

# **Swan Region Strategy**

**for**

# **Natural Resource Management**

**Appendix 18**

**Swan Region Employment Structure Review**



## Background

In 2001 it became evident that the future delivery of funding/investment across the nation was going to change. The Commonwealth Government appeared to be moving away from the adhoc, non-strategic approach of the NHT1 system, where funds were distributed to independent catchment groups and organisations and taking a more strategic regional approach.

With this in mind, the Swan Catchment Council and the Swan Catchment Centre initiated a process to develop a Swan regional structure that would serve to deliver NRM investment in the future.

The process for developing a structure, involved a number of workshops and discussions over a period of 18 months or so.

### Phase 1

A whole of catchment (ie. the Swan Region) workshop was organised in November 2001 for Catchment Coordinators and Chairpersons.

It aimed to:-

- initiate discussion and action between catchment groups about future relationships
- to encourage catchment groups to take a lead role in defining regional structures
- to consider issues and potential of the future structure of the region to deliver ICM/NRM into the future

The desired outcomes were that the:

- Community groups take a lead role in refining regional structures and relationships;
- Issues and opportunities were identified to provide a basis for a follow up workshop where they would be addressed; and
- Catchment groups initiate discussions with neighbours.

The workshop generated much discussion about sub-regional boundaries, identifying gaps where there was little support and what opportunities and issues existed in relation to the potential change in the delivery of NRM.

### Phase 2

A further workshop was planned to follow up on the November Workshop. The aim here was to develop a framework that identified:-

- Where ICM/NRM has been put in to place and where there are gaps(geographic/spatial)?
- The (group) structure that we have for ICM/NRM in the region.
- What relationships exist between groups at the sub regional level and with the Swan Catchment Council at the regional level and what changes for improvement can be put in to place?
- What resources exist in the region, where they are, what gaps there are, how can we manage smarter and what is it going to take?

The second workshop never took place, for several reasons:-

1. The interim NHT coordinators and facilitators funding round (2002-03) provided particular challenges for the Swan region.

The criteria for funding from the Commonwealth emphasised support for positions supporting sustainable agriculture. The Swan Catchment Council and the Swan Catchment Centre prepared a proposal for funding support justified by subregional areas and the value of agricultural production in these sub- regions.

This bid was successful and highlighted the shift in funding towards a regional delivery model.

2. The Swan Canning Cleanup Program was unable to meet the funding proposals for priority catchment areas in the 2001 SCCP Priority Catchment Funding round.

This generated a high level of community lobbying for extra support for priority catchment groups.

The Minister responded by providing an extra \$25,000 to the Swan Catchment Council for distribution to the priority catchment groups, based on SCCP priorities. This was conditional on the Swan Catchment Council facilitating a process to implement a more efficient and effective regional structure.

Over the course of the next year, several of the groups found opportunities to progress their structural changes, resulting in the following:-

- Bayswater Integrated Catchment Management Group and Bennett Brook Catchment Group merged to form the North East Catchments Committee.
- The North East Catchments Committee then expanded to include the City of Stirling forming the upper boundary and encompassing the area south to the Swan River as the southern boundary, working with Claisebrook Catchment Group.
- Ellen Brook Integrated Catchment Management Group merged with Brockman River Catchment Group to form Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Management Group.

### **Phase 3 - Early 2003**

The Swan Catchment Centre in consultation with the Catchment Coordinators, decided that working on a regional scale was no longer relevant as many of the groups had evolved into new sub-regional structures.

Assistance was offered to the South East/Canning region, which had not completely addressed the issues identified in the November 2001 workshop.

A series of workshops were held in January 2003 for the South/East/Canning sub-region, incorporating the catchment groups of Canning Plain, Belmont-Victoria Park, Bannister Creek and Armadale Gosnells. The workshop identified the issues that needed to be considered and then worked through these, developing a sub-regional model.

A key constraint for this sub-region was to maintain the same number of staff being requested from SCCP and NHT while also covering the gaps. After several small workshops, the groups came up with a sub-regional model and renamed the area SERCUL, the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare. SERCUL was not only a Landcare Centre but will become an incorporated body taking the place of the Canning Catchment Coordinating Group.

The main changes in the South East/Canning sub-region include:-

- Canning Plain and Belmont Victoria Park Catchment Group sharing a coordinator and a project officer.
- Canning Plain, Belmont-Victoria Park and Bannister Creek Catchment Groups have expanded the area they service.
- The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare has been established, housing officers from the Belmont-Victoria Park, Canning Plain and Bannister Creek Catchment Group and the Phosphorous Action Group.
- A new position, Regional Coordinator, has been established.

### **Phase 4 - March/April 2003**

In late March, the Swan Catchment Council was required, by the Commonwealth, to come up with a regional model within 14 days, that is, a model that would outline all funding being requested from NHT during the accreditation phase in the development of the Swan Regional NRM Strategy, ie. June to Dec 2003, and post accreditation, ie, after Dec 2003.

A meeting was held on Monday 7th April for all Catchment Group Coordinators and Chairs at which the Swan Catchment Centre outlined a proposed regional structure for the delivery of NHT funds to the region.

The model was endorsed and now sets a foundation for the regional delivery of funds within the Swan Region. See attached diagram.

### **Where to next?**

The coastal areas to the north and south still do not have an established structure under the new NRM Model and this will need to be addressed. Negotiations are under way with the Environmental Advisory Committees of the Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo and the Yellagonga Catchment Group to facilitate this process.