from 80% in 1990 to 4% in 2006.

Reduced water allocations and continued water trade out of the irrigation region is causing regional salt exports to reduce. This in turn is causing salt and nutrient concentrations in drains to remain high.

Progress towards North Central River Health Strategy

CASE STUDY

Since 2005, the North Central River Health Strategy has guided priority actions for river health across the region. One of the priority actions identified in this strategy was to protect and enhance multiple values associated with riparian vegetation through fencing and enhancement plantings along priority reaches.

Management Action Target:

3,209 Ha of riparian land protected, enhanced and under management agreement by 2010 (includes both banks and equates to one quarter of the total length of priority reaches).

Our progress towards the target at both a priority reach and program area scale is shown below.

Water

Waterways and Wetlands

Goal

Waterways and wetlands will be managed to enhance their environmental function and, where appropriate, provide opportunities for economic, recreational and amenity use.

Waterways Catchment Condition

The condition of waterways and wetlands in the region remains poor to moderate, however with well developed plans, strategies and on going management in place, the overall trend appears stable. Factors that influence a continued improvement in conditions include altered hydrology (via extraction and regulation), which results in poor physical form and degraded in-stream habitat. Nutrients and salinity continue to be a major water quality issue.

Water Resources

Goal

Water will be shared equitably between environmental and consumptive uses, water quality will match users' requirements and water will be used efficiently.

Water Resources Catchment Condition

Due to the continued dry conditions, regional water availability has remained very low leading to environmental stress on our river system and challenges and stress to our regional communities. Poor water quality remains a problem, with high levels of nutrients, salinity, turbidity and dissolved oxygen being the major causes. While planning, management response and monitoring is generally good, the region experienced similar algal blooms to last year, largely due to the low flows.





Caring for our people

At the North Central CMA, it is our intention to be regarded as Victoria's leading natural resource management practitioner. To achieve this we are focussed on matching the values and expectations of our people with the strategic direction of the organisation.

Our people are a key strength behind our organisations success and we are committed to building a workplace culture that emphasises teamwork, continuous learning, community, efficiency and effectiveness, integrity and individual leadership.

To demonstrate the continued focus on our people, we are pleased to report a number of initiatives and achievements that have been realised over the past year.

Certified Agreement

Following extensive engagement with employees and a formal voting process the North Central CMA Union Collective Agreement was certified in February 2008. More than simply providing the terms and conditions by which employees are governed, the agreement is aimed at improving productivity and future development of the North Central CMA to the benefit of the community, environment, employees and all stakeholders.

The attractive employment conditions contained in the Agreement such as flexible hours of work, paid maternity leave and specified funds for employee education, training and wellbeing has allowed the North Central CMA to remain competitive in the employment sphere. This has ensured we attract and retain the right people in the right jobs.

To date the Agreement has been successfully implemented, but to continue with bedding down the new terms and conditions and to provide ongoing employee engagement during the life of the agreement, a Staff Consultative Committee has been formed. This committee of both employees and managers regularly meets to monitor the progress of the implementation and to manage the 'Wellbeing' program.

Wellbeing Program

North Central CMA recognises and is committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of employees. We are able to demonstrate this commitment through the wellbeing program. The program provides a combination of activities that focus on health promotion, including a range of educational services aimed at helping employees manage the complexities of balancing work and life.



To date the program has been successful with solid participation from employees across a range of activities and educative seminars. Furthermore, our focus on employee health and wellbeing has assisted in achieving the result of no OH&S lost time or reports of serious incidents over the last year.

Values and Behaviours

To further align the organisation with our aim to be regarded as Victoria's leading natural resource management practitioner, North Central CMA partnered with Mercer (Australia) Pty Ltd to assist in a review of our values and behaviours.

The initiative involved Mercer stepping management and employees through a series of engagement, analysis and validation processes. The result of these processes highlighted the challenges and opportunities the organisation faced both currently and into the future. These results provided the foundations to develop a brand identity and set of values that would enable achievement of North Central CMA's overall objectives.

A majority of the initiative is complete with the final stage of carrying out the recommendations currently underway. As the change will be gradual and ongoing it is expected that implementation will be somewhat constant as the organisation continues to develop strategy, practices, policies and procedures in line with the brand identity and values.

Learning and Development

Our employee's accumulated knowledge and experiences are a key strength behind our organisation's success. We continue to support this by providing a range of learning and development opportunities for employees.

Employees and in turn the North Central CMA have benefited from the increased skill, knowledge and abilities employees have acquired through attending training programs, conferences and seminars throughout the year. The learning and development opportunities undertaken by employees encompass a wide range of topics that have assisted to develop both their hard/technical skills and soft skills. Some of the soft skill development has been in the areas of negotiation, interpersonal skills and working with communities, whilst the hard/technical skill development of employees has included understanding the legal aspects of land management, water management training and attendance at climate change and renewable energy conferences.

This continued commitment to development and education ensures that at North Central CMA we are equipping our employees and managers with the right skills and knowledge to best perform their roles.

For the record



I certify that the North Central CMA has risk management processes in place consistent with the Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standard and an internal control system is in place that enables the executive to understand, manage and satisfactorily control risk exposures. The Board of the North Central CMA verifies this assurance and that the risk profile of the North Central CMA has been critically reviewed within the last 12 months.

Ian MacBean
Chairperson

Objectives, Functions and Activities

As the lead agency on directions and priorities in catchment management in the north central Victorian region, the North Central CMA's primary responsibility is to ensure that the natural resources of this region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way. This requires us to coordinate and engage in meaningful consultation with our stakeholders of the communities we serve.

The activities we are involved in are guided by goals set for each of the major assets across the North Central Catchment, which forms part of the North Central RCS. The projects that we manage relate to the implementation of resource condition outcomes that are aligned to each North Central RCS goal.

As the lead natural resource manager in the region we have a responsibility to ensure we provide regular and factual advice to the government on all natural resource management issues affecting our region. In conjunction with this responsibility we strive to deliver environmental projects directly, or through service providers, land and water managers (public and private) and contractors to achieve each resource condition outcome.

The North Central CMA has two types of business namely:

a) Direct Service Delivery involving:

- Waterway management (River Health)
- Water Quality and Biodiversity Co-Ordination
- Floodplain Management
- Catchment Planning (corporate functions), and

b) Partnership Business involving:

- Sustainable Agriculture and Land Management (particularly with reference to irrigation and dryland salinity)
- Water Savings and water use efficiency
- Biodiversity (including vegetation management and private forestry)
- Landcare Support
- Pest Plant and Animal Management.

The responsibilities of the North Central CMA as they relate to the Water Act 1989 are as follows:

- Statutory Planning
- Flood enquiries
- Flood Response
- VCAT appeals
- Updates to flood database
- Flood education and advice.

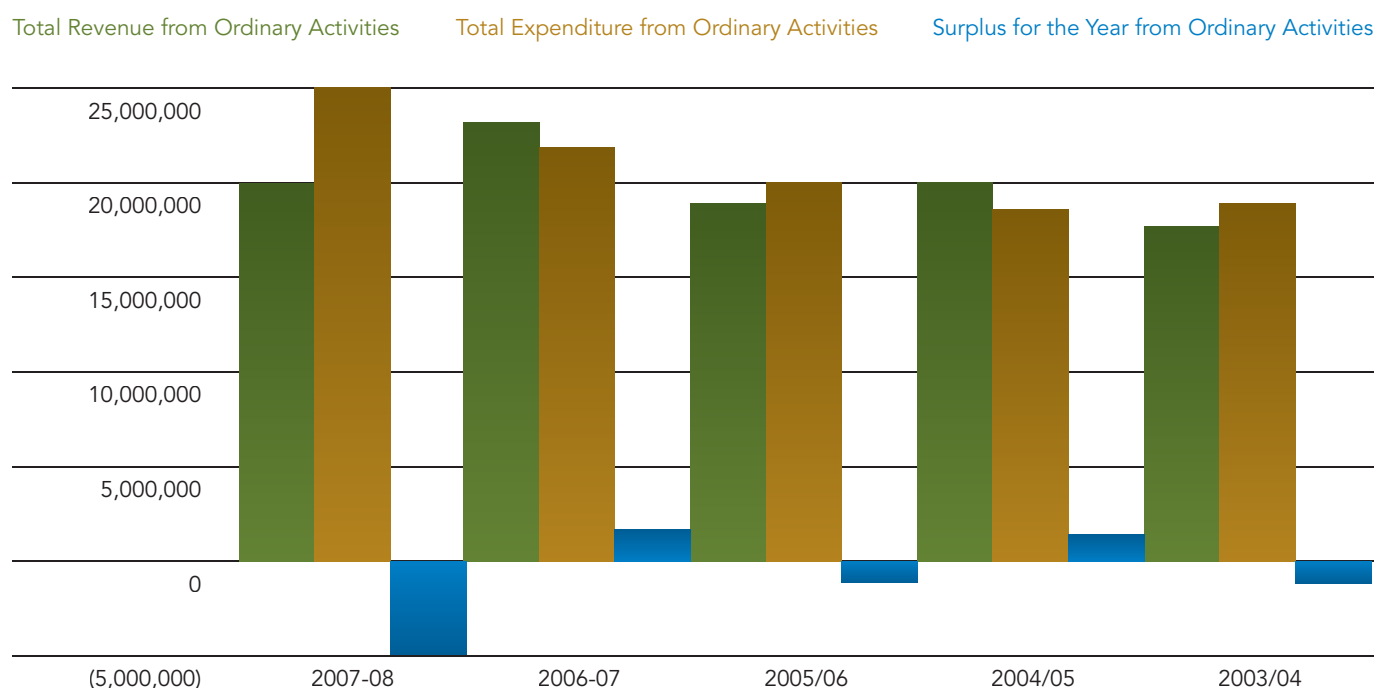
The responsibilities of the North Central CMA as they relate to the Statement of Obligations commenced in July 2007 issued under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 are as follows:

- Operate within the requirement of Governance Guidelines for Statutory Authorities
- Establish open and transparent

processes to engage its stakeholders and community

- Enhance strategic partnerships
- Coordinate the development and review of the RCS in accordance with any guidelines issued by the Minister
- Submit to the Minister for approval any special area plans
- Coordinate the development of the Regional Catchment Investment Plan in accordance with any guidelines issued by the Department
- Develop and coordinate the implementation of a regional action plan for Landcare in accordance with the RCS
- Develop and coordinate the implementation of the Native Vegetation Plan in accordance with the RCS
- Develop and coordinate the implementation of a regional pest plan in accordance with the RCS
- Develop and coordinate the implementation of a Regional Salinity Management Plan in accordance with guidelines issued to the Authority
- Prepare responses to planning referrals from the Environmental Protection Authority in accordance with relevant legislation
- Participate in the periodic review and implementation of municipal Planning Schemes.

	2007-08 \$	2006-07 \$	2005/2006 \$	2004/2005 \$	2003/2004 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities					
Government Contributions	16,803,727	20,210,508	17,035,376	18,471,332	16,392,316
Other Revenue	3,283,239	3,063,111	1,917,925	1,552,270	1,391,440
Total Revenue from Ordinary Activities	20,086,966	23,273,619	18,953,301	20,023,602	17,783,756
Expenditure from ordinary activities					
Corporate	3,446,652	2,708,420	2,747,912	2,445,738	2,439,459
Works Programs	21,568,957	18,900,042	17,351,074	16,187,955	16,514,523
Total Expenditure from Ordinary Activities	25,015,609	21,608,462	20,098,986	18,633,693	18,953,982
Surplus for the Year from Ordinary Activities	(4,928,643)	1,665,157	(1,145,685)	1,389,909	(1,170,226)
Total Assests	13,051,616	15,463,640	13,435,718	14,558,864	20,251,599
Total Liabilities	5,709,411	3,315,039	2,952,274	2,929,735	6,741,283



Five Year Financial Summary

During the financial year ending 30 June 2008, the North Central CMA recorded a \$4.9 million loss from Ordinary Activities.

The financial performance from ordinary activities was affected by:

- A 13.7 percent overall decrease in revenue, influenced by a 17.6 percent decrease in State (\$2.51 million) and a 15.2 percent decrease of Commonwealth Government Funding (\$0.90 million)
- Other Revenue increased 7.2 percent and included interest and funding from the Murray Darling Basin Commission for Living Murray projects, Bureau of Rural Science and the University of Tasmania.
- Expenditure increased by 15.8 percent compared to the previous year, which was impacted materially by a 14.1 percent increase (\$2.67 million) in the delivery of works due to 2006-07 carried forward projects being completed in September 2007 and the majority of current year projects being completed within the financial year.

Corporate and administration expenditure increased 27.3 percent (\$0.74 million) due to the improvement in systems, procedures and processes during the year and the outsourcing of the Information Technology function.



During the financial year ending 30 June 2008, the North Central CMA's balance sheet was significantly affected by:

- Cash Assets decreased 20.5 percent due to greater payments made to suppliers as expenditure increased for the year
- Receivables increased 24.9 percent due to a \$0.86 million refund from the Australian Taxation Office for the 4th quarter GST
- Assets increased 20.8 percent due to 12 motor vehicles purchased for the Drought Employment Program
- Payables increased 81.9 percent due to the increase expenditure for the year
- Total equity decreased for the year 39.6 percent as the Authority spent accumulated funds due to the completion of 2006-07 carried forward projects and completion of the majority of current year projects within the 2007-08 financial year.

In general, the delivery of major works program expenditure was within defined budgetary objectives. Exceptions were due to agreed changes in committed projects being delivered in the next financial year.

Human Resource Management

The North Central CMA promotes the personal and professional development of its people in order to achieve ongoing improvements in service delivery of outputs so as to create satisfying career paths for staff members. We actively promote safe work practices, career development, balanced lifestyles and a friendly, non-discriminatory working environment.

Occupational Health and Safety

The North Central CMA is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of our employees. We do this by ensuring we adhere to strict safe work practices, as well as providing a safe working environment for all our employees. We are pleased to report that there were no Workcover incidents during the year that required reporting under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985.

Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, Women, Youth and Indigenous Affairs

The North Central CMA continues to work closely with local indigenous groups, always ensuring we abide by the Protocols, Principles and Strategy Agreement for Indigenous Involvement in natural resource management.

The North Central CMA also commenced the employment of an Indigenous Facilitator at the end of the year.

Our Waterwatch program continues to successfully provide education and training opportunities for the youth of our region. We do this through engaging our youth in meaningful environmental issues that allows them to enhance their abilities to be actively involved in natural resource management.

Industrial relations

The North Central CMA enjoys a cooperative relationship with employee representative organisations, who were involved in the development of the prevailing Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.



Workforce Data

The North Central CMA staff are appointed following a comprehensive selection process involving an independent selection panel. In accordance with the Public Administration Act 2004, staff appointments are made on the basis of merit and a commitment is maintained to the principles of the Equal Opportunity Act 1985.

The workforce is comprised:

	2007-08		2006-2007	
	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time
No of Women	3	30	6	28
Under 30 yo	1	13	3	13
Over 30 yo	2	17	3	15
Board	-	4	-	4
Executive	-	1	-	2
Project Officer	-	24	2	22
Administration	3	1	4	0
No of Men	3	24	2	26
Under 30 yo	0	4	0	4
Over 30 yo	3	20	2	22
Board	-	5	-	5
Executive	-	4	-	3
Project Officer	3	15	2	18
Administration	-	-	-	-

Compliance with the Building Act 1993

The North Central CMA has met its obligations under the Building Act 1993. No building approvals were applicable to the North Central CMA during the reporting year.

National Competition Policy

Competitive neutrality seeks to enable fair competition between local government and private sector businesses. Any advantages or disadvantages that government businesses may experience, simply as a result of government ownership, should be neutralised. The North Central CMA continues to implement and apply this principle in its business undertakings.

Environmental Policy and Climate Change

The North Central CMA is committed to reducing our footprint on the environment. Building on water saving initiatives of recent years with the installation of dual flush toilets and a waterless urinal at the Huntly office, in 2007/08 the organisation focused on achieving carbon neutral operations.

This was achieved through the purchase of 100% green energy and carbon credits to offset vehicle and other measurable direct greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2008/09, we will implement several initiatives to reduce our emissions and therefore reduce our reliance on the purchase of carbon credits to achieve carbon neutrality.

Climate change considerations are also now part of the project planning processes.

Victorian Industry Participation Policy

The North Central CMA had no tenders over \$1 million during the financial year.

Freedom of Information

The North Central CMA is considered to be a "Government Agency" under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and is required to comply with the procedures that have been prescribed under which members of the public may gain access to information held by agencies. A decision to release information is made by an Authorised Officer. The North Central CMA has determined that its Authorised Officer is the Department of Sustainability & Environment's Freedom of Information Manager, Mr Michael Guarna (03) 9637 8873.

Requests under the Act can be made in writing to the contact officer, together with the statutory fee of \$22.70:

Risk Management Coordinator
Freedom of information Contact Officer
North Central
Catchment Management Authority
PO Box 18
Huntly Victoria 3551

During the reporting year there was one application to the North Central CMA requesting information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1982.

Statement of Information

The North Central CMA has prepared and made available to the relevant Minister, Members of Parliament and the public on request, the following documents as specified in the Financial Management Act 1994:

- Declarations of pecuniary interest duly completed by relevant officers
- Board members' indemnity declarations
- Inwards and outwards correspondence
- Publications produced by the Authority and the places where the publications can be obtained
- Occupational Health & Safety Guidelines.

Information Kept and Available

Information relating to the requirements of the Financial Reporting Direction 22B of the Financial Management Act 1994 is held at the North Central CMA's main office and subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1982 is available on request.

List of further details available on request:

- shares held by a senior officer;
- publications produced by the CMA and how these can be obtained;
- changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged;
- major external reviews carried out on the Authority;
- major research and development activities undertaken;
- major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the Authority to develop community awareness of the Authority and its services;
- assessments and measures undertaken to improve the OHS of employees;
- Industrial Relations within the Authority and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes; and
- a list of major committees sponsored by the Authority, the purposes of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved.



Whistleblowers Protection Act

The Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 came into effect on 1 January 2002. The Act is designed to protect people who disclose information about serious wrongdoings within the Victorian Public Sector; equally it provides a framework for the investigation of these matters.

In support of the Act, the North Central CMA maintains a system of reporting disclosures of any improper conduct of detrimental action by the North Central CMA or its employees.

No disclosures were made to the North Central CMA and no disclosures were referred to the Ombudsman, nor have there been any disclosures or referrals by the Ombudsman.

Disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the North Central Catchment Management Authority or its employees may be made to the following officers:

The protected disclosure coordinator
(03) 5448 7124

A protected disclosure officer/s
(03) 5448 7124

All correspondence, phone calls and emails from internal or external whistleblowers will be referred to the protected disclosure coordinator.

Where a person is contemplating making a disclosure and is concerned about approaching the protected disclosure coordinator or a protected disclosure officer/s in the workplace, they can call the relevant officer and request a meeting in a discreet location away from the workplace.

Executive Officers

Executive officers are those persons employed at an annual remuneration rate not less than an executive employed by a department, which includes a person employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act 2004, as a public service body Head or other executive.

The executive officers of the North Central CMA are classified as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and as Managers. The CEO is male and the Managers comprise one female and three males.

There were no vacancies or special project executives employed during the reporting period.

In the previous reporting period five persons met the definition of executive officers, the CEO and four Managers. The CEO was male and the Managers comprised two females and two males.

Details of executives officers' remuneration are disclosed in Note 16(b) to the accounts.

Administration of Statutory Functions

Under the Water Act 1989 the North Central CMA aims to reduce the impact of flood damage to new buildings, help conserve and preserve flora, fauna and habitat in designated waterways and to reduce water quality decline. We do this by providing:

- Permits to construct and operate works on a waterway, compliance and community education
- Resources to planning permit referrals for developments within a flood prone area
- Responses to applications for flood levels, flood risk reports and flood information before development
- Flood planning information and advice to Councils, State Emergency Services, developers and others
- Flood Response Action Plans, including collection of flood information during and after a flood and assistance with emergency planning and flood warning
- Flood data management.

Statutory Functions / Floodplain

	2007-08	2006-07
Floodplain/River Health Planning Referrals Issued	484	566
Floodplain/River Health Planning Referrals Refused	12	24
Flood Level Advice	393	174
Planning Scheme Amendments	24	20
Referral, Advice Enquiries and Inspections	1,241	1,230
Percentage of statutory timelines met	100%	100%
Take and Use Licence Referrals	7	4

Waterways Protection (incorporating Works on Waterways Permit Scheme)

	2007-08	2006-07
Permit Applications Issued	88	122
Planning Referrals	50	45
Exemption Approvals eg. Major Pipe Infrastructure Projects & Calder Highway Upgrade	13	148
Illegal Works Enforcement	12	37
Enquiries and Inspections	741	745

Consultants

The North Central CMA was involved in 128 consultancies during the 2007-08 financial year. The total cost of consultants were \$11,688,857 (2006-07 \$6,775,007). All amounts are GST exclusive.

The total number of consultancies valued at less than \$100,000 was 121, with a total value of \$3,981,871.

There were no major contracts over \$10 million.

The consultancies engaged that exceeded \$100,000 are detailed in the following schedule:

Consultants Engaged over \$100,000.00	Summary of Projects	Total Fees Approved \$	Expenditure for Reporting Period \$	Future Commitments \$
Goulburn-Murray Water	Salary & Operating for the delivery of on-ground works (Kerang Weir Fishway, Kerang Fish Ladder and Surface Water Management)	2,750,141	2,750,141	0
Dept of Primary Industries	Salary & Operating for the delivery of On-ground works through the PACE program	2,824,445	2,824,445	0
Simpson Personnel	Payroll Services for the Drought Employment Program	1,405,796	1,405,796	0
Alluvium Consulting	Dryland Wetland Program: Spatial database, prioritisation and action plans	185,000	185,000	0
Department of Sustainability	Implementation of Recovery plans for Threatened Species	225,360	225,360	0
Arthur Rylah Institute	Ecosystem risk studies as a result of Climate Change	150,000	150,000	0
Ecowise Environmental (Victoria) P/L	Water Management Plans and fieldwork for the Monitoring of Ecological responses to the Loddon River	169,422	166,244	3,178

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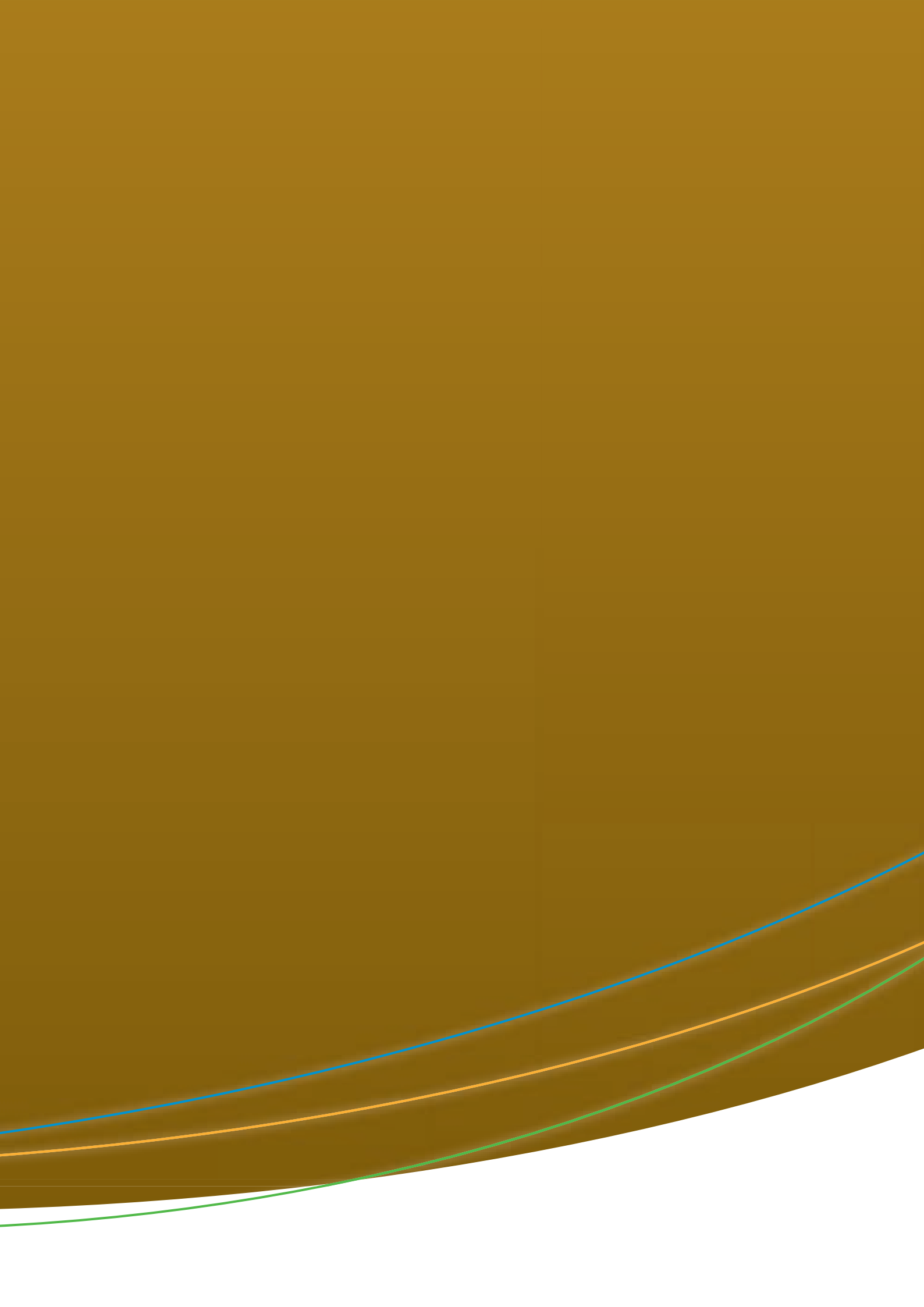
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Our people

Aaron Gay Adrian Bathgate Adrian Martins Allison Long Amanda McClaren
Amy Campbell Angela Gladman April Curatolo Barry Hancock Ben Kroker Ben Ryan
Benjamin Goonan Bradley Drust Bridie Velik-Lord Britt Gregory Camille White
Catherine Fox Christopher Hain Clare Millen Colin Campbell Colin Francis Damian Wells
Daniel Mudford Darren White Deon Pearce Emma Wolters Eryn Basile Gavin Hanlon
Geoffrey Park Glenn Merrick Graham Hall Hagen Rieck Heidi Kleinert Ian Higgins
Janelle Williams Jennelle Carlier Jodie Fisher Jon Leever Julie Bennett
Kathryn Stanislawski Kellie Gibson Kirsten Steel Laura Chant Leigh Mitchell
Lyndall Rowley Maree McKinley Matthew Jackson Megan Kreutzer Melanie Barrot
Melanie Tranter Melissa Donaldson Melissa Tylee Michelle Bills Nathan Day Nick Layne
Paul Nelson Paula Camenzuli Peter Leersen Peter McRostie Philip Slessar
Rachel Paterson Rebecca Horsburgh Rhonda Leed Rohan Hogan Ross Pittaway
Shane Thaddeus Sharon McColl Sonia Colville Sonia Robinson Suzanne Nuroo
Tanya Pickering Tim Shanahan Trevor Marshall Vanessa Murray



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority