

## **NRM SOUTH**

### **SOUTHERN NRM STRATEGY**

#### **DISCUSSION PAPER SUMMARY**

## **BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN NRM**

### **SUMMARY**

The health of our landscapes and waterways depends largely on the level and nature of the human impact on them. The attitudes and practices of people determine whether our natural resources – our soils, our waterways, our bush, our coasts, our native animals – are in good shape or not.

Responsibility for the health of our region's natural resources rests with all of us. Even if you live in a flat in Hobart, your food and fibre choices, your use of fresh water and how you dispose of your wastes have a direct impact on the health of our environment. The farmers who produce the food and fibre that you buy do so in response to market signals and market pressures in a highly competitive global trading environment. Much of the land and water degradation that we see now has been caused by decisions and practices in the past – such as broad-scale land clearing – which were sanctioned by government policy or taxation incentives with good intent and in line with the knowledge and attitudes to natural resources of the time. We now know that we must look after our natural resources much more carefully, as it is too easy to damage them to a point where they can no longer be repaired.

If 'people' and their behaviours and expectations are the fundamental cause of most natural resource management (NRM) 'problems', solving them rests in harnessing people more effectively. The Southern NRM strategy will need to:

- Identify the different 'market segments' (groups or 'target audiences') within the community and the roles they could play in addressing NRM issues. These are broad-ranging, including individuals, community groups, organisations, businesses and industry, governments and public and private land managers.
- Identify the key motivations of each target audience, particularly the things that might motivate them to contribute to the regional effort to improve our natural resource management.

**NRM South gratefully acknowledges funding support from the Natural Heritage Trust Extension and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. NRM South is also grateful to the many people who have contributed to the development of each of the Discussion Papers.**



- Determine the specific communication needs, incentives and/or level of support each target audience may require to participate more effectively in NRM
- Build or improve the ability of everyone in the community – individuals, groups, institutions and organisations - to contribute to more sustainable NRM
- Raise awareness in the community at large about how consumer choices impact on our environment and how everyone must help build a more sustainable future
- Address the research, information management and dissemination, communication, skills, training and resource needs to support the work of each segment of the population to improve the management of our natural resources

Two of the Goals for the Southern NRM Strategy proposed by NRM South acknowledge the important role of participation, communication, networks and partnerships and the need for well-informed decisions and require us to build the capacity of governments, industry and the community to manage natural resources.

NRM South proposes a number of Management Actions to help raise awareness of the issues and involve the whole community in natural resource management. These could include:

#### **Raising awareness**

- Implement a simple public awareness campaign to raise understanding in the community about the link between community behaviour and the health of our resources

#### **Changing attitudes & building ‘capacity’ in the community**

- Implement a suite of incentive programs (for example, stewardship payments for farmers who look after the bush on their land; rate rebates or other rewards or recognition for land and water managers who implement effective natural resource management conservation or enhancement activities)

#### **Creating and sharing knowledge and information**

- Implement large-scale demonstrations of ‘good practice’, such as establishment of ‘demonstration farms’ as a communication tool to assist land managers learn and share information
- Publicise case studies – ie tell the stories of some of the leading edge land and water managers
- Invest in on-going management of trials of new products and species (for example, trials of regionally suitable species for commercial farm forestry, particularly in some of the drier parts of the region)
- Employ science communicators to convert recent research findings into digestible information and make this readily available

#### **Assisting with resources**

- Provide labour and financial incentives to ensure natural resource manager are not prevented from tackling problems on their own land because of lack of time and lack of money

### **Building skills**

- Provide targeted, short training programs

### **Providing support**

- Provide facilitators and technical support so that land and managers and community groups are able to get help

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1. What would YOU need to help you do more to look after our natural resources better?**
- 2. Are there other barriers to good natural resource management?**
- 3. How important or urgent do you think the proposed Management Actions could be to help improve the way we manage our land and water?**  
**Do you agree with them?**
- 4. What other issues need to be addressed to build effective participation in NRM?**
- 5. What long-term targets (eg 50 years) should we set for the Southern region to build effective participation in NRM?**
- 6. What do you think are the five most important and most urgent Management Actions we should implement to help people look after our natural resources better?**

NRM South has developed a series of Discussion Papers to get feedback from the community on natural resource management issues and options. Your feedback will inform the next step: development of a draft Southern NRM Strategy, expected to be released for consultation in April 2004.

**Please send your comments on the Discussion Papers to:**

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins  
Coordinator, NRM South  
C/o GPO Box 44  
HOBART TAS 7001

or **Email:** [nrmsouth@nht.tas.gov.au](mailto:nrmsouth@nht.tas.gov.au)

Closing date for comments: **Monday, 19 January 2004**