



swan catchment
council



2003

infocus



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It is with great pleasure that I present this report for the Annual General Meeting of the Swan Catchment Council 2003.

This has been an exceptional year. The Swan Catchment Council has been recognised by the State and Commonwealth governments as the peak natural resource body for our region. The signing of a memorandum of understanding with the State government on 26 June 2003 and the signing of the bilateral agreement between the State and Federal governments enshrined this process in law. This is a step towards true democracy when a community body is recognised in this manner.

The membership of the Council has changed during the year with the new processes of election of members from the subregions and the new structure of the Council coming into fruition. I must thank most sincerely all those members of the Council who have given so much of their time and effort to achieve good natural resource outcomes for their communities.

Our communities are the strengths and the drivers of the Swan Catchment Council. In this new era of accreditation, reporting and streamlining of processes the Council has been most determined that the community voice would not be lost. It hasn't. The rounds of community consultation recently completed have shown us that the community has confidence that the Swan Catchment Council will represent their interests. The Swan Council does not intend to lose that confidence. We will go forward into the investment planning process knowing that the community has expressed what is important to them. It will be reflected in all of our undertakings.

The Swan Catchment Council has some exceptional employees. Without these people we would not function. I would formally like to thank all those people for their patience and good humour as we have struggled through a momentous year. We also have some exceptional partners and I mention specifically Alcoa. Without their financial support the on-ground works in this region in 2003/04 would have been severely limited. The support of the natural resource management agencies has in the most been supportive in what must have been a very challenging year.

The Swan Catchment Council has been working hard towards accreditation. The access to funds post-accreditation to achieve good environmental outcomes for the Swan Region is our goal and one that we intend to achieve within this financial year.

I would take this opportunity to thank all of our friends and associates for their help during this year and look forward to a very productive year in 2003/04.

Sue Metcalf
Chairperson Swan Catchment Council



*our goal is to achieve good
environmental outcomes for
the swan region*



The Swan Catchment Council is a regional group involved in the coordination and delivery of natural resource management (NRM) activities in the Swan region.

The Swan Catchment Council addresses community needs by working closely with government agencies and other bodies to promote collaboration on key environmental issues.

The Council aims to improve natural resource management by:

- Better integration of programs, strategies and statutory processes.
- Increasing understanding in community, government and industry.
- Influencing government policy.
- Linking local catchment activities to regional priorities.

Membership

The thirteen members of the Swan Catchment Council are drawn from community, catchment and environment groups, and local and state government agencies.

Community – nine positions

- Six active community members of community NRM groups – chosen through a subregional election process
- One elected member of a local government authority within the Swan region, representing a geographic spread through the local government working group
- One member who has a sound working knowledge of natural ecosystems, biodiversity and current environmental issues, representing a working group with wide ranging expertise and representation
- One member to represent indigenous issues in the Swan region

State Government – three positions

- Council representatives are drawn from the Departments of Environment, Conservation and Land Management and Agriculture. A representative from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure is a key member of the Accreditation Working Group and may be called upon to attend Council meetings in an advisory capacity.

Community Landcare Professional

- One representative who operates within the Swan region and has been selected by the Catchment Officers Support Network.

The Council is reliant on the members of four working groups to contribute to regional strategic planning, initiate and manage strategic projects in line with the Regional Strategy. The four working groups focus on issues of:

- Accreditation of the regional strategy
- Natural diversity
- Local government
- Education, awareness raising and communication

the peak natural resource

management body in the

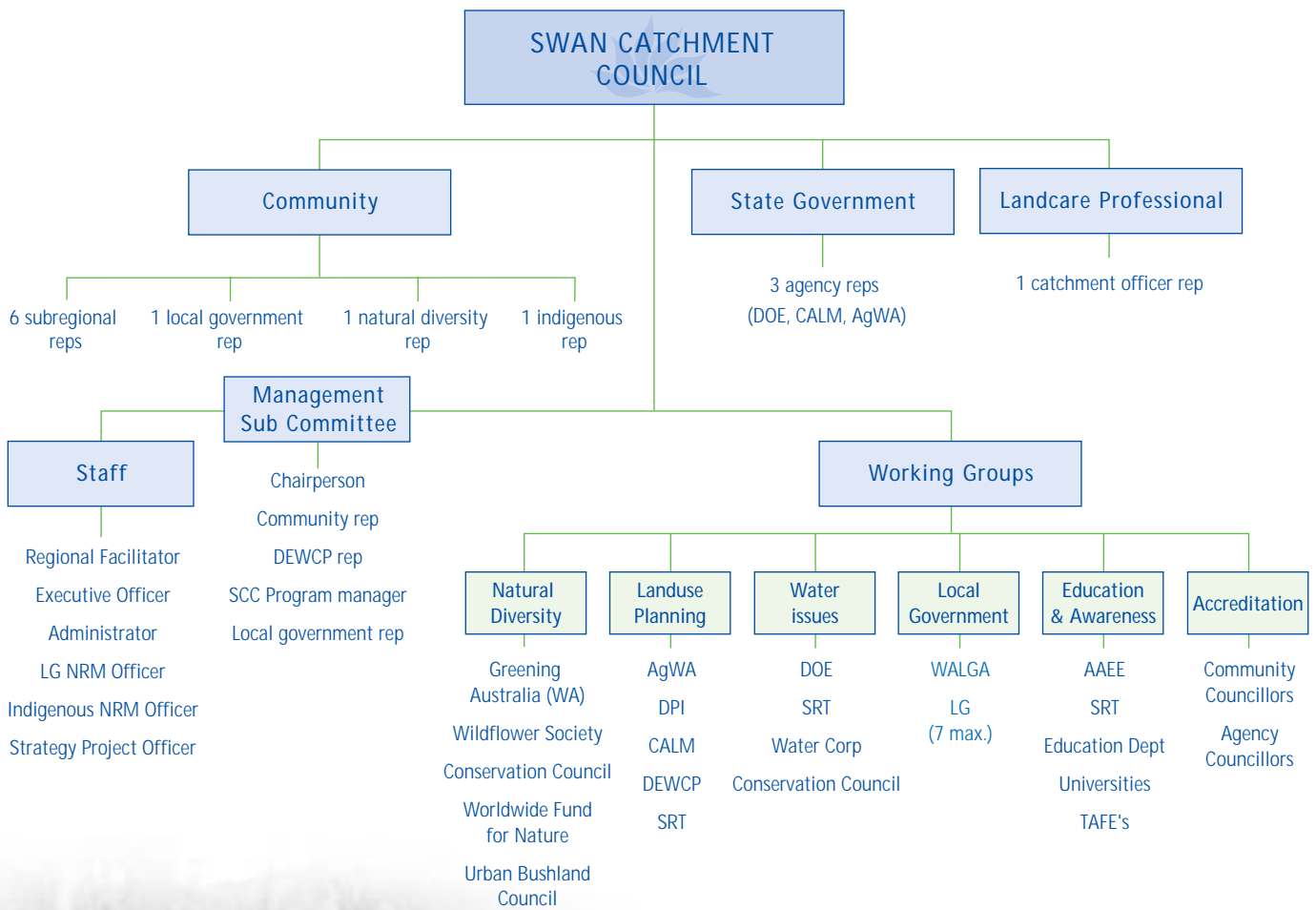
swan region



The Management Subcommittee has representatives from the Council membership and deals with administrative and management issues on behalf of the Council.

The Swan Catchment Council meets a minimum of six times per year in addition to the annual general meeting. The working groups are also required to meet a minimum of six times per year as well as reporting progress to the Council to coincide with their meetings.

Swan Catchment Council organisation chart

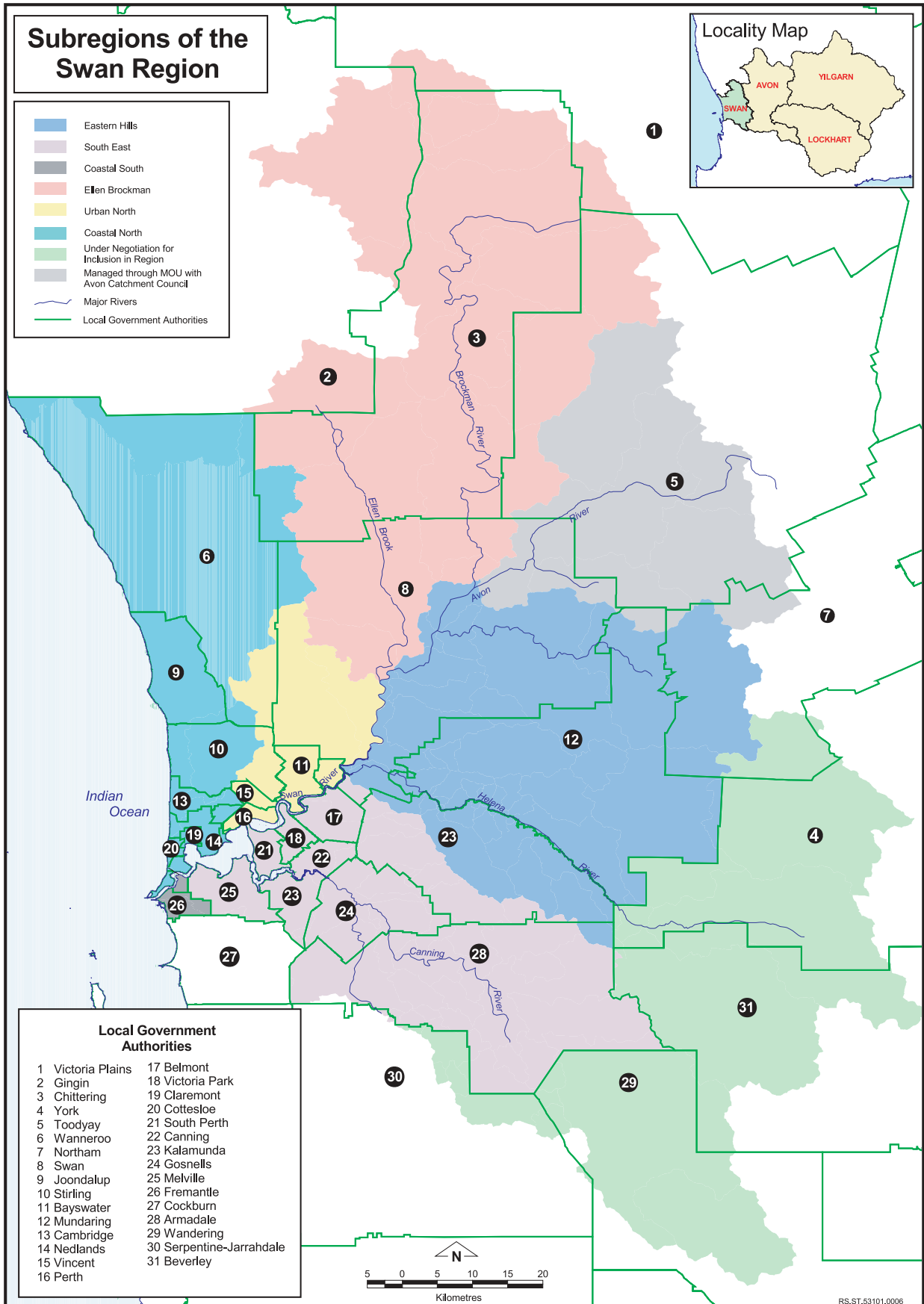




SWAN CATCHMENT COUNCIL INC.

Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June, 2003

	2003 \$	2002 \$
Unspent grant funds at the beginning of the year	162,252	29,355
Income		
Interest received	5,932	1,923
Other income		17
Council salaries & operating grant	825,993	89,000
NHT2 grant	663,895	
Sitting fees & mileage grant		32,079
Grants - other	546,819	405,919
Total income	2,042,639	528,938
Expenses		
Council employment expense	140,414	
Council salaries & operating expense		88,835
Council operating expense	47,444	
Grant expense - other	482,199	289,057
Sitting fees & mileage expense		18,149
Sundry expenses	338	
Total expenses	670,396	396,041
Profit from ordinary activities before income tax	1,372,243	132,896
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Net profit attributable to the association	1,372,243	132,896
Total changes in equity of the association	1,372,243	132,896
Opening retained profits		
Net profit attributable to the association	1,372,243	132,896
Closing retained profits	1,372,243	132,896
Unspent grant funds at the end of the year	1,534,494	162,252





The Swan Catchment Council, along with all other regional NRM groups has been through a consultative process to redefine the regional and subregional boundaries, in preparation for implementing the regional delivery model.

The changes include redefining the subregions which are now:

- Ellen-Brockman - incorporating the Ellen Brook Integrated Catchment Group, the Wannamal Lakes LCDC, Chittering LCDC and North Swan LCDC
- Eastern Hills - incorporating Wooroloo Brook LCDC, Urban Hills LCDC and associated catchment groups (Jane Brook, Helena River, Blackadder Woodbridge, Susannah Brook catchment groups)
- South East Region - incorporating Canning Catchment Coordinating Group, Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group, Bannister Creek, Belmont-Victoria Park and Canning Plains catchment groups
- Coastal Lakes - Wanneroo and Joondalup communities and Yellagonga Catchment Group
- Coast and Marine - incorporating Rottnest Island and a range of Coastcare Groups

achievements

Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2)

Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding is a Commonwealth program and was first developed in 1997 to address the need for on-ground funding by community, local government and agencies involved in natural resource management (NRM). It was based on a concept of project support with funding provided directly to each state and project proponent.

NHT2 interim funding is different to the first in both organisation and delivery. It is strategic in its delivery of funding assistance, focussing on regional delivery through the use of accredited regional plans.

Natural Heritage Trust 2 (NHT2) funding for the foundation funding, priority projects, and facilitators and coordinators streams for the 2003 interim period arrived in July 2003. The Swan Catchment Council has responsibility for managing all but the priority project funding.

Contracts and agreements were developed and distributed for all project participants and partners.

Funds are distributed quarterly with the first two instalments being sent together once invoices were received. The third instalment is due to be distributed in October 2003 and the final instalment in January 2004.

The reporting mechanism has been simplified with quarterly financial statements and six monthly progress reporting requirements. All project proponents in the Swan region will report to the Commonwealth through the Swan Catchment Council.





Swan Region Natural Resource Management Strategy

The Swan Catchment Council took a lead role in developing a NHT2 funding proposal on behalf of the Swan region. These funds are to:

- Refine the draft Swan NRM strategy to reach accreditation standards
- Develop and build the capacity of the Swan Catchment Council and the regional structure
- Engage the community and key stakeholders, including Indigenous communities and local government.

Accreditation or endorsement by the Commonwealth, must first be obtained to access future NHT funding. To gain accreditation, NRM strategies must:

- identify all locally relevant NRM issues
- be based on available scientific and technical information
- develop actions to address these issues, and
- prioritise the most important issues for action.

This will provide direction for future investment in NRM by the government and private sector.

Over the last six months the Swan Catchment Council and Centre have been working closely with state government agencies, local government, industry, Indigenous communities, catchment and community groups and the general community. It is imperative for accreditation that all stakeholders are engaged in the strategy development.

The Swan NRM Strategy will be available for public comment in later October 2003, and the Strategy is to be delivered to the Commonwealth Government in December 2003.

State Government signs on to natural resource management

The State Government and the six Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups signed an historic agreement on 26 June 2003.

The agreement will open the way for integration of regional, community and Government efforts for biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use practices.

The memorandum of understanding formalises working relationships between the State and the regional NRM Groups, as well as providing a framework for greater cooperation, mutual support and accountability for NRM within Western Australia.

The Regional NRM Groups that signed the agreement are the Swan Catchment Council, Avon Catchment Council, South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team, South West Catchments Council, Northern Agricultural Catchment Council and the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group.



The agreement will provide greater certainty and acknowledgment of the Regional NRM Groups' role in regional NRM strategic planning and delivering community-based initiatives. It also provides for a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities for regional groups and the natural resource management agencies.

Regional NRM Groups and Environment Minister sign the agreement on 26 June 2003.

Back row from left to right: Michael Bates (Northern Agricultural Catchment Council Chair), David Chadwick (South West Catchments Council Chair), Bill Mitchell (Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group Chair), Barbara Morrell (Avon Catchment Council Chair), Sue Metcalf (Swan Catchment Council Chair) and John Simpson (South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team Chair). Front row: Rex Edmondson (NRM Council Chair) and Judy Edwards (Minister for the Environment).



Swan and Avon catchment councils formalise partnership

The Swan and Avon catchment councils signed a memorandum of understanding in December 2002 formally recognising a shared geographical area.

The Avon-Upper Swan region has been federally identified as a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) region and covers the Ellen Brook, Brockman River and Wooroloo Brook catchments. These areas lie within the Swan NRM region and are overseen by the Swan Catchment Council.

Catchments within the Swan Region are not classified as a NAP region at a federal level, and therefore have no access to NAP funding.

The agreement reconfirms the historical commitment to working together in the Swan-Avon regions at a time when NRM partnerships are increasingly important. Formalising the understanding will help to ensure that salinity issues within the Swan NRM region are addressed.

Swan Alcoa Landcare Program



The Swan Catchment Council was pleased to announce \$450,000 for community based conservation projects for the next 12 months through the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program.

This announcement reaffirms the continuing support for landcare in the Swan-Canning catchment from both Alcoa and the Swan River Trust. In recognition of their outstanding contribution the program has been renamed the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program.

This successful partnership has been supporting community-based conservation projects for the past five years as the Swan Catchment Urban Landcare Program.

Alcoa has committed \$600,000 during the next three years for on-ground projects. This is in addition to Alcoa's already significant contribution of \$1.25 million since 1998 to landcare projects in the Swan and Canning catchments.

The Swan River Trust, who has contributed \$100,000 annually since 1999, will increase its sponsorship of the program with a \$250,000 commitment for 2004 through the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.



Bannister Creek 2000

Bannister Creek became an engineered drain for the disposal of storm water and industrial runoff after urbanisation of the catchment in the early 1970's. Bannister Creek Catchment Group first received Swan Alcoa Landcare Program funds in 1998, to rehabilitate and protect the riparian zone.



Bannister Creek 2003

The group has transformed an ugly unsafe drain into a beautiful natural ecosystem for the whole community to enjoy and protect.



Swan Catchment Centre

Delivery of Swan Strategy

The Swan Catchment Centre plays a vital role in the refinement of the Swan Catchment Council's regional NRM strategy for accreditation and implementation. The Centre has coordinated communications and stakeholder engagement in the strategy development. Centre staff and its programs provide an ongoing link between the Council and its stakeholders.

Currently the Swan Catchment Centre supports over 250 community conservation groups involved in natural resource management. The Centre provides training, resources, advice and information. It creates opportunities for members of the community to work with businesses and local and state government agencies on common environmental projects.

Revamped website

The new Swan Catchment Centre site, completed in September 2002, was designed to appeal to both new and existing users, and is based around a simple structure.

Visitors to the site will be able to download the Centre's key publications including the newsletter, brochures, training calendar, information sheets and details about the Swan River Action Kit.

A key feature is the inclusion of links to other organisations. This allows visitors to make use of other valuable sources of information, while reducing the amount of information we have to maintain.

For the first time the Swan Catchment Council is represented on the site through a series of dedicated pages. Council minutes, agendas and full details about the Swan region's draft NRM strategy and Swan Alcoa Landcare Program application kits can be directly downloaded from the site.

The website address is www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon.



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Beyond strategic planning

The Swan Catchment Council is looking forward to the start of the implementation phase of the regional NRM strategy in 2004. All NRM activities in the region will be identified through the accredited strategy, and investment by government will address the priorities identified by the community.

The interim period of NHT that has spanned eighteen months has taken its toll on the community momentum that has been driving natural resource management in this region. In the next twelve months, NRM will continue to change shape with the focus shifting from planning to on-ground action. The Swan Catchment Council remains committed to supporting the community drive for NRM in the region. Investment in the region will also include acknowledging the need for community support and capacity building.

All of the planning and action will be measured for progress towards regional targets through the monitoring and evaluation framework. The region will be able to assess and understand progress towards reaching our shared goals.

Partnerships in the region will continue to be of highest importance. Delivering outcomes from the regional strategy will be dependent on solid partnerships being maintained and built. The Swan Catchment Council and working group membership will continue to reflect the commitment to representation and partnerships.

The Swan Catchment Council will continue to report progress to its community and stakeholders annually in this report, and regularly through newsletters, website and email networks. The regional stakeholder database has been refined and continues to grow.

Priority projects

Priority projects will be a key part of strategy implementation. Investment from the Commonwealth will be through the Natural Heritage Trust, and will be in the three core areas of biodiversity conservation, sustainable production and capacity building. These priority projects will be assessed against the investment plan and the Swan Region NRM Strategy. State governments and other community based organisations will be able to propose priority projects. A call for priority projects will occur late in 2003.

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The future for coordinators

The Swan Catchment Council recognises the key support offered to community and stakeholder organisations through the network of coordinators and project officers. The regional structure of coordinators and project officers was refined in the early part of 2003. The Swan Catchment Council will continue to work with the regional community, from partners to program managers, to ensure that support and investment in this significant resource is maintained.

Swan Alcoa Landcare Program

This year has seen an expansion of the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP). SALP will continue in 2004 to contribute to the on-ground efforts community groups and local governments in partnership with community. SALP has aligned with the regional boundaries of the Swan Catchment Council and will continue to involve the community in assessment and decision-making.

The Swan Catchment Council, Alcoa and the Swan River Trust will continue to provide project support, program promotion and to support the community in on-ground outcomes for the benefit of natural resources in the Swan region.



supporting the community

drive for NRM

in the region



1 How does the membership of the Swan Catchment Council work?

The Swan Catchment Council membership model is heavily weighted towards community-based membership rather than state agency employees. This places greater emphasis on local issues with members selected for their skills and experience. The membership also reflects the range of key stakeholder organisations with the working groups extending representation and input.

2 What is the Swan NRM Strategy?

The Swan Region – A Natural Resource Management Strategy, was intended to provide a 30 year blue print to guide environmental activity in the region. Since its development, the strategy has obtained even greater importance with a Commonwealth shift toward regional delivery of NRM. Work continues to bring the strategy in line with accreditation guidelines, which will lead to more strategic investment and improved NRM outcomes.

3 What is accreditation and why is it important?

In order to obtain funding, NRM strategies must first be endorsed by the Commonwealth through the process of accreditation. In order to gain accreditation, plans must identify all locally relevant NRM issues based on available scientific and technical information, develop actions to address these issues, and prioritise the most important issues for action.

4 What is Natural Heritage Trust Funding?

Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding is a Commonwealth program and was first developed in 1997 to address the need for on-ground funding by community, local government and agencies involved in NRM. It was based on a concept of project support with funding provided directly to each state, with funding distributed across twenty-three programs. NHT2 funding is significantly different to the first in both organisation and delivery. It is intended to be more strategic in its delivery of funding assistance, with significant emphasis on regional delivery through accredited regional NRM plans.

5 What role does the Swan Catchment Council have in NHT2 funding?

The Swan Catchment Council has a lead role in the development of NHT2 funding proposals on behalf of the region, and the distribution and reporting of funding outcomes. These funds will deliver regional priorities (as identified in the draft Swan Regional Strategy) and provide direction for future investment in NRM by the government and private sector.





6 What are the main objectives guiding NHT2?

1. Biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia's biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals.
2. Sustainable use of natural resources – the sustainable use and management of Australia's land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries.
3. Community capacity building and institutional change – support for individuals, landholders, industry and communities with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use and management.

7 How will funds from NHT2 be accessed?

Investment through NHT2 will occur at three levels: national/state, regional and local. The second level of investment will be applied within the Swan region, through an accredited, integrated NRM plan and investment strategy developed by the region. Local groups are able to directly access Envirofunds.

8 What role does the Swan Catchment Centre play in this process?

The Swan Catchment Centre plays a vital role in the accreditation and delivery of the Swan Catchment Council's regional strategy. Currently the Swan Catchment Centre supports over 250 community conservation groups involved in natural resource management. The Centre, through its staff and programs, provides a link between the Council and its stakeholders. It will continue to play a significant role in the communication and delivery of Council and Commonwealth requirements.



*the swan catchment centre plays a
vital role in the accreditation
and delivery of the
regional strategy*



9 What is investment in NRM?

Commonwealth and State Governments agreed that a new approach to natural resource management would deliver better outcomes than was achieved under the first NHT. Both will now "invest" in large scale projects that have been identified in the accredited NRM strategies. These projects will be designed to address the key issues, will be measured against the targets, and will be large scale.

10 How long will this planning phase go on for?

The Swan Catchment Council, with the support of State and Commonwealth governments has committed to finalising the Swan Region NRM Strategy by the end of 2003. This means that the Commonwealth and State governments will then invest in priority projects that will deliver best outcomes. The concept is for a three-year rolling project cycle.

11 What are priority projects?

These are large-scale projects that will deliver regional outcomes for NRM. Priority projects will be identified through the investment plan that will be developed to achieve the goals and targets set down in the Swan Region NRM Strategy. There will be a process for developing priority projects toward the end of 2003, based on the actions identified in the Swan Region NRM Strategy.

12 How can local groups access funds for local projects?

There are a range of funding grants available for local-level, community-based projects. The Commonwealth government provides funding through Envirofunds, the Gordon Reid foundation through Lotterywest and the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program for projects in the Swan region. For the range of options available to community groups, check out the Swan Catchment Centre website on www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon.







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