

## Commencement of the Natural Resource Management Research Alliance

### Forming an Alliance

The Alliance is a collaboration between natural resource managers and researchers. It includes researchers working in biophysical and socio-economic disciplines as well as the practitioners who actively undertake management of our natural resources.

The Alliance was established in 2008 following extensive consultation, including a feasibility study commissioned by the South Australian State Government. This study outlined the need for a coordinated approach to Natural Resource Management (NRM) science and technology and presented a compelling case on how an alliance could provide significant economic, environmental and social benefits to the State.

The Alliance is one of 7 Alliances' within the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) Constellation SA framework ([http://www.innovation.sa.gov.au/Government/constellation\\_sa](http://www.innovation.sa.gov.au/Government/constellation_sa)).

The Alliances within Constellation SA aim to:

- ▶ Strengthen collaboration between researchers within and across disciplines
- ▶ Improve the interface between the research community and the practitioners to facilitate translation of research into practical solutions.

Guided by these principles, the Alliance operates by a 'market driven' model and will focus on developing research that supports the needs of NRM practitioners. The Alliance will achieve this by:

- ▶ Strengthening linkages between natural resource managers and providers of NRM science, technology and innovation



Pitfall trap, Erudina Station

### In this issue

▶ Welcome to the first issue 'synergy matters', the newsletter of the Natural Resource Management Research Alliance. We welcome your comments and feedback on this newsletter

▶ Minister Jay Weatherill, South Australian Minister for Environment and Conservation will launch the Alliance on the 23rd February at the Plant Research Centre Auditorium. Don Blackmore will be the keynote Speaker.

- ▶ Working with NRM practitioners to identify and capture NRM issues to be addressed through science, technology and innovation
- ▶ Increasing capacity and capability of researchers by fostering collaboration on priority research
- ▶ Providing strategic advice on the adoption of science, technology and innovation outcomes to regional boards and government
- ▶ Attracting and directing investment into NRM science and technology to improve NRM outcomes across South Australia

The partners signed the 'Alliance Agreement' in mid 2008.

The partners of the Alliance are:

- ▶ South Australia's eight regional NRM boards

- ▶ South Australia's NRM Council
- ▶ South Australia's state government NRM agencies (Environment and Heritage, Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, and Primary Industries and Resources SA, including SARDI and Rural Solutions SA)
- ▶ CSIRO
- ▶ The University of Adelaide
- ▶ Flinders University
- ▶ University of South Australia

The Alliance is also supported by:

- ▶ An independent chair, Dr Keith Steele
- ▶ The Director, Ms Kathryn Bellette
- ▶ An expert reference panel, comprised of a diverse team of researchers

*continued overleaf*

The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation have agreed to act as the managing agent for the Alliance and the office of the Alliance is located at the Waite Campus in CSIRO building 1.

## Working together for collective benefit, a word from our Chair



Keith Steele, Chair NRM RA

We currently face many challenges in pursuit of sustainable management of our natural resources. Research and the new knowledge it generates, the development of new technologies and innovative approaches to existing and emerging problems will help address many of these challenges. We have much to gain by collaborating and working together on these issues, rather than duplicating our efforts. Fragmentation of effort is one of the barriers to growth and development of any industry, business, property, or region.

Working more closely together across government agencies, research disciplines and institutions, and regional boards, will create an environment more likely to generate creative solutions to our big priority natural resource issues. We would like to encourage all South Australian organisations with an interest in NRM to explore opportunities to become involved with the Alliance.

Bringing all the parties together at the outset to collectively identify priority issues and collaborate to

bring practical, realistic solutions will set the foundation for collective understanding, ownership and adoption of those solutions.

The role of the Alliance can be broken into two broad themes:

- ▶ Facilitating access to existing knowledge and expertise
- ▶ Development of new knowledge, directed to address the needs of NRM Boards and State agencies.

The Alliance represents an exciting opportunity to make a tangible difference to the management of natural resources in South Australia.

## Current Activity

### Research need and capability map

In order to achieve the objectives of facilitating access to existing knowledge and progressing the creation of new knowledge, the Alliance is currently developing a 'research need and capability map'.

This process involves:

- ▶ Identifying current knowledge gaps of the NRM practitioners and the research needed to address those gaps
- ▶ Identifying research capability across partners that can address those needs
- ▶ Scoping multi-disciplinary and multi-partner research project proposals that will deliver solutions to address the needs

All the parties interested in a particular project collaboration will use the proposal to collectively seek funding in order to undertake the work.

This approach will encourage effective linkages between practitioners and researchers throughout the entire life of a research project and beyond. This will provide optimum opportunity for uptake of knowledge into NRM policy and management practice.

This process will also allow the Alliance to identify any gaps in our current research capacity and assist in either 'buying in' that expertise from interstate or overseas and/or in growing that capability within the Alliance over the long-term.

## Complementary State NRM program success

The Alliance was successful in receiving funding for 10 projects through the South Australian State Government complementary State NRM program funding. This amounts to \$929,000 of investment into NRM Research projects, funneled through the Alliance. These projects are being undertaken by partners of the Alliance. The Alliance will be running workshops to ensure cross fertilisation of ideas and outcomes between the projects.

The successful projects are listed by research cluster themes below:

#### *Alliance umbrella project*

- ▶ Pulling it all together

#### *Landscape integration*

- ▶ Land use planning for sustainable production systems

#### *Habitat restoration and sustainable production research cluster*

- ▶ Developing an integrated sustainability market for South Australia
- ▶ Establishing a Biodiversity Market for SA: Stage 1 - review and scoping
- ▶ Building knowledge of soil carbon, impacts of climate change and opportunities for carbon storage in SA soils
- ▶ Carbon sequestration from revegetation
- ▶ How can woody perennial vegetation enhance native biodiversity?
- ▶ Old Man saltbush - a key species for profitable and resilient grazing systems
- ▶ Maintaining healthy steam ecosystems in the Mount Lofty Ranges

#### *Human dimensions*

- ▶ Engaging the whole NRM community in multifunctional landscape planning (based on Eyre Peninsula with the Eyre Peninsula and Northern Yorke NRM Boards).

## Coming events

**Feb 26:** NRM RA Board Meeting

**March 13:** Initial meeting of the core group of the 'SA Land Use Planning, NRM Network'

**April 6:** Workshop for practitioners and researchers on meeting groundwater research needs of the State's NRM practitioners, particularly those related to NRM plans and Water Allocation Plans

**May 28:** NRM RA Board Meeting



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