

32201-01

14 November, 2005

Dr Jacqueline Dewar
Secretary (References Committee)
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600



Dear Dr Dewar

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE EXTENT AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SALINITY

In response to your request for further information on two matters which I agreed to take on notice and provide a written response please note the following:

1. The amount of money that WSROC has received (and applied for) from the Natural Heritage Trust.

In total WSROC has received \$179,000 in NHT funding (excluding GST) over the past four years.

In the first round of funding in 2001 WSROC received \$77,000 in NHT funding and a further \$2,000 from the Department of Land and Water Conservation which enabled a Project Officer- Salinity to be employed at WSROC for 12 months. This officer developed a Code of Practice, developed a regional co-ordinating network, increased recognition of salinity as an issue within the region and held a number of community awareness days.

In the second round of funding in 2002 WSROC received \$ 95,400 to facilitate the implementation of the Code of Practice, provide support and training for stakeholders, especially councils.

In November 2003, as part of its ongoing commitment to promoting best practice salinity management in the region, WSROC applied for and received in 2004 Stage 3 NHT funds (staged funding of \$22,500) to conduct an urban salinity conference highlighting current best practices and future trends and to develop an urban salinity website.

The conference was held in February 2005 and was co-ordinated by a steering committee made up of WSROC, DIPNR and staff from WSROC's constituent councils.

2. The actual program(s) within the Natural Heritage Trust through which WSROC has been able to access funding.

The funding from NHT came from the Natural Resource and Environment Program. WSROC has been grateful for the NHT funding that it has received but is currently struggling to maintain the momentum that existed in the past.

In the future WSROC believes that there would be opportunities for the NHT to support regional work on salinity through the CMA process, by providing funds for the employment of an officer at WSROC to deliver a number of projects including:

- Gathering groundwater data for the region;
- Collecting existing groundwater information;
- Assisting with better implementation of the Code of Practice; and
- Helping Councils with liability for salinity issues.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 9671 5271.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Finland
Assistant Director