



## What is a RIS?

A **RIS** is a “Regional Investment Strategy”. It’s a term that describes the document and the process we use to guide investments in Natural Resource Management (**NRM**) in the Territory.

These investments are from a variety of sources and include \$7.1m per year from the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust (**NHT**) and National Action Plan for Salinity & Water Quality (**NAP**). Many people are familiar with the NHT and NAP programs through initiatives like Landcare, Bushcare, Rivercare and Coastcare. RIS funds are invested to support:

1. **Biodiversity conservation**
2. **Sustainable use of Natural Resources**
3. **Social and institutional change** (to support 1 & 2)

The Natural Resource Management Board (NT) Inc (**NRMB(NT)**) is a non-profit incorporated association that has been set up jointly by the Australian and Northern Territory governments to provide strategic coordination of NRM in the Territory and oversee the investment of NHT and NAP funds.

The NHT and NAP grants are major NRM-related investments in the Territory, but they are certainly not the only investments. Other important grants programs include *NB: all figures approximate*: EnviroFund (\$0.5M/yr); National Landcare Program Community Support (\$1.3M/yr); Community Water Grants (\$0.75M/yr); and EnvironmeNT (\$0.5M/yr).

The NRMB(NT) seeks to complement the objectives of these programs while remaining focussed on landscape-scale changes as described through the NT Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (**INRM Plan**).

The INRM Plan is a general outline of what we agree needs to be done...what actually gets funded at any given point is described through the RIS.

Annually, the RIS maps out priority issues and specifies strategic investments. All the money in the RIS is directed towards actions and targets in the Plan. In future, the RIS will continue to evolve as a “regional prospectus” whose main aim is to attract resources from a wide range of NRM participants.

## RIS07-10 Development

The RIS07-10’s development began with consultations with key stakeholders from September to October 2006, while broader public consultation and feedback was gathered by the Board throughout the year.

A draft strategy was developed and released by the Board for review by the Landcare Council of the NT and the Australian and Northern Territory governments through a Commonwealth/NT Joint Steering Committee. Comments from these stakeholders were incorporated, with the Board signing-off on the strategy in April 2007. The Regional Investment Strategy was then presented to the four sponsoring Ministers for final review and endorsement.

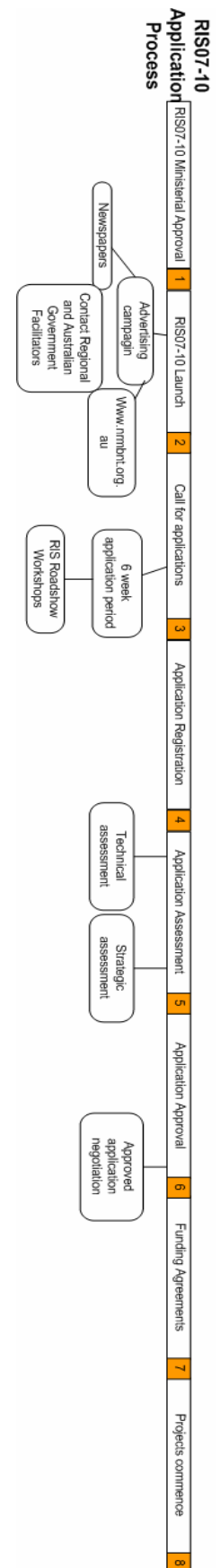
RIS 07-10 Investment Programs have been developed by the Board after careful analysis of factors from a number of sources and processes. These factors include:

- Strategic References: for example, the priorities outlined in the draft NT Parks and Conservation Master Plan, Regional Weeds Strategies, Threatened Species Recovery Plans.
- Continuation: assessing the value of the RIS04-07 investment mix.
- Progression: tracking the logical progress from baseline data, to strategic development, to capacity building, to on-ground works.
- Demand: considering opportunities in over-subscribed RIS04-07 project briefs.
- Regional intelligence: collecting and cataloguing information from RIS07-10 stakeholder consultation.
- Obligation: acknowledging the timing commitments explicit in the INRM Plan.
- Opportunity: sensitivity to leverage/co-investment potential.
- Closure: working to complete Management Actions wherever possible.

## RIS07-10 Project Proposal and Assessment Process

The table below shows the approximate process the NRMB(NT) has committed to in delivering the RIS07-10. The declared goal of the NRMB(NT) is to provide every means of support to ensure that the projects for the RIS07-10 are selected, contracted, and ready to commence in a open and transparent process.

RIS07-10 Project Proposal and Assessment Process		
Element	Process Stage	Description
1	RIS07-10 Ministerial Approval	Federal and State Ministers approve the 2007-2008 funding allocation for the RIS07-10
2	RIS07-10 Launch	An advertising campaign calling for Project Proposals and inviting NRM stakeholders to RIS Roadshow workshops begins. The advertising campaign announces the beginning of a 6 week application period. Information is available on the web ( <a href="http://www.nrmbnt.org.au">www.nrmbnt.org.au</a> ) and through Regional and Australian Government Facilitators
3	Call for Applications	This is a 6 week period. Calls for Project Proposals are either open invitations or expressions of interest (note expressions of interest have a 2 week application period for stage 1). RIS Roadshow workshops will be held in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alice Springs</li> <li>- Tennant Creek</li> <li>- Katherine</li> <li>- Darwin and</li> <li>- Gove.</li> </ul> These meetings will provide stakeholders with information on the RIS07-10 and how to apply for funding under the investment programs.
4	Application Registration	The proposal period closes 6 weeks from the launch of the RIS07-10. All Project Proposals received by the NRMB(NT) are registered and checked for funding eligibility
5	Application Assessment	All projects are assessed for technical and strategic merit.
6	Application Approval	NRMB(NT) Directors approve the funding of Project Proposals based on their contribution to implementation of the RIS and their technical and strategic merit. Approved Project Proposals may require negotiation between proponents and NRMB(NT) staff. The NRMB(NT) will recommend projects for funding to the NT Joint Steering Committee (JSC).
7	Funding Agreements	Once the NRMB(NT) receive approval from the JSC, funding agreements are drawn up by the NRMB(NT) and sent to proponents.
8	Projects Commence	The NRMB(NT) receives the signed funding agreements and projects commence.





## Investment Programs in the RIS07-10

The term 'Investment Program' is used in the RIS07-10 to describe a suite of actions and targets associated with a funding allocation. The following table shows individual Investment Program allocations and their procurement types as approved under the Regional Investment Strategy. The allocation of funds to Investment Programs is only guaranteed for the 2007/2008 financial year. The 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 funding allocations are only indicative and subject to review and Ministerial approval when the new arrangement for the NHT Regional Delivery have been finalised.

ID	Program Name	2007/2008	Indicative 2008/2009	Indicative 2009/2010	Procurement Type
003	Community capacity building for delivery of	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	Open Invitation
004	Fire: Research and Strategic Development	\$100,000	\$80,000	\$130,000	Expression of Interest
005	Fire: Regional Planning	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	Expression of Interest
006	Fire: Regional Management	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	Open Invitation
007	Invasive species: Plans and Surveys	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	Open Invitation
008	Invasive species: Control and Eradication	\$1,150,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	Open Invitation
009	Off-reserve Conservation Incentives	\$0	\$100,000	\$150,000	Open Invitation
010	Vegetation Mapping	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	Direct Invitation to NRETA
011	Threatened Species Recovery	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	Open Invitation
012	Best Practice Land Management Implementation	\$350,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	Open Invitation
013	Sustainable Enterprise Development	\$350,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	Open Invitation
014	Soil Conservation Services	\$0	\$250,000	\$150,000	Direct Invitation to NRETA
015	Scenario Planning: Climate Change	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	Expression of Interest
016	Scenario Planning: Shared Landscapes	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	Expression of Interest
017	Indigenous Land Management: NRM Capacity	\$330,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	Open Invitation
018	Indigenous Land Management: IEK	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000	Expression of Interest
019	Indigenous Land Management: Sea Country	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	Open Invitation
020	Coastal Marine: Capacity Building	\$300,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	Open Invitation
021	Collaborative Water Monitoring	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	Expression of Interest
022	NAP program	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	Expression of Interest
023	Coastal Marine: Management	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	Open Invitation
002	NRMB Regional Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	Direct Invitation to NRMB
001	NRMB Regional NRM Facilitators	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	Direct Invitation to NRMB
000	NRMB Core Operations	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	Direct Invitation to NRMB

## Procurement Types

The invitation for applications will be conducted under three methods of invitation– Open, Expression of Interest and Direct.

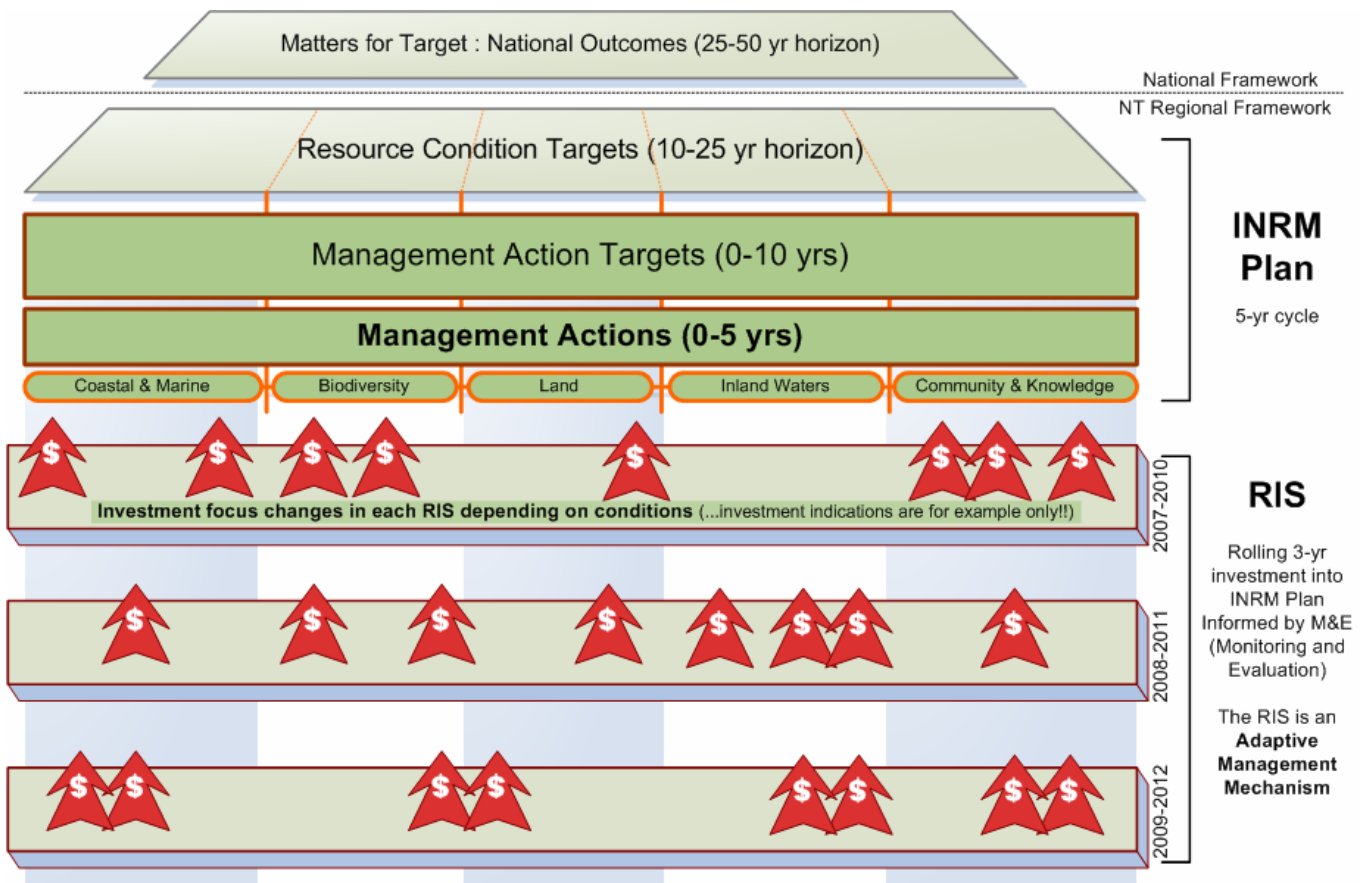
- Open Invitation: will be used when an Investment Program can be applied for by any stakeholder and will be advertised for a period of 6 weeks.
- Expression of Interest: occurs when an Investment Program requires specific skills and there may be only a select group of organisations with the ability to meet the Management Action Targets. In this case, the NRMB(NT) will advertise for organisations to submit an Expression of Interest for identified Investment Program.
- Direct Invitation: this occurs when an Investment Program requires specific skills and there may only be one appropriate proponent, in this case the NRMB(NT) will go directly to the proponent.



## EXPIRY OF AUTHORITY FOR NHT2

The Natural Heritage Trust Extension including NHT2 is due for completion on 30 June 2008. While the Australian Government has made a budget commitment for a further extension (NHT3) to 2012, the form of the new program is not yet established. The NRMB(NT) understands that it will be similar to the current NHT program.

The NRMB(NT) has negotiated to offer funding for up to 12 months for the 2007-08 funding year in the RIS07-10. The allocation of funds to Investment Programs is only guaranteed for the 2007/2008 financial year. The 08/09 and 09/10 funding allocations are only indicative and subject to review and Ministerial approval when the new arrangement for the NHT Regional Delivery have been finalised.



The **NT INRM Plan** is about meeting the aspirations of Territorians to use and conserve our natural resources. It is a broad-reaching document that is broken down into 5 **asset areas** (Coastal & Marine, Biodiversity, Land, Inland Waters, and Community, Institutions & Knowledge).

The Plan sets out **Resource Condition Targets** which could be attained through a cascade of **Management Targets** and **Management Actions**. The Plan suggests timeframes and linkages between various actions and targets. With appropriate monitoring and evaluation (**M&E**), we can use **adaptive management** techniques to improve the performance of the Plan and RIS. Over a number of years, we should see that our efforts will deliver progress at a landscape scale.

## Frequently Answered Questions

**Q1: Can I apply for 12 months funding or only until 30 June 08?**

A: You can apply for 12 months funding, with years 2 and 3 outlined (but funding not guaranteed for those years). Contracts can be until September 2008. There will be no variations approved past that date.

**Q2: Can I apply for funding for projects that address more than one Investment Program?**

A: The Application form is designed to address only one Investment Program. You will need to use a separate application form to address more than one Investment Program. This is to enable a fair and strategic assessment process.

**Q3: What role does our Regional NRM Facilitator play in the RIS application process?**

A: The NRMB has four Regional NRM facilitators in the Top End, Savanna, Barkly and Arid regions. The Regional Facilitators will be running RIS information sessions in each sub region, as well as an application help session and are key contact points for your questions and queries.

**Q4: Does the NRMB intend to encourage consortium proposals?**

A: The NRMB is committed to assisting the community in finding the most efficient approaches to the Territory's many challenges and opportunities. In many cases, cooperative arrangements are sensible. But that is a matter for you to decide.

**Q5: Consortium proposals can be awkward and risky to manage. What is the NRMB's advice?**

A: It's absolutely true that consortium projects demand a higher level of administrative, legal, and organisational capacity. On the other hand, consortium projects offer efficiencies and integration that can make all the difference to your on-ground outcomes. Proponents who decide to put up a consortium project should only do so after they have fully considered the management implications. The NRMB cannot accept liability for a consortium's failure to manage itself. This risk must be absorbed by the consortium.

**Q6: What about collaborative projects (i.e., each proponent is directly contracted to the NRMB)?**

A: The NRMB is committed to encouraging regional co-operation and productive cross-linkages. However, as with consortium arrangements, the risk of individual failure has to be considered and explained in any proposal.

**Q7: Does the NRMB intend to favour large institutional and corporate applicants, or will it recognise the needs of many small groups?**

A: The NRMB is charged with managing a very large funding program and is required to deliver these funds under strict management controls that many small groups find difficult to sustain without significant support from experienced facilitators. At the same time, the NRMB Directors are committed to getting as much money out "on the ground" as possible. That means we have to run a very lean team and cannot afford to provide a full-service assistance program for small groups. Combining these two points, you can see that the natural pathway is toward larger contracts with larger organisations. To offset the recognised problems this raises, the NRMB will be encouraging collaborative and consortia arrangements as above. We are committed to supporting the best regional outcomes possible and are keen to hear of creative suggestions for meeting the needs within the budget.

**Q8: Will all projects be awarded through open competitive tender?**

A: No. We are offering 3 procurement arrangements as appropriate to the outcomes being sought. They are Open Invitation, Expression of Interest and Direct Invitation.

**Q9: How is Program 003 different from previous coordinator funding?**

A: Despite the difficulties, 18 facilitators have received sufficient funding to cover their wages until the end of Dec 2007. Program 003 will allow organisation to apply for up to \$70,000 a year to support a group coordinator. If a group requires further funding to support a full time position funding can be sourced through project management from the RIS, or through any number of alternative sources of funding. See the Program 003 Guide for further information and help.

**Q10: Will we have to fill in complicated application forms?**

A: The NRMB(NT) have made a big effort to design the Application Form to meet a number of different needs including making it user friendly and enabling good project proposals. We also have to use the application form for assessing and comparing projects against each other, assessing against the Investment Programs and Management Outcomes and providing information for the contract stage, amongst other things. We have adjusted Section 2.4 Design your Project Work plan (formerly Table 8.1) and will still be capturing output codes but we have created drop down lists for ease of use.

**Q11: There are statements in the RIS07-10 and Investment Programs about Years 2008 and 2009 being Indicative allocations. What does this mean?**

A: The NRMB(NT) can currently offer contracts for 1 year to September 2008. Therefore we have encouraged applicants to submit staged proposals. The application forms have been developed so that the first year of the project requires a detailed work plan and budget and subsequent out years only require a skeleton proposal and budget. These out years will be looked at once further funding for 2008-09 and 2009-10 has been approved. If you are successful in receiving funding in 2007/08 your request for further funding will be considered based on your performance in the first year. If approved you will be asked to provide more information for the other years.

**Q12: If I wish to target an Investment Program which has funding available from this year, but don't wish to start my project in Year 1, should I apply next year for funding from year 2 or 3 of the RIS or should I put in an application now?**

A: The NRMB can't commit funds for 2008-09 and 2009-10. However if you are planning on developing a project to start in the 2008-09 financial year it is recommended that you submit an application for the NRMB to consider in this current call for applications.

**Q13: Does a project application have to address all the Management Actions in the Investment Program?**

A: No you are not required to address all the Management Actions in the Investment Program. You will need to look at the % of the Investment Program that is directed towards the Management action outcomes that your project relates to, and take that into consideration in the preparation of your application and budget.

**Q14: If some Management Actions rely on other Management Actions that have not produced results yet, how do you deal with that?**

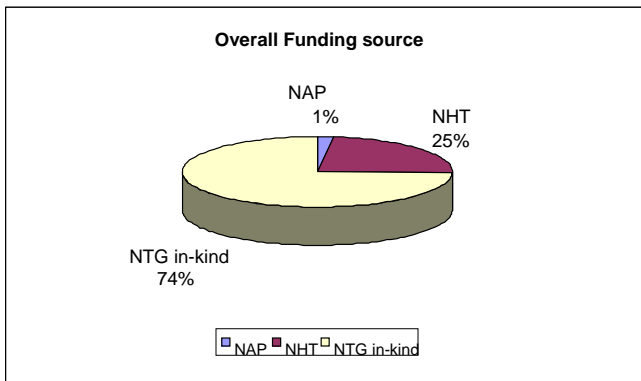
A: Sometimes MAs will be underway with other projects. Where you can, you should make connections with proponents of projects undertaking Management Actions that your project relies on and provide evidence of this connection in your application

## RIS07-10 Facts and figures

These graphs show the way investment is proposed to be distributed in the RIS07-10

### Sources of funding

This graph shows the relative investments by the Australian Government and the NT Government.

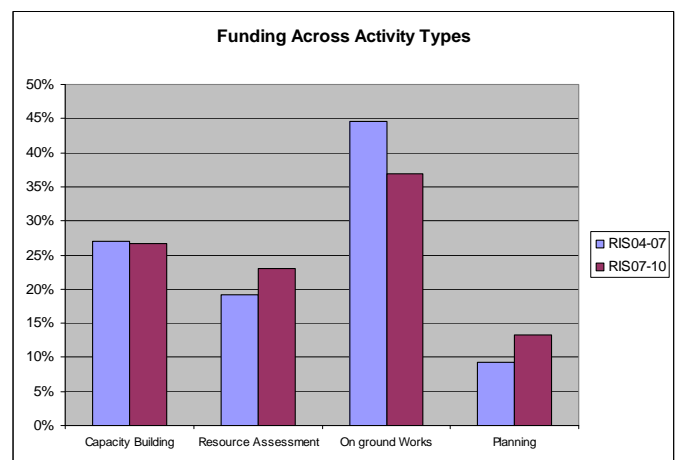


In total, the current RIS (2007-10) attracted over \$20M in grant funding. The NT Government records an additional \$60M+ toward targets in the INRM Plan.

The 2007-2008 financial year has \$7.1m in Australian Government funding allocated.

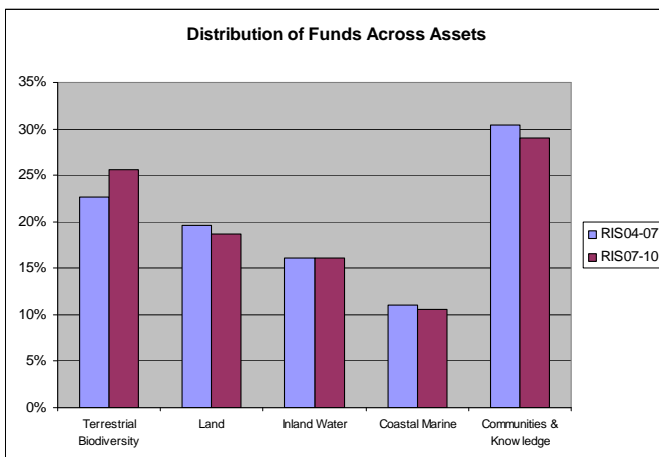
### Investments by type of activity

This graph shows a comparison of the two regional strategies in relation to planning, resource assessment, capacity building and on-ground works.



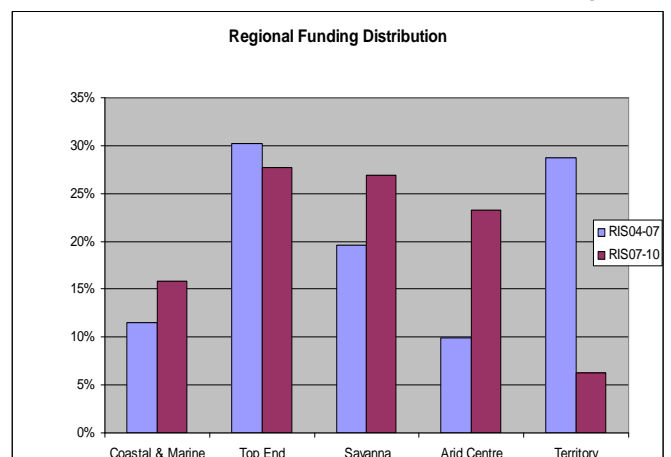
### Investments across Asset Packages

This graph shows the distribution of investment across the 5 "asset packages" of the NT INRM Plan and also compares RIS04-07 to RIS07-10.



### Investments across the regions

The regional distribution of funds in RIS07-10 responds to shifts in natural resource management priorities and funding programs across the Northern Territory. The Arid Centre will receive a boost in funding, while fewer Territory-wide projects have been proposed since many of the large projects funded in RIS04-07 are still in progress.



## NRMB Regional Facilitator Contacts

### Southern Region NRM Facilitators

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## Australian Government Facilitator Contacts

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### NRM Facilitator - Coastcare

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