



## **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SURVEY OF THE NEEDS OF COUNCILS**

### **BACKGROUND ON NRM REFORMS**

The NSW Government has committed to reforms to the way in which natural resources are managed. This has included a major restructure of state agencies with responsibility for natural resource management (NRM) issues and the abolition of a number of committees with responsibility for managing natural resources including Vegetation Management Committees and Catchment Management Boards.

The reforms included the establishment of Catchment Management Authorities, new regional structures to manage natural resources. These authorities derive their responsibilities and structure from the *Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003*.

### **PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY**

This survey has been designed to ascertain local government's *capacity building* needs to engage in the regional scale planning for, and delivery of natural resource management. *Capacity Building* may sound like a buzz phrase at the moment, but in this context it is about providing assistance, in a range of ways which better enables councils to be involved in regional NRM. Capacity can refer to awareness, skills, knowledge, motivation, commitment and confidence.

In this case it's what local government needs to improve its capacity to deliver regional NRM objectives. This may include the need for more information and awareness raising of regional NRM, opportunities to gain skills and knowledge through training and resources, or anything else which councils believe will assist them to become involved in regional NRM.

The results of this survey will be provided to the Catchment Management Authority (CMA) to create a profile of local government in the region and to explain councils' level of engagement in the regional process to date and importantly the needs of councils to improve their capacity to be involved. The Local Government and Shires Association also intends to use these results to ensure commitments are made to ensure appropriate resources are provided to meet the identified needs of councils.

### **WHAT ARE REGIONAL NRM PLANS?**

Regional NRM plans are required by the State and Commonwealth Governments to provide a strategic approach to the management of natural resources across a region. Regional NRM plans need to be accredited by both the State and Commonwealth governments in an agreed standard and format. The plans prioritise NRM activities in a region and allocate responsibility to these actions. In NSW these were Catchment Management Blueprints, however since the creation of CMAs, regional plans will be revised. They will incorporate previously prepared 'catchment blueprints', but will also include other NRM plans (such as vegetation management plans and water sharing plans) for the region and result in Catchment Action Plans.

### **WHY ARE REGIONAL NRM PLANS IMPORTANT?**

Regional plans identify NRM priorities and targets for the region. They are then used to develop CMA investment strategies which identify specific actions needed to address NRM problems identified in the plan, including the cost and specific impact on particular NRM outcomes. Funds are contributed to these investment strategies by the State and Commonwealth Governments.



## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SURVEY OF THE NEEDS OF COUNCILS

This survey has been designed to ascertain local government's *capacity building* needs to engage in the regional scale planning for, and delivery of natural resource management (NRM). Information collected will assist to develop Local Government Profiles for each CMA region to determine capacity building needs at the catchment level.

Please return completed surveys to the Associations: fax 9242 4111 or email [kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au](mailto:kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au) by **30 July 2004**.

Thank you for participating in this project.

### SECTION A: CONTACT DETAILS

Council .....

Please indicate who completed this survey:

Officer       Manager       Director       General Manager       Councillor

**Optional contact details:** Please provide contact details if you would like to receive the results of this survey and any other future communication relating to the outcomes of this research.

Contact officer : Name: ..... Position title: .....

Phone: ..... email: .....

### SECTION B: COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL NRM PROCESSES

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. What is the level of Council's understanding of natural resource management issues in a local and regional context?

No knowledge      Limited knowledge      General understanding      Above average understanding      Comprehensive Understanding

2. Please indicate the level of involvement your council had with the previous Catchment Management Boards, now Catchment Management Authorities in your region?

No involvement      Limited involvement      General involvement      Above average involvement      Comprehensive involvement

3. Please indicate the level of awareness within council of the regional NRM plan developed for each catchment – called a Catchment Blueprint.

No knowledge      Limited knowledge      General understanding      Above average understanding      Comprehensive Understanding

4. If your council was involved in the development of the Blueprint, please indicate the extent of involvement. You can tick more than one box here.

- Participated on a regional NRM Board (i.e. Catchment Management Board)
- Attended briefing sessions
- Contributed locally relevant information
- Provided comments on the draft plan
- Reviewed the plan and linked it to council activities underway
- Other, please specify:

5. If council has had limited or no involvement in regional NRM, please provide reasons from the list below. You can tick more than one box here.

- Lack of awareness of the need to be involved
- Lack of funding / resources
- Lack of expertise / skills / background / training in council staff
- Lack of political support within council
- Other priorities seen as more important for council
- Difficulty coordinating with other local government areas
- Other (please specify):

6. What are the most important NRM issues facing your LGA?

Please list: *For example... salinity, vegetation loss, water quality, threatened species issues etc.*

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**SECTION C: COUNCILS CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS**

7. Please indicate what capacity council has (including time, resources, staff etc.) to undertake NRM activities.

None	Limited capacity	General capacity	Above average capacity	Comprehensive capacity
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8. Please indicate what capacity council has (including time, resources, staff etc.) to participate in the development and implementation of a regional NRM plan (i.e. catchment blueprint)?

None	Limited capacity	General capacity	Above average capacity	Comprehensive capacity
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9. Have any linkages been made between regional NRM goals and council's corporate and planning schemes?

None	Limited capacity	General capacity	Above average capacity	Comprehensive capacity
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10. What does your council need to increase involvement in regional NRM planning and implementation processes? Please identify council's support for:

	Priority given		
	Low	Medium	High
<b>Awareness raising activities</b> (e.g. meetings with councils, councillors, briefings)			
<b>Skills and Training</b> (through face to face workshops, provision of tools)			
<b>Information and Knowledge</b> (research, data etc.)			
<b>Support systems and networks</b>			
<b>Specialised staff</b>			
<b>Resources</b>			
<b>Formal relationship with the CMA</b>			

11. What are the benefits to council in being involved in regional NRM planning and implementation processes? (Please rank these 1-5)

- Resource sharing across councils
- Strategic approach to NRM
- Accessing funding for projects
- Reflecting broader communities aspirations
- Other (please specify):

**SECTION D: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

12. Is there a regional group of councils, or regionally based forum or Committee in which your council actively participates, and in which regional NRM or environmental issues are discussed? If so please detail:

Name of Group/Committee: .....

Membership: .....

Contact for further information: .....

13. Do you look to this group to provide you with information on regional scale NRM initiatives?

- Yes
- No

Who else do you seek information from. Please list. ....

14. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the capacity building needs of your council? Please provide details.

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT**

To ensure this response has endorsement within council please include a signature of the Director of Planning and Environment (or equivalent) or the General Manager.

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....