

## **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BOARD COMMUNIQUE**

### **27th NRM Board meeting on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

As most people are now all aware, the Caring For Our Country program will succeed NHT as the primary Australian Government funding source for NRM as of 1 July 2008.

The keystone of the new program consists of six national priorities to which all future funding is to be directed. These are:


- a national reserve system;
- biodiversity and natural icons;
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats;
- sustainable farm practices;
- natural resource management in remote and northern Australia; and
- community skills, knowledge and engagement.

The NRMB (NT) has been funded \$4,275,000 in 2008-09 which includes costs of running the organisation. The Caring for Our Country program provides for a much more active role for Commonwealth Ministers to determine its investments, and it will be the decision of these Ministers which projects to fund in 2008-09 and beyond. The Board has provided input and this will be used in providing the advice to the Ministers – nevertheless it is clear that there has been a shift in responsibility to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is aiming for a timely rollout of funding in July 2008 and the Board, and consequently other NRM stakeholders, will be advised of the Commonwealth's intentions with regard to project funding in the 2008/09 year in due course, and we will pass this information onto project proponents as soon as possible.

The main purpose of this Board meeting was for the Directors to understand more effectively the details of the Caring for our Country initiative, the implications for NRM in the NT, and the role the NRMB should play into the future to achieve the best NRM outcomes.

In the morning the Board meeting was attended by Mary Colreavy, the Commonwealth Government Co Chair of the Commonwealth/Northern Territory Government Joint Steering Committee and David Lambert the Team Leader of the Northern Territory NRM Team. There was a very useful discussion on the intent of the changes, the expectations of regional NRM bodies and the NRMB in particular, and (to the extent that they have been determined), more details on processes and timing.

In the afternoon the Board had a strategic planning session externally-facilitated by Paul Josif, talking about the Board's role under the new regime. The Board is very positive about the new Caring for our Country program and the strengthened opportunities for the NT. Board reiterates its strong continuing role providing an active investment framework for NRM in the NT. The results of the strategic planning session are yet to be finalised, but in summary the Board believes that our future specific roles are as neutral broker of partnerships for landscape- or regional-scale NRM programs, facilitator of smaller/less capacity groups to be involved in NRM in NT, introducing new partners to NRM in the NT (including funding partners), and leveraging additional funding for NRM in NT.



Sue van-Cuylenburg  
Chairman, NRMB (NT) Inc