

July 23 1999

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re: Inquiry into Catchment Management

Introduction

The Shoalhaven Catchment Management Committee (SCMC)* welcomes the opportunity to send comment to the Inquiry regarding Catchment Management in NSW, and in the Shoalhaven catchment in particular.

In this submission we address the strategic role of Catchment Management Committees (CMCs) and emphasise the importance of CMC members being out in the community resolving problems with the local community.

We have attached for the Standing Committee a list of achievements of the SCMC. This list is not all encompassing but should give the Committee a fair idea of the strategic role of catchment management and also the ways in which the CMC has worked with local communities.

We are also enclosing to you a number of documents arising from our major programs.

Strategic role of CMCs

Like most CMCs, there are a number of major strategic projects that the SCMC has been working on for two to three years. This timeframe includes community consultation, developing the concept and methodology and obtaining funds for implementation. Examples include catchment management planning for urban and

* The Shoalhaven Catchment Management Committee (SCMC) was established in September 1998. The area covered was previously represented by the Lower Shoalhaven CMC and the Upper Shoalhaven CMC. The Lower and Upper Shoalhaven CMCs had been established since May 1993 and June 1994 respectively. As a result of a State-wide Review of Total Catchment Management in 1997, the Minister for Land and Water Conservation and Agriculture, Mr. Richard Amery, announced that the Lower and Upper Shoalhaven CMC's would be combined to form the Shoalhaven CMC. This was to enhance total catchment management and provide operational improvements.

coastal environments, remnant vegetation management strategies for the whole of the catchment, Jervis Bay Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program and working with neighbouring CMCs to develop a regional farm forestry strategy. In developing these programs we have facilitated the involvement of all stakeholders and reduced the fragmentation of natural resource management. We have also established networks within the local communities and a shared understanding of the issues. The desired outcomes from such strategic projects are now beginning to be realised.

One point we want to make about this strategic role is that it is a slow process. No one ever suggested implementing Total Catchment Management (TCM) would be a quick process. Yet there has been some unspoken pressure for visible output. This comes, in part, from lead agencies wanting to show “something” to the community and to their political masters. It also comes from the community wondering ‘what it is CMCs do’. This sometimes pushes CMCs to adopt a less strategic approach in favour of producing product.

The SCMC’s response has been to concentrate on our broad strategic role but also to work with other groups in the community to ensure a more immediate demonstration of TCM such as:

- addressing riverbank erosion with Shoalhaven River Farmers;
- helping Healthy Cities to initiate drain stencilling to raise awareness about the purpose of stormwater drains and their connection to rivers and estuaries;
- facilitating the Dairy Industry Group’s development of an effluent management program for dairy shed waste;
- developing a farm forestry research and development project
- organising tours of the relevant natural resource issues in the local community.

At the same time we have been:

- promoting through the media our role in funding and our relationship to landcare; and
- presenting through the media outcomes of strategic actions such as the SCMC audit of endangered fauna in the Shoalhaven (see article enclosed) and where this fits into better natural resource management.

Maintaining this balance has helped the community to understand our relationship to on-ground work and our strategic role of integrating natural resource management. We have worked with the community to emphasise the relationship between the various natural resources (soil, water, vegetation, fauna) and, consequently, why a TCM approach is needed. Our experience is that many in the community now understand this. It is not uncommon for community members to insist on a TCM approach to planning and decision making.

TCM attempts to change how things are done - to some extent this requires a cultural shift. It is fundamentally imperative to take the community along. This requires being able to work closely with the community at the catchment level.

In most of our projects that you will see summarised on the Achievements List, the role of the CMC has been one of initiation by bringing together various agencies and community to discuss how we can more effectively address natural resource issues. The CMC has played a major role in planning the strategy, obtaining the resources,

seeking the cooperation of the various stakeholders and coordinating the project. This role of coordination and facilitating change is not done by any other sector (government or non-government) because they each have their specialised area of responsibility or interest. Our role is to bring those different areas of interest and responsibility together in a way that integrates the management of natural resources. Our role is to ensure that the community is part of this so that the issues are well understood; and consequently, the community can share the adoption of the outcomes. This role can not happen unless CMCs can have face to face contact with their catchment communities.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Jim Walliss
Chairperson, SCMC

Enclosures:

- Achievements of the SCMC
- Draft Broughton Creek Catchment Management Plan
- Draft Currumbene Creek Catchment Management Plan
- Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) brochure
- Draft Regional Strategy for Farm Forestry (available on request August 1999)
- Remnant Vegetation Management Strategy (Table of Contents and introduction)
- Draft Model Management Plans for four vegetation community types
 - Rainforest (Croobyar Rd, Milton)
 - Sclerophyll Forest (Moeyan Hill, Berry)
 - Woodland (Kangaroo Valley)
 - Wetland (Brundee Swamp, Worrigee)

Achievements of the SCMC 1995

Remnant Vegetation Management

The project involves:

- a) an inventory of remnant vegetation from reports, surveys and community assessment sheets.
Previous studies and surveys have been identified and mapped. An index of studies and surveys has been compiled and a hard copy reference system developed. On-ground surveys of remnant vegetation completed.
- b) logging this information into Council's database system.
 - Data digitised against Shoalhaven map base.
 - System set up for logging future data available through community assessment submissions and remnant information associated with development applications.
 - The database will be accessible to the community for reading through the public library computer system. The information is being converted into ArcView GIS.
- c) the adoption of general management principles for remnants.
General management principles have been adopted by the Committee
- d) model management plans for different types of vegetation communities.
Four sites have been selected based on a range of criteria including conservation value, mix of public and private land and the opportunity to demonstrate management options. The model management plans are an illustration of how the principles and strategy can be implemented and case studies for the development of management plans by other private and public sources.
- e) development of a remnant vegetation strategy to be endorsed by participating stakeholders.
A draft strategy is now being completed (see enclosed Table of Contents and Introduction).

Catchment Management Planning, CMP

The CMC coordinated the preparation of two catchment management plans, these being the first such plans for urban and coastal areas. The process involved:

- i) collecting information about the nature of each subcatchment; its environment, its condition and pressures on it;

- ii) presenting the information in text and map form in consultation with local communities; and
- iii) preparing a management plan taking into consideration the information audit and community input.

The outcomes:

- the integration and exchange of information between agencies (state and local) and between government and community;
- community participation in planning and TCM;
- facilitation of integrated management response to natural resource issues; and
- identification of catchment landcare needs in these areas.

The draft strategies for Broughton and Currumbene catchments require a final edit prior to public release (see enclosed drafts).

The CMC recommends that natural resource plans such as these form the basis for Development Control Plans by local government.

One immediate outcome of the project is a Green Corp team currently involved in fencing, weed control and revegetation along selected sections of Broughton Creek and its tributaries.

Kangaroo River Working Group

This project is to be a pilot for water management planning (water quality and flow) in the Sydney/South Coast region. To date, the Working Group (a subcommittee of the SCMC) has:

- gathered existing water quality data.
- sampled river for faecal biomarkers to identify source of contamination.
- held meeting held with KV farmers to discuss water quality issues and funding opportunities. (Four farmers signed up for Catchment Protection Scheme; others expressed interest in 'being next').
- held a public meeting to discuss management of water quality and to field questions.
- circulated brochures on management of domestic and commercial on-site effluent systems to all households and businesses in Valley.
- initiated a water management plan.

Farm Forestry

Illawarra Farm Forestry Project, IFFP (research & development; joint SCMC and Illawarra CMC project with University of Wollongong) has:

- completed plot designs for eight properties;
- almost completed planting on six properties;
- recorded designs on database for future research and development;
- developed a data-collection protocol for landholders; and

- held landholder workshop covering Timber Harvest Guarantee Act, pruning and timber usage.

Illawarra Region Farm Forestry Development Project (joint project managed by SCMC, ICMC and the University of Wollongong)

- Secured DPIE funding to develop regional farm forestry strategy.
- Draft strategy to be discussed with stakeholders at public meeting July 27 1999. Draft available late August 1999.

Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program, Jervis Bay, CIMP (see enclosed brochure)

- *Main program*
 - First level monitoring design (Fresh Water Inputs) ratified by all stakeholders. In-kind and cash contributions in the order of \$40-50,000 received. Implementation in process with base flow sampling and event flow sampling.
 - Memorandum of Understanding (or equivalent) detailing commitment to project and provision of resources for monitoring distributed and signed off by stakeholders.
 - Monitoring support work complete: probability density function calculations to provide interpretative framework for event flow; detailed site selection, catchment area determination, stream cross-sectional area surveys and run-off calculations for sample response times complete. Laboratory and sample transportation logistics complete.
 - Data format, and dissemination intentions provided to stakeholders to enable them to incorporate new load based monitoring data into existing databases used for reporting (e.g. State of Environment).
- *Bird Monitoring component of CIMP*
- *Meta Data Base component of CIMP*
 - Basic Data base constructed using Visual Basic Programming Options in MS Access. Raw data entry completed.
- *Saltmarsh and Mangrove Monitoring component of CIMP*
 - Detailed site inspections completed. Transects established. Samples for C14 dating collected and analysed.
- *Access Roads and Tracks Erosion Assessment and Monitoring component (CIMP)*
 - Fieldwork, soil analysis and report complete.
- *Monitoring of marine water quality and seagrass meadow*
 - Planning complete; funding sought.

Shoalhaven River Erosion Plan

- Secured Wollongong University student to work with SCMC and Shoalhaven River Farmers to establish research project about the effectiveness of riverbank plantings in erosion control and to promote participation of additional landholders along the River
- Secured Green Corp program to fence and revegetate stretch of river along Bundanon.

Estuary Management Planning

The SCMC worked with Shoalhaven Council and Department of Land and Water Conservation to:

- Initiate 'Estuary/Catchment Management Planning Project' integrating these two management planning processes.
- Secure funding for this joint innovation. Work began in May 1999.

Community Awareness and participation

The SCMC is involved in a range of activities aimed at raising community awareness and participation. Examples include:

- Worked with Council and Healthy Cities to organise preparation of a giant jigsaw puzzle (7m x 5m) about TCM. Twenty-six schools participated in painting the jigsaw pieces and assembling the puzzle at a media event during National Water Week (1995).
- Helped organise and participated in a Regional Streamwatch Congress involving high schools throughout the region.
- Conducted 30 radio interviews about TCM
- Had 16 articles about TCM issues printed in local papers.
- Worked with about 10 community groups each year in developing funding applications for on-the-ground work.
- Presented a paper on monitoring and TCM at NSW Coastal Conference and to local community groups.
- Held public launch of Fauna Audit report at Bangalee followed by spot-lighting for native fauna (see enclosed media coverage).
- Worked with DLWC to promote RiverCare 2000 event with Susie Maroney swimming in Shoalhaven River. Organised associated water activities and land activities including music, food and TCM/Landcare displays.
- Developed an Upper Shoalhaven Phosphorus Action Campaign
- Developed a promotional brochures, a series of poster displays on the work of the Committee and purchased a TCM banner for use at field days and public events.
- Purchased soil landscapes information and other resource materials for landcare groups in the catchment.
- Initiated a water quality monitoring project with six landcare groups. Monitoring is primarily focused at this stage on the success of landcare erosion control and planting projects.

