

## Standing Committee on Environment & Heritage

### INQUIRY INTO CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

The images of Catchment Management Committees in the communities in which they act is not nearly as good as it should be due to their lack of ability to force change. This can be easily overcome.

They have also suffered to some extent from a lack of clear definition of their role, which has led in some cases to a tendency to try to include too much. This can also be easily overcome.

Government should define the role of a Catchment Committee and it should be this:

- (1) Identify detrimental natural resource trends in its catchment.
- (2) Develop a strategic plan to address those trends.
- (3) Allocate available funds (NHT or its successor) to community or agency projects designed to halt or ameliorate the trends.
- (4) Negotiate at least annually with relevant government departments to get project input or, in alarming circumstances, direct action.
- (5) Monitor agency and community project progress and report to relevant ministers.

The only difficult part of my plan is convincing Ministers/Departmental heads to devolve some of the fund allocation responsibility. This could be done on the basis of the quality of the Strategic Plan and in my view is critical to having the whole catchment management idea progress. Until the committees have real power (= \$\$) they will be viewed as Mickey Mouse turnouts and will continue to lose community support.

Scott Sturgess  
Agriculture WA  
PO Box 522  
Carnarvon WA 6701  
Ph 08 99563322