

Senate NRM Inquiry

- There is a need to eliminate 'transition years' between programs. Transition years are very disruptive and demoralizing. They cause a loss of personnel, skills and momentum.
- Avoid abrupt changes in program methodology, direction, targets etc in the future. Again this is disruptive and wasteful of past efforts.
- There is a need to align State and Federal efforts in NRM. There should be common targets. There should be more emphasis on an integrated and coordinated approach to targets and funding with linked business plans between partners. Targets should be reviewed on a regular basis and re-prioritised if necessary. The Australian Govt needs to work with the States and the Regional NRM Groups to develop a National Framework for Integrated NRM to coordinate with a State NRM Plan, Strategy and Investment Plan. This would be the basis for cost effective investment at all scales.
- Need to develop strategic delivery programs at both national and state levels as a means of achieving RCTs and as a framework for the development of projects at different scales. These would be included in the business plans
- Regional Strategies and Investment Plans, their Targets and Program Logic (currently being developed) should be maintained as the basis for Regional delivery
- There is a need to clarify and emphasise the role of Regions in (1) coordination of NRM effort within their Region (2) capacity building within their Region (3) information and knowledge sharing on NRM issues within their Region (4) project delivery within and between Regions
- Greater recognition of the role of Regional Groups in Capacity Building within their Regions – particularly in high population Regions where there are large numbers of community groups and other stakeholders. A clarification of how '*community skills, knowledge and engagement*' can be addressed as a priority area when most prioritisation approaches appear to be asset based.
- Provide secure on-going 'core funding' to cover the essential administration costs, regional strategy development, program development, and M&E costs of the Regional Groups. Currently these are mostly funded out of program dollars, which makes program outcomes look less cost effective than they really are.
- Confirmation of funding should always be at least 3 months prior to commencement (or cessation) of programs. Again this would help to minimise disruption to programs.
- The Australian Govt should adopt Integrated NRM and Environmental Management as 'core business' to set long term targets for the nation and to fund in partnership with State and Local Government on an ongoing basis like health and education. This would put a more strategic perspective on things like drought and climate change - it is about managing our landscapes in a holistic way, rather than continually responding to a succession of crises as they emerge