

Recommendations agreed at the Local Government NRM Forum 2 December 2003, Country Embassy, Sydney.

Recommendation 1

That the Minister and State Government commit to ensuring that each CMA has Local Government expertise.

Recommendation 2

That this forum generally supports the establishment of the Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA and a Sydney CMA. We reiterate the need for Local Government engagement in NRM and support the Local Govt. Implementation Plans to-date.

Recommendation 3

That the State Govt. formalise a 'NRM Partnership Agreement' with Local Govt. which will guide and direct working relationships between the two levels of government in planning for, and investing in, sustainable natural resource management and confirm commitment to the Catchment Blueprints, Vegetation and Water Sharing Plans which have been developed throughout the state.

Recommendation 4

That within the NRM partnership agreement there should be clear recognition that CMAs must have a strong strategic investment focus which seeks to better harness the totality of public and private investment in NRM within each CMA area to deliver on ground outcomes.

That in seeking to improve NRM efficiency, CMAs should consider whether existing local government and community forums/mechanisms are able to effectively assist investment decision making.

That local government should wherever possible harness its existing local and regional mechanisms to help deliver NRM outcomes through the catchment action plan process and identify opportunities for improving its own investment in NRM

Recommendation 5

The principles and mechanisms within the NRM Partnership Agreement should equitably secure continuing and adequate levels of State and Commonwealth Government funding for NRM and a commitment to the timely delivery of funds to the CMAs for sustainable NRM initiatives across the State must be assured for the long term.

The principles and mechanisms should also guide realistic, outcome focused and transparent policies and programs enabling State and Local governments to work together with the CMAs across NSW. Written agreements and contracts for action should be principal delivery mechanisms within the NRM Partnership Agreement to ensure implementation of Catchment Action Plans and achievement of agreed outcomes. Funding should be adequate to provide on-ground expertise and support, building on existing expertise, knowledge and resources.

Recommendation 6

That the NRM Partnership Agreement outline and confirm the commitment of Local Government, the Natural Resources Commission, the Natural Resource Advisory Council and DIPNR to work together to develop and establish an appropriate and State-wide framework which ensures consistency in landuse planning and decision-making for NRM across NSW.

The framework should use regional catchments as the primary co-ordinating geographical units for consistency. This would ensure that identified and agreed regional and local values for all natural resources and the environment are sustained and enhanced wherever possible.

Recommendation 7

That the NRM Partnership Agreement outline and confirm means by which State and Local Government undertake the 'two way sharing' of information, co-ordinated at the regional level by the CMA. The State (DIPNR) and Commonwealth Governments should assist Local Government and other State agencies to document and manage the data sets they hold that are relevant to NRM and make them available to all stakeholders through the CMAs. The Agreement should also confirm the role of DIPNR as an information provider for baseline NRM data and, where relevant, to research and fill data gaps at an appropriate scale and further, that data be provided to Local Government at no cost.

Recommendation 8

That the NRM Partnership Agreement confirm commitment by State and Local Govt to work together to develop environmental indicators and management performance indicators for each CMA area. The CMAs should manage a coordinated approach to monitoring that involves both govt. and the community.

Recommendation 9

That the NRM Partnership Agreement confirm a joint commitment to the development and implementation of a common and consistent approach to the reporting of monitoring results and of progress in management of each catchment. Such reporting should be timed to complement Local Government SoE reporting while Local Government will work towards aligning its reporting to assist catchment wide requirements.

Recommendation 10

That the NRM Partnership Agreement outline and confirm joint commitment to developing and funding an ongoing NRM capacity building strategy, reviewed annually within each catchment. That individual CMAs develop programs and initiatives within Local Government areas in their region to build community capacity to deliver on catchment management plans. Further, that this be incorporated into the NSW Capacity Building Strategy and adequate funds be allocated to ensure implementation.

Recommendation 11

That the past progress in coastal zone management issues in NSW is built upon through the reform process.

That a stewardship role for the coastal zone is embodied within new management structure to achieve integrated management of the coastal zone and its interaction with the areas managed by the new catchment management authorities.

Specific recommendations include:

- a) That there is a need to build the ability and capacity to deal with coastal issues under the new NRM framework including within the CMA's NRC, NRAC and that all these bodies require coastal expertise in their representation.
- b) That a long term Coastal Management Strategy for the NSW coast be developed to focus upon development pressures and in recognition of the existing catchment blueprints

having limited consideration of coastal issues. The state Coastal Management Strategy would:

- Focus upon development and will incorporate the NSW Coastal Policy, Coastal Protection Act and SEPP 71 (Coastal Protection)
 - Develop local Coastline Management Plans (under provisions in the Coastal Protection Act) to address local management issues, consistent with the state vision.
- c) That the four coastal CMAs meet 1-2 times per annum to specifically focus upon coastal issues and coordinate integrated and consistent management responses for the NSW coast.
- d) That additional resources be provided to the Comprehensive Coastal Assessment (CCA) process to enable better, and more inclusive data collection and to provide the necessary tools and capacity building programs to assist stakeholders (primarily local government) to interpret and effectively utilisation of the CCA.