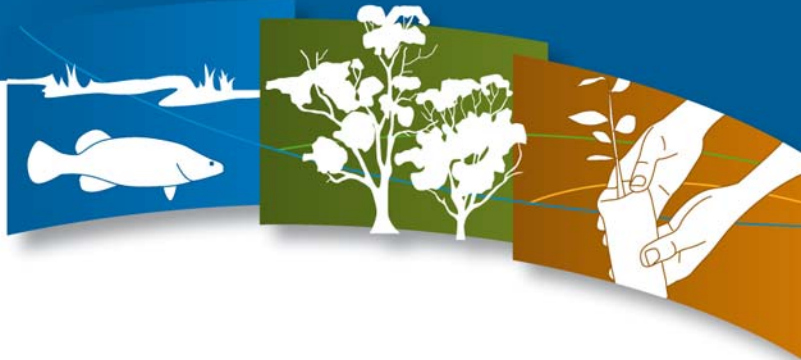


Investment summary

Funding received by the North Central CMA in 2009–10



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People



The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) works in partnership with local communities and other agencies to develop investment proposals to address high value natural resource management. The North Central CMA is responsible for coordinating the development, implementation and reporting of regional investment proposals for environmental projects that address government priorities. To ensure that the limited funding available is spent wisely, environmental assets of the region are prioritised and the best value for money initiatives to protect these assets are determined. For the 2009–10 investment proposals, the Investment Framework for Environmental Resources (INFFER) was used to help direct investment to protect highest value and most threatened environmental assets

As of 1 July 2009, \$16,834,884 had been allocated to the North Central CMA to invest in the region's environmental assets in 2009–10. This funding is from various Victorian and Australian Government sources and will go towards the projects detailed below. It is expected that some further funding will be received throughout 2009–10 for expenditure this year. The Victorian and Australian governments remain the most significant investors into the North Central CMA's activities.

Community Delivering Sustainable Natural Resource Management

Investment: \$762,000 (\$467,000 – Victorian Investment Framework; \$295,000 – Caring for Our Country)

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: This project will engage Landcare and other community groups to protect and improve the region's high priority assets. Through the project, the following support will be provided:

- Ongoing strategic support for regional Landcare
- Facilitation of best practice land management and protection of the critically endangered White Box, Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland communities on private land in the catchment
- Ongoing resources and funding to support on ground activities through the Second Generation Landcare Grants Program.



Connecting Country

Investment: \$667,347 (\$405,347 – Caring for our Country; \$262,000 – Victorian Investment Framework)

Proponent: Friends of the Box Ironbark Inc.

Priority asset to be protected: Brush-tailed Phascogale (Tuan) and associated habitat

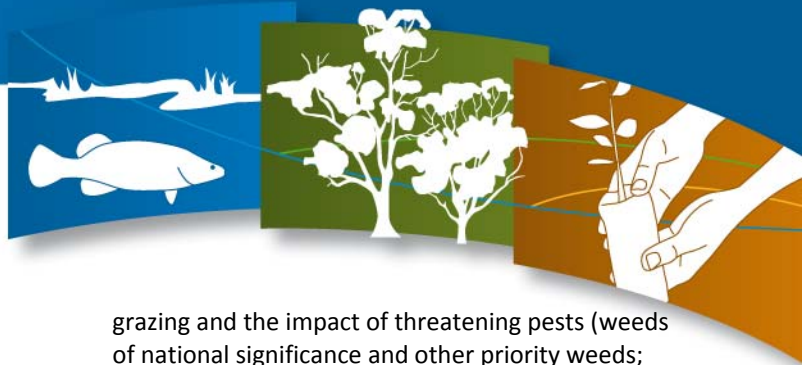
Overview: This community-based project has a specific focus on a flagship threatened species – the Brush-tailed Phascogale. The project will involve onground actions to improve habitat quality and connectivity, community education and awareness raising, and will support the participation of a diverse range of landholders and community groups. The project involves a wide range of groups and agencies.

DPI Direct Sustainable Irrigation

Investment: \$1,282,280 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: Department of Primary Industries

Priority asset to be protected: The Loddon Campaspe Irrigation Region is regarded as an area of significant environmental and agricultural value that has benefited enormously from previous natural resource management planning.



Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

Overview: This project will deliver land and water management activities on irrigated properties to protect and improve the value of priority assets. The project will address salinity and environmental issues, improve regional productivity (especially through irrigation modernisation), and progress social wellbeing.

Enhancing the Kerang Ramsar Wetlands

Investment: \$916,744 (\$806,774 – Caring for our Country; \$110,000 – Victorian Investment Framework)

Proponents: North Central CMA and Department of Sustainability and Environment

Priority asset to be protected: The Kerang Wetlands is a unique system of over 100 lakes and swamps recognised under the Ramsar Convention for providing habitat to significant waterbird populations.

Overview: This project will target onground weed and rabbit works, and contribute to delivery of the Murray Hardyhead Threatened Species Recovery Plan. It aims to protect up to 450 cultural heritage sites through engagement of Traditional Owners in project planning and implementation. The primary threats posed by pest plants and animals will be addressed through a partnership between the North Central CMA, Barapa Barapa Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria, Goulburn–Murray Water, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Department of Primary Industries. Works on the wetlands will be complemented by works on adjacent private land.

Enhancing values of the Gunbower Ramsar Site

Investment: 1,099,756 (\$450,000 – Victorian Investment Framework; \$649,756 – Caring for Our Country)

Proponents: North Central CMA and Department of Sustainability and Environment

Priority asset to be protected: Gunbower Forest is a Ramsar-listed wetland and is a priority environmental asset in local, regional, national and international contexts. It is also highly valued by the local community. Gunbower Creek flows directly to the Murray River and is a priority reach identified in the North Central River Health Strategy.

Overview: This project will enhance biodiversity values of the site by reducing the damage from stock

grazing and the impact of threatening pests (weeds of national significance and other priority weeds; pest animals such as rabbits, foxes and carp). Four populations of threatened wetland flora species will also be established.

Environmental Reserve Manager

Investment: \$199,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: The Victorian Government's White Paper on sustainable water management – *Securing Our Water Future Together* – identified the need to establish a suite of Environmental Water Reserves (EWR) roles across Victoria. This project will provide ongoing funding for the employment of 2.3 EWR officer positions to fulfill the North Central CMA's statutory obligations in its role as manager of the EWR within the region.

Farming for Sustainable Soils

Investment: \$995,980 – Caring for Our Country

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Regional soils

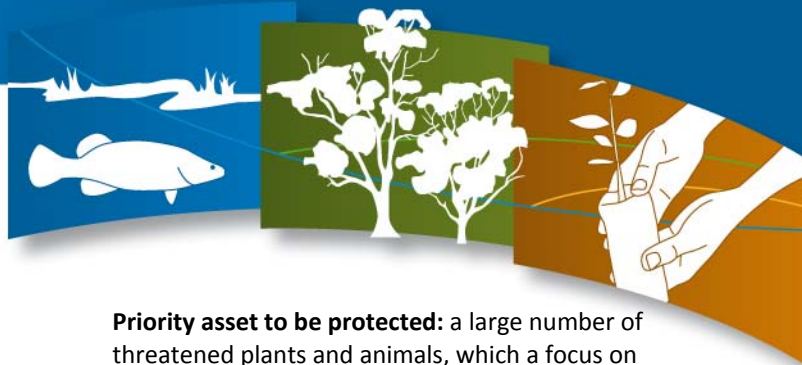
Overview: The soils of North Central Victoria, together with the region's water and vegetation resources, form the essential base that both natural ecosystems and agriculture depend upon. The health of the land is intimately linked to the health of the soil. This project recognises soil as an important asset that should be protected and managed for future generations. Achieving this goal means working collaboratively with regional farming communities in the quest for greater soil integrity pursued through an adaptive, community-based learning approach. The focus of the work is on providing the carbon needed to build the structural integrity required to mitigate wind erosion in times of reduced rainfall and much greater seasonal climatic variability.

Farm Plan 21 – North Central Asset Protection

Investment: \$550,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: Department of Primary Industries

Overview: This project proposes to develop 400 additional or updated farm plans across North Central Victoria. It seeks to build the capacity of farmers to manage environmental risks and externalities whilst ensuring farm profitability.



Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre

Investment: \$69,000 – University of Western Australia

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: the resilience of broadacre agriculture in adapting to climate variability and drought while improving productivity and sustainability.

Overview: This project comprises three components:

- The adoption of the Investment Framework for Environmental Resources (INFFER) to support development of the Regional Catchment Strategy and future investment planning
- Enrich trial site at York Plains. Enrich aims to evaluate a range of native shrub species for their potential as fodder plants for medium to low rainfall zones in Australia.
- Salinity knowledge exchange, assessing the suitability of decision support tools within the new dryland.

Goldfields Threatened Species Project

Investment: \$250,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: Department of Sustainability and Environment

Priority asset to be protected: a range of Goldfields Bioregion threatened flora and fauna species

Overview: This project will implement a range of high priority actions identified in the Actions for Biodiversity Conservation database. It will implement recovery plan actions for 11 endangered orchid species, and protect and enhance small remaining populations of four threatened flora species. The project will also analyse long-term survey data for Brush-tailed Phascogale from key sites to further understand their management requirements and improve conservation outcomes within two years, and survey potential habitat for new populations of Eltham Copper Butterfly.

Gunbower Creek Reconnection and Restoration

Investment: \$72,689 – Caring for our Country

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: a large number of threatened plants and animals, which a focus on native fish, native grasses and herbaceous perennials

Overview: This project will restore native fish habitat along Gunbower Creek to provide uninterrupted movement of fish over the entire 120 km length of the waterway. Connectivity will be restored between the creek and Murray River through the construction of fish ladders and riparian restoration. High value vegetation will be protected through pest plant and animal control.

Healthy Productive Irrigated Landscapes

Investment: \$1.331 million – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Land and water assets in the Loddon Campaspe Irrigation Region, Murray River and Kerang Lakes

Overview: This project will continue the implementation of the Loddon Campaspe Irrigation Region Land and Water Management Plan. Broadly, it aims to mitigate salinity and nutrient risks on land and water assets, such as the Murray River and Kerang Lakes, improve agricultural productivity, and improve water use efficiency for savings to be used on-farm and/or for the environment. By undertaking a strategic and coordinated approach to land and water management, individual landholders and supporting organisations will increase their capacity to achieve a sustainable and viable future. Specifically, the project aims to support irrigation modernisation from the system to the farm level.

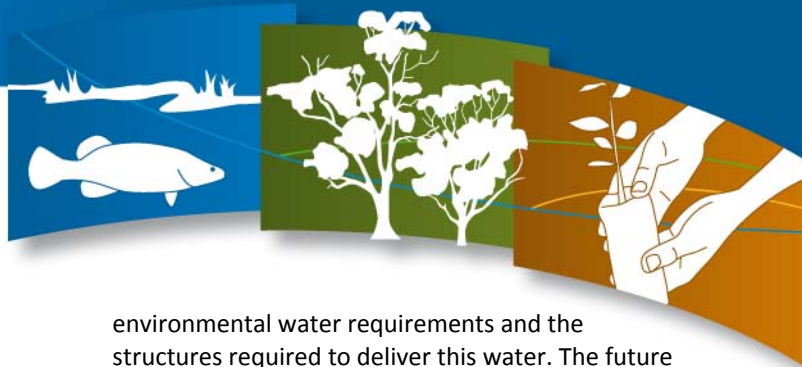
Improving the Health of Avoca River Reach 7

Investment: \$75,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Avoca River Reach 7 (Avoca to Archdale Junction) is a priority river reach for protection and enhancement, and is connected to nationally and internationally significant wetlands such as Avoca Marshes and Kerang Lakes.

Overview: This project will build on the 2008–09 Avoca River Reach 7 project to support community interest in river protection. Ongoing works will be delivered by the community and will include stock exclusion fencing, revegetation and strategic pest plant and animal control.



Kooyoora Connections

Investment: \$70,440 – Caring for our Country

Proponent: Wedderburn Conservation Management Network

Priority asset to be protected: Nationally threatened Mallee Fowl and associated Box Woodland habitat.

Overview: Kooyoora Connections is a landscape-scale project that aims to increase the quality and connectivity of Box Woodlands and increase the numbers of Mallee Fowl breeding pairs to create a more stable, viable population in the Wedderburn area. The project will implement recommendations of the 2008 Wedderburn Conservation Management Network Local Area Biodiversity Plan, developed by private and public land managers in the area.

Landscape Logic

Investment: \$141,340 – University of Tasmania

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: water quality and vegetation condition.

Overview: The North Central CMA delivers on the knowledge broking component of this research hub. It is responsible for ensuring a shared understanding of the project activities and purpose amongst the partners, and managing an outreach and training program for partners and other regional organisations.

The Living Murray – Gunbower Forest

Environmental Works and Measures Program and Environmental Delivery Program

Investment: \$1,681,825 – Murray–Darling Basin Authority (through The Living Murray program)

- Environmental Works and Measures Program: \$1,252,640
- Environmental Delivery Program: \$429,185

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Gunbower Forest is a flood dependant ecosystem of the Murray River floodplain in Northern Victoria. It is internationally recognised under the Ramsar Convention for the high value habitat provided to significant waterbird populations, and is an icon site under The Living Murray program.

Overview: Through The Living Murray program, the North Central CMA identifies Gunbower Forest's

environmental water requirements and the structures required to deliver this water. The future operation of infrastructure will allow the restoration of flood dependant communities within the forest, including colonial waterbird and native fish populations.

Loddon Stressed River

Investment: \$1.1 million – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: The Loddon River is listed as a flow-stressed river in the Victorian River Health Strategy.

Overview: This large-scale river restoration project will complement environmental flows by improving river health along the regulated reaches of the Loddon River (downstream of Cairn Curran to the River Murray). Onground works to be delivered include riparian protection (including fencing and revegetation), improved fish passage linkages, aquatic habitat improvement and management of weeds of national significance. Community engagement is a key component of this project.



The Loddon River – a priority asset in North Central Victoria

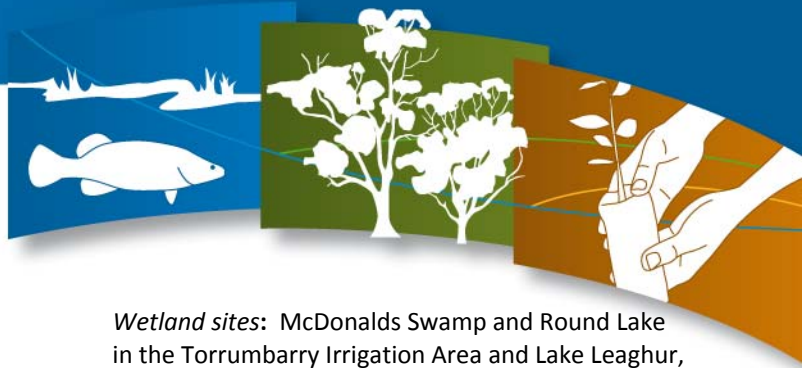
North Central Waterwatch

Investment: \$151,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Waterways and biodiversity throughout the region.

Overview: The North Central Waterwatch Program continues to provide reliable data to support catchment and asset condition assessment and to assist in the evaluation of North Central CMA and partner agency projects. The project will specifically focus on the condition of priority assets, where sites will be monitored to demonstrate project performance.



Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

In addition to providing water quality data, the North Central Waterwatch Program will improve community understanding of water quality, biodiversity and catchment health issues, and the impacts of different land management practices.

Northern Plains Conservation

Investment: \$310,680 (\$60,000 – Victorian Investment Framework; \$250,680 – Caring for Our Country)

Proponent: Department of Sustainability and Environment

Priority asset to be protected: High priority and nationally significant woodlands and grasslands of the Northern Plains

Overview: This project will protect, extend and improve habitat condition and linkages of high priority and nationally significant woodlands and grasslands of the Northern Plains. It will also implement high priority actions for six threatened flora species and five threatened fauna species. The project builds on works undertaken over the previous decade, including the establishment of a Conservation Management Network that links land managers and interested stakeholders in the area. The project will also fund the purchase and inclusion of over 1,000 hectares into the National Reserve System, and the development of a strategic plan for the management of the Patho Plains area.

Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project: Waterway & Wetland Environmental Watering Plans

Investment: \$930,358 – Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP)

Proponents: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: Environmental Watering Plans (EWPs) will be prepared for high-value waterways and wetlands considered to be at risk as a result of the NVIRP.

Waterway sites: The Campaspe River (downstream of Campaspe Weir to the Murray River) and the Loddon River (downstream of Loddon Weir to the Little Murray River). These sites support numerous environmental, cultural and social values including nationally and state listed fish species, waterbirds protected by international agreements, and rare and threatened flora species.

Wetland sites: McDonalds Swamp and Round Lake in the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area and Lake Leaghur, Little Lake Boort, Lake Meran, Little Lake Meran and Lake Yando in the Pyramid–Boort Irrigation Area. These wetlands provide high value habitat for significant waterbird species, some of which are protected by international agreements.

Overview: EWPs will be prepared for high-value waterways and wetlands considered to be at risk as a result of the NVIRP. The plans will be used to ensure that there is no net environmental loss resulting from the NVIRP by assessing and mitigating negative environmental impacts. Preparation of the EWPs will occur in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries, with reviews undertaken by the NVIRP Technical Advisory Committee and the Expert Review Panel.

Permanent Protection and Stewardship

Investment: \$200,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: Trust for Nature

Priority asset to be protected: high-value native vegetation in areas at risk in private ownership in the North Central CMA region

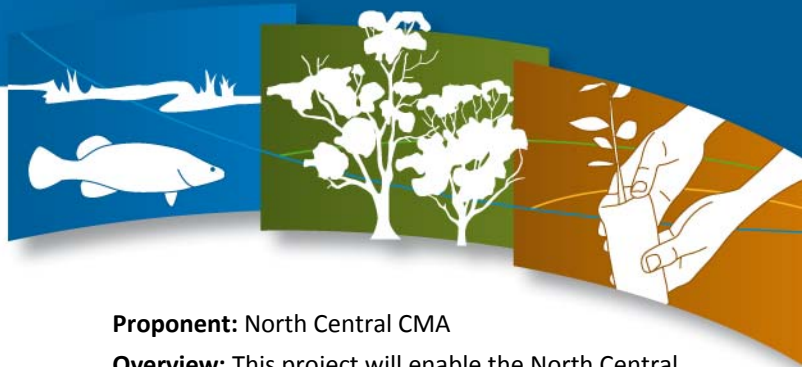
Overview: Through conservation covenant and stewardship programs, this Trust for Nature project will permanently protect, enhance and restore high value native vegetation in areas at risk in private ownership. The project will combine a structured covenant and stewardship program to ensure appropriate management and monitoring of these significant remnants. The Trust will also work with Landcare networks and Conservation Management Networks in the North Central CMA region to increase landscape scale conservation in the Goldfields bioregion between Bendigo, Wedderburn and St Arnaud.

Protection of the York Plains Wetlands

Investment: \$704,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: The York Plains is a series of connected wetlands along the Avon River that provides important biodiversity and ecosystem services.



Overview: This project will protect and restore the biodiversity and cultural values of the York Plains wetlands by mitigating threats such as rising saline groundwater and the removal and destruction of native habitat through overgrazing and cropping. Perennial pastures and native vegetation will be planted to reduce the off-site impact of salinity and soil degradation on this high value wetland system. Stewardship programs will ensure that there is enduring land practice change in and around the wetland area. An onground works program of fencing and revegetation will assist with natural regeneration of key understorey species and protection of cultural heritage sites.

Reporting & Accounting for Salinity

Investment: \$220,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: The North Central CMA has developed a robust reporting and accounting project to coordinate salinity management in the North Central CMA region. This project will ensure that the North Central CMA meets its obligations to the Victorian Government and the Murray–Darling Basin Authority relating to salinity management reporting and accounting. The North Central CMA will use a detailed register to manage responsibilities and will develop a work plan to guide the implementation of key actions required to maintain compliance over the next five years.

River Health Maintenance

Investment: \$300,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: sites where river health works have been undertaken.

Overview: This project aims to maintain past, current and future river health works, specifically activities that require further work (e.g. fencing, weed control, revegetation and erosion control), maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. erosion control structures) and responsive activities (e.g. instream vegetation and large woody debris).

River & Wetland Strategic Planning

Investment: \$50,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: This project will enable the North Central CMA to set strategic direction for the future of the region's waterways and wetlands through the development and renewal of the North Central River and Wetland Health Strategy. As part of this project, the CMA will review the previous North Central River Health Strategy, update the RIVERS database and provide datasets for the region, and contribute to Index of Stream Condition data.

State Landcare Projects

Investment: \$34,000 – Victorian Landcare Program

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: This project funds minor projects that contribute to regional Landcare support. These include the development of a regional Landcare newsletter, Indigenous engagement activities, and Landcare group local action plans.

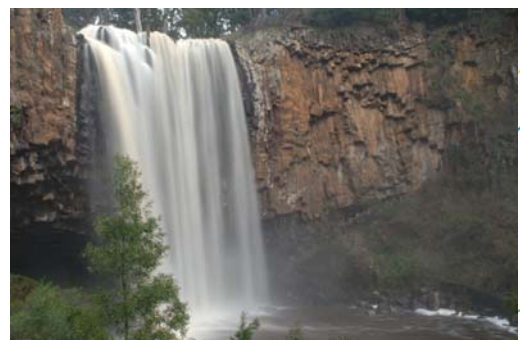
Upper Loddon & Campaspe Priority Reaches

Investment: \$607,000 – Victorian Investment Framework

Proponent: North Central CMA

Priority asset to be protected: The upper Loddon and Campaspe catchments in the Daylesford and surrounding areas are recognised as containing some of the healthiest rivers and creeks in North Central Victoria. They support intact and important streamside vegetation, deliver good quality water to downstream users, and provide important habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species. There is strong community support for river health management in these areas.

Overview: Project activities include improving and protecting vegetation, managing weeds of national significance (such as gorse, willow and blackberry), and involving the community in river health management.



Trentham Falls, a feature of the upper Campaspe catchment



Corporate

Investment: \$2,063,445

Proponent: North Central CMA

Overview: Corporate activities enable the effective delivery of projects and for statutory obligations to be met. The North Central CMA has identified mandatory functions and roles that require funding so that the region can deliver on its commitments with minimal risk. These include:

- Ensuring that the North Central CMA delivers on its statutory obligations under Victoria's *Water Act 1989*, *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* in relation to floodplain management and waterway protection.
- Capacity to meeting compliance functions as outlined in the Statement of Obligation, including the corporate governance requirements, finance systems and processes, and CEO, Board and Community Advisory Committee operations.
- A dedicated Investor Coordinator position, considered integral to drive the regional investment process and to coordinate the Regional Catchment Strategy renewal.

- Senior management roles for NRM Delivery, Communications/Engagement and Strategy functions to ensure that the North Central CMA is meeting strategic expectations in addition to operational requirements.
- Application of the Environmental Water Reserve Manager function.
- Regional communication and engagement activities, including production of the Annual Report.
- Regional catchment information services to support monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

All projects funded through the North Central Regional Investment Process have monitoring, evaluation and reporting plans built into the project design. These plans aim to demonstrate the project's individual and collective contribution to resource condition change in the North Central CMA region. The knowledge generated during these projects is then used to improve the design, development and implementation of current and future projects.

Further information

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