

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The planning and management of natural resources in Australia is moving to a community based, regional focussed approach to the protection and management of valued environmental, social and economic assets such as water quality, native vegetation, productive land and soils. This emerging approach to the integrated planning and management of natural resources builds upon previous programs and strategies such as the National Landcare Program, the National Soil Conservation Program and the National Dryland Salinity Program. The major feature of this approach are that regional planning and investment priority setting are determined regionally by all the partners involved in management of natural resources based upon best available information, community participation in planning and target setting and consideration of regional community aspirations.

The major challenges to the success of this approach include:

- improving the coordination and integration of natural resource planning and management at the regional scale;
- providing support for regional planning including information on natural resource condition and trend, policy direction, technical and professional support, and long term support; and
- developing the capacity of community based regional bodies and local groups such as Landcare groups and groups of local landholders to lead the planning and management of natural resources.

The success of this approach will be measured by the degree to which valued community assets are protected, the extent of community commitment and participation in the management of natural resources and the robustness of regional partnerships.

Additional Keywords: asset, target, capacity