

CHAIRMAN REPORT 2010-2011

The South Coast is experiencing a mixed season this year, with the Western half enjoying excellent conditions and part of the Central and Eastern being short of rain. This is in contrast to most of Western Australia, which has had one of its best years ever. Difficult seasonal conditions impact in two ways; farmers are only able to undertake NRM activity when they are profitable, and many projects depend on rainfall, such as the planting of vegetation.

A highlight this year has been the completion of updating our Strategy - "Southern Prospects" - for a further five year period. There was a tremendous contribution from the community through the reference groups, the NRM Committee and public workshops. These activities have been well supported by our skilled and dedicated management team led by operations manager, Justin Bellanger.

While the Strategy is an excellent document, both in content and appearance, it will only be of benefit if it is utilised. This equally applies at both Regional and Sub-regional level. Project planning and funding applications will be more successful if they can demonstrate a contribution to strategic outcomes.

Our management and governance continue to mature and improve. The Board has just completed an external evaluation of our management and governance process. On the one hand it was gratifying to learn that we ranked well across the board, but there were, none the less, some areas of "opportunity" that we will focus on to further improve our operation.

You will notice further amendments to our constitution. Most relate to a "tidy up" and compliance with updated State requirements. The most substantive change is a more detailed election and evaluation process for Board Director positions. An independent selection panel will assess nominations against a skills based matrix and make recommendations to the AGM for endorsement. This process is being used by other regions in WA and Australia and by Government supported R&D bodies.

This year's call for nominations received a nomination from Bill Hollingworth to fill a vacancy and I am very pleased to have his skill set complement the other Board Directors. The Board was sorry to lose the valuable contribution of Gary Schwab but pleased that he has offered to remain on the Finance and Audit Committee. I would also like to pay tribute to Rhonda Williams, who has advised she will not be standing again as Deputy Chair but remaining as a Director. Her contribution and support has been outstanding, and especially in the recent updating of the constitution. To the other Directors, my appreciation for your time and effort in ensuring good governance for South Coast NRM.

A community based organisation can only survive with the help and support of many hard working people. This has certainly happened again with excellent contribution from our reference groups and committees and in “dirt under the fingernails” support at the project level. Thank you to all our members and friends.

It was pleasing to see David Broadhurst, regional landcare facilitator west, win the Australian Government Local Landcare Facilitator Award at the WA Landcare Awards, and he will now be a finalist at the National Awards next year.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to all South Coast NRM management and staff for a truly outstanding effort. You really are the glue that keeps us all together! A special note of appreciation to our CEO, Rob Edkins, for his contribution both within our Region and also at State and National levels.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alex Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Alex Campbell AM
Chairman
South Coast NRM
September 2011