



Friday 11 June 2010

Local Aboriginals in milestone meeting

South Coast NRM's new Aboriginal Reference Group met for the first time last week to determine how the Indigenous community could contribute to the organisation's regional strategy and help guide future cultural projects.

After an introduction and welcome by South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins, members of the reference group reviewed its responsibilities and determined its Terms of Reference.

South Coast NRM community and cultural program leader Karen Ireland said the meeting, held at its Mercer Road office, was a historic occasion as it had previously been a challenge to find a broad representative group of Aboriginal people to guide natural resource management strategy for the region.

Ms Ireland said the Aboriginal Reference Group nominated John Farmer as its interim chair (representing the Tambellup Aboriginal community), and nominated Treasy Woods as vice chair (representing the Choorilj Farm Management Corporation).

"This is the first time South Coast NRM has been able to establish such a group and its very timely as the group will play an important role in the review of Southern Prospects, our regional strategy for NRM," she said.

"It is vital that Aboriginal people have input into this strategy as it will guide state and federal government investment in NRM for the next five years across our region."

South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins said the organisation took a new approach to forming the 15-member reference group by attracting a skills-based membership that was representative of the Aboriginal community and relevant Aboriginal community groups.

"It's fantastic to find a truly representative group of the Aboriginal people who can provide valuable input into our strategy and future cultural program. The Aboriginal Reference Group is one of six reference groups which provide recommendations to the South Coast NRM Board of Management," Mr Edkins said.

The Aboriginal Reference Group will meet quarterly and is due to meet again in July for the review of the strategy.

ENDS

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South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management in the South Coast region of Western Australia. As an independent not-for-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.