



Integrated Natural Resource Management Group for the South Australia Murray Darling Basin Inc.

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Salinity Inquiry
Submission No. 23.....

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Science and Innovation
R1 Suite 116
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re: Inquiry into the coordination of the science to combat the nation's salinity problem

In response to your request for a submission on the subject of the Commonwealth Government's role in managing and coordinating the application of best science in Australia's salinity programs, I have briefly detailed some examples of how science has and will continue to be used in the SA Murray Darling Basin to help direct the development and implementation of salinity programs.

Use of salinity science in salinity programs

The Integrated Natural Resource Management Group for the SA Murray-Darling Basin (INRM Group) has utilised scientific knowledge and expertise during the development of the regional INRM Plan and Investment Strategy. The INRM Group will continue to support projects that seek additional knowledge to help address salinity issues in the region.

Scientific knowledge and expertise has been particularly important in assisting to make decisions in relation to large investments in the region eg salt interception schemes. This knowledge is also becoming increasingly important in relation to ensuring on-ground activities are targeted to high priority areas.

Although the airborne geophysics mapping in the region has not been completed, initial results indicate that the knowledge gained will be valuable in supporting prioritisation of on-ground works. This will ensure that future investment is well targeted and achieves the maximum return. The results are also expected to direct further research through the identification of knowledge gaps.

Research and implementation linkages

Excellent linkages have been developed between those conducting research and those implementing salinity solutions within the region. In the SA Murray Darling Basin region, local action planning groups are key community groups implementing on-ground activities. During the development of local action plans, scientific knowledge and expertise was sought and utilised. Knowledge gaps were identified and funding sought to obtain this knowledge.

For example the Murray Mallee Local Action Planning Association Inc commissioned a scientific review by CSIRO of groundwater recharge in the Mallee region and the salinity implications for the Murray River. The information provided in this review has helped direct revegetation activities to

reduce salinity impacts from the dryland Mallee region to the River Murray. The process of undertaking the review also developed a strong link between the community group and the research scientists which has continued to be utilised. Other local action planning groups have also commissioned scientific knowledge to identify and quantify issues during land and water management planning processes and developed linkages with these researchers.

Adequacy of technical and scientific support in applying management options

The adequacy of technical and scientific support in applying salinity management options is variable and it is recognised that there will always be a need for more knowledge and expertise. For projects with significant investment, eg salt interception schemes, adequate technical and scientific support is sought before implementing the project. However addressing salinity issues through land management change has proven to be more challenging, with more technical and scientific support required to identify economic options that will result in the significant landscape change required to address salinity issues.

There will be an ongoing need for technical and scientific support in the region and the INRM Group will seek to identify the support needs required and ensure that appropriate investment is sought to meet these needs. Identification of research and development priorities will also be a key role of the group to ensure that adequate technical and scientific support is available in the future.

Summary

This is a very brief overview of the application of best science in salinity programs in the SA Murray Darling Basin and I would like to emphasise that a significant amount of knowledge and expertise has been utilised to develop and implement programs in the region and more specific program information is available from both scientists and project managers.

If the Committee requires any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Judy Pfeiffer
Group Support Officer
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