



wheatbelt
natural resource
management

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2012




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ABN 61 661 518 664



Approvals

This Strategic Plan has been approved by the Wheatbelt NRM Inc's Board of Management:

Version	Name	Position	Date	Signature
1.00	Glenice Batchelor	Chairperson	28 Jan 2010	
2.00	Glenice Batchelor	Chairperson	9 Feb 2011	

Acronyms & Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
ABN	Australian Business Number
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
NAPSWQ	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NRM	Natural Resource Management
WA	Western Australia
WNRM	Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated

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1 Introduction

The Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated (“Wheatbelt NRM Inc”), formerly known as the Avon Catchment Council Incorporated, is an independent community-based organisation leading natural resource management (NRM) endeavours within the Avon River Basin. The organisation operates from its Northam office, Western Australia, and exists as the second largest of the six NRM regional organisations in the State, with responsibility for the 12,000,000 hectares of the Avon River Basin.

This document presents a clear 3-year strategic direction that ensures Wheatbelt NRM Inc effectively responds to National, State and regional NRM needs and fosters productive relationships with the community to support and progress its strategic objectives. This Strategic Plan is supported each year by an Operations Plan that sets out how resources will be allocated and utilised in progressing the strategic objectives in this document.

2 Vision and Mission Statements

The Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated vision is:

to be the leading NRM organisation in the Wheatbelt working with communities to create healthy environments and livelihoods.

This vision is supported by Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated’s mission to:

1. Work with community, in collaboration with our partners, in pursuit of fulfilling our vision;
2. Engage with Governments in National, State and local NRM initiatives on behalf of the community;
3. Provide leadership through the development and delivery of sound and documented strategy, programs and projects for the protection and improvement of natural resources;
4. Promote and coordinate improvements in environmental, cultural, social and industry practices relating to NRM;
5. Empower and build capacity with the community to create healthy environments and livelihoods; and
6. Identify and support related beneficial research.

Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated’s vision and mission compel the organisation to pursue community engagement and participation that fosters collaborative and productive relationships. These actions result in sponsorship, funding, research and joint ventures that help protect and improve the natural assets and cultures of the Wheatbelt.

2.1 Values of Wheatbelt NRM Inc

The values that Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated hold as important and that guide its ethical behaviour, partnerships and community engagements include:

1. **Healthy environments** - recognising the value of natural assets and the importance to preserve and improve natural resources for future generations;
2. **Leadership** – promoting and leading behaviours that help bring together communities to progress clear and shared goals;

3. **Collaboration** – partnering and developing relationships to foster information sharing, capacity building and working in unity for the benefit of natural resources;
4. **Diversity** – recognising the value of different viewpoints and the benefits of cultural integration that supports community involvement and contributes to the enrichment of life;
5. **Ethical and fair behaviour** – being honest, trustworthy, transparent and respectful;
6. **Organisational empowerment** - offering a challenging, safe and rewarding work environment that facilitates the attraction, retention, development and performance of quality people;
7. **Community health and well being** - recognising the importance of having productive and healthy lifestyles, and engaging in social, economic and cultural activities;
8. **Outcomes focus** – delivering quality and lasting outcomes through community ownership; and
9. **Value proposition** – Wheatbelt NRM works with community and funders to bring dollars and skills to achieve environmental solutions.

3 About Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated

3.1 Our History

Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated originally began in 1994 as the Avon Working Group that formed part of the Swan-Avon ICM (the first regional group initiative in the State). At that time it was a partnership between the State and Federal governments and the community of the Avon River Basin. It was charged with overseeing projects, setting priorities, planning and advocacy of community issues.

During the Decade of Landcare and Natural Heritage Trust (NHT 1), the organisation undertook a wide range of activities, particularly under the Dryland Salinity Program. One key program was the development of the first NRM Strategic Plan (2001) that resulted from extensive consultation with the Avon community and Government. This period also saw the organisation become incorporated and undergo a name change to Avon Catchment Council.

Under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and Natural Heritage Trust 2 (NAP/NHT 2), an initiative by the Australian and State Governments, Avon Catchment Council was designated a Regional Group. This major initiative supported six regional natural resource management organisations across Western Australia (56 Australia-wide) to develop Regional NRM Strategic Plans through consultation with Community, Government and not-for-profit organisations. These NRM Strategies, with their 20 year targets and tradeoffs and prioritisations, were accredited by the Australian Government to guide investment in each region. The period (2004-2007) saw a focus on large scale strategic projects targeting high value public assets, such as the Avon River and its pools.

The new era of Caring for our Country has presented the organisation with many challenges and opportunities, one of which was to re-evaluate the strategic direction. It has been recognised that a stronger leadership focus on the community of the Avon River Basin would require its own strategic planning effort (in alignment with National and State initiatives) to ensure the sustainability of the organisation itself. This Strategic Plan is the outcome and marks a new way forward for the engagement with the community and a new way of doing business.

The change of name to Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated, initiated and approved in 2009, reflects the geographical location and common interests and land uses of

the community within the Avon River Basin region. This was part of major governance reform that included a skills-based Board of Management, comprising up to ten Board Directors, three subcommittees of the Board, and most importantly, provided a mechanism and a membership base of NRM-related groups and sub-catchment reference groups (representing individuals).

With these changes, Wheatbelt NRM Incorporated looks forward to a sustainable future as a community-based regional organisation, working with, and on behalf of, the community.

3.2 Our Key Strength Areas

This Strategic Plan aims to build upon the key recognised strengths of Wheatbelt NRM Inc that include:

1. **Membership Base** – a new Membership composition was formed in 2009 to enable the Board of Management to better consider the wider community interests in its planning and strategic endeavours. This has led to stronger community engagement with key organisations who now are entitled to become Members of Wheatbelt NRM Inc;
2. **Strong Governance** – the introduction of a skills-based Board of Management in 2009 and the three supporting subcommittee structure helps ensure its governance obligations, and the renewed focus on improving and expanding its policies and procedures support capacity building and guide ethical and professional behaviours;
3. **Sub-catchment Reference Groups** – three sub-catchment reference groups (representing individuals) have been established to better interface with the program and project planning endeavours and to provide a mechanism for community concerns and interests to be raised to the Board of Management;
4. **Engagement with Community** – a model for a communications and engagement framework has been created that extends to the new group-based Membership structure, partnerships and Associates (registered individuals who receive correspondence from Wheatbelt NRM Inc) and has improved the information and communication channels between the organisations and the community, including individual residents and landholders;
5. **Operational Frameworks** – to ensure consistent performance with a focus on continuous improvement, Wheatbelt NRM Inc has implemented a series of good practice frameworks in program management, project management, contract management and performance management;
6. **Committed Team** – the NRM industry attracts committed staff and Board Directors who wish to protect, nurture and improve the natural resources. Wheatbelt NRM Inc enjoy a strong staff structure of experienced and dedicated NRM professionals and equally dedicated Directors with a diversity of knowledge and experience;
7. **Cross Disciplinary** – the organisation resides as the only independent entity that is cross-disciplinary focused that can bring together the diverse organisations and communities for positive NRM outcomes; and
8. **Local Knowledge** – the organisation has a breadth and depth of information, data, expertise and knowledge on community engagement, local natural assets and natural resource management practices.

3.3 Our Key Improvement Areas

Beyond building upon the key strengths of the Wheatbelt NRM Inc, the following key improvement areas will also be addressed by this Strategic Plan over its life cycle:

1. **Australian and State NRM Leadership** – changes in the Australian Government funding, NRM State Office function and the engagement with the other WA regional offices is presenting opportunities to better align interests towards cohesive and collaborative relationships;
2. **Partnering and Community Engagement** – given the recent conceptual design of an engagement and communication framework, Wheatbelt NRM Inc now needs to finalise and implement the framework and build the productive relationships. Wheatbelt NRM Inc is focused on demonstrating its community leadership that is highly reliant on building productive relationships;
3. **Diversified Funding** – the changes in Government funding, and the historic dependence on it, has seen a need to revisit and diversify the revenue streams of the organisation to ensure its sustainability and to continuously improve its productivity in finding better ways to do business; and
4. **Governance** – there is a focus on ensuring a comprehensive, sound and robust governance structure that has seen the governing policies being updated. The recent governance frameworks, Board of Management structure, subcommittee structure and reference groups now need to be implemented.

3.4 Our Organisational Structure

Wheatbelt NRM Inc operates a lean organisational structure, as shown in the organisational chart below, with expertise covering the main focus areas of biodiversity, sustainable communities, sustainable agriculture and water.

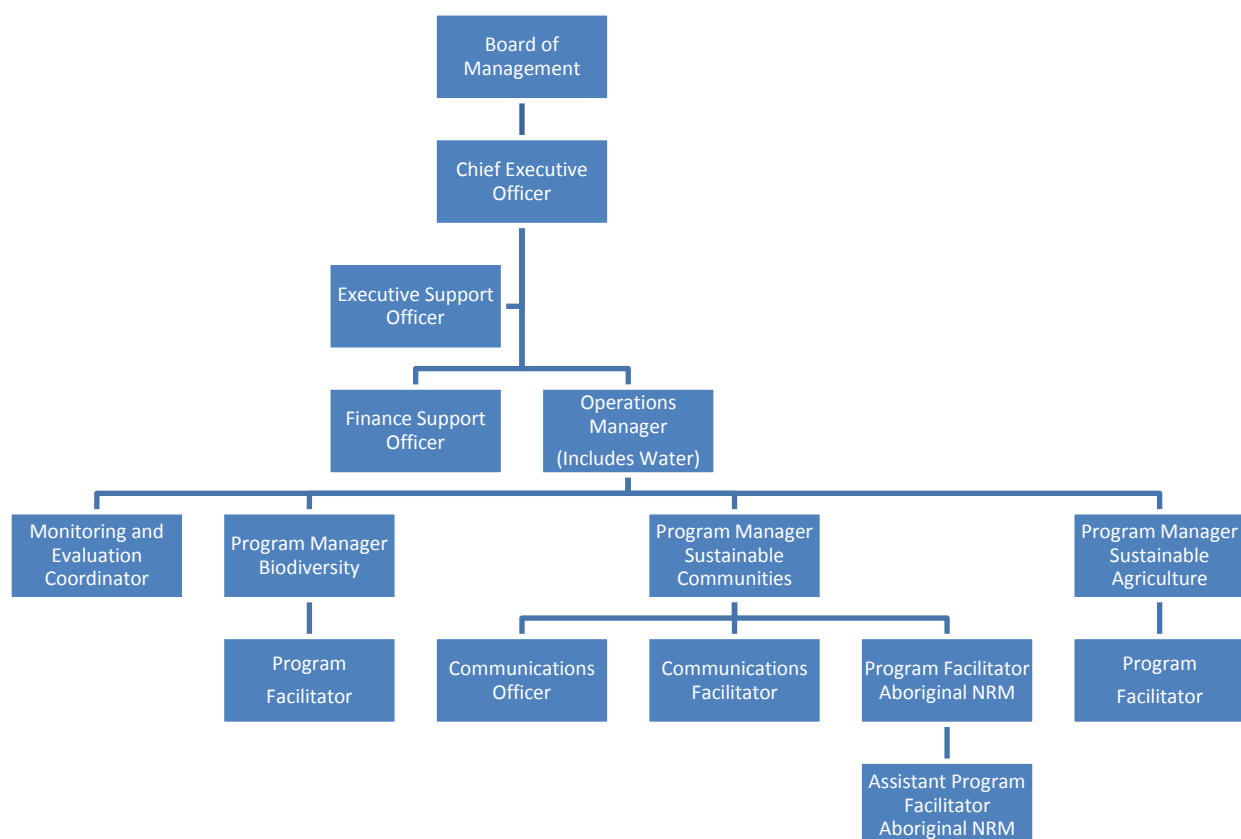


Figure 1 Wheatbelt NRM Inc's Organisational Chart as at 31 December 2009

4 About the Planning Process

4.1 5-Tier Planning Methodology

The Wheatbelt NRM Inc planning framework is a 5-tier methodology, comprising:

- a Regional Strategy (where Wheatbelt NRM Inc is the custodian);
- the vision and mission statements;
- the strategic objectives that are defined by the 3-year Strategic Plan;
- the portfolio-based annual initiatives that are aligned to the strategic objectives and stated in the annual Operations Plan; and
- any further program and project based documentation that defines the actual implementation works in detail.



Figure 2 5-Tier Planning Model

This provides a comprehensive framework that facilitates strategy through to implementation, and enables performance measurement at all levels of the process. The framework also integrates the financial management, risk management, variation management, project and program management, and monitoring and reporting processes and systems.

4.2 Regional Strategy

The long-term vision and strategy, originally developed by Avon Catchment Council in consultation with the Avon community and partners, sets the aspiration position that guides all NRM investments in the Avon river Basin. Priorities identified in the regional strategy informed the initial investment plans of Wheatbelt NRM Inc, resulting in programs and projects that worked towards longer term targets. This strategy was originally endorsed by the Australian and State Governments. The custodianship of this program is not well defined and presents an opportunity for Wheatbelt NRM Inc to lead all organisations towards its accomplishment.

4.3 Vision and Mission

The vision sets the aspiration position that Wheatbelt NRM Inc strives toward, whereas the mission outlines the organisation's key purpose. These are used to set a context to the development of all the plans, and are stated in the Strategic Plan document.

4.4 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan presents an organisational-wide strategy for a 3-year period. It establishes a measurable strategic result for Wheatbelt NRM Inc that will lead all planning activities below it. Each year of its life cycle, the Plan is reaffirmed by the Board of Management as being still relevant and valid. In addition, the progress of the strategic objectives are measured and reported to track the overall organisation's performance to its strategy.

4.5 Annual Operations Plans

Each year, an Operations Plan is created that sets out annual initiatives based on progressing the strategic objectives. The Operations Plan also covers ongoing operational key performance indicators and includes the annual budget that covers both core funding and special funding. This Plan becomes a key tool for performance evaluation.

4.6 Program and Project Plans

Program and project plans provide the lowest level of detail of how the annual initiatives will be progressed, including the detailed human resource allocations, budget, schedules and quality-based deliverables that results in the overall strategy being implemented.

4.7 Annual Initiatives and the Budget Process

Each year new annual initiatives (delivered as programs or projects) are developed, prioritised and funded in alignment of, and to progress, the agreed strategic objectives stated in this Plan. The funding required for progressing these annual initiatives, together with the ongoing core operational management financial requirements, define the annual budget.

The overall methodology reflects strategic objectives set at an organisational-level by the Board of Management and annual initiatives progressed at the operational-level overseen by the Chief Executive Officer. By the end of 2012, the sum of all the annual initiatives from each Operations Plan would have expected to realise the full completion of this Plan's strategic objectives.

4.8 Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Each strategic objective from this Plan and annual initiatives from the Operations Plans have specific measures that will be monitored and reported. As the budget forms part of the Operations Plan, each quarter the financial and performance position of the organisation will be reported. All programs and projects are tracked by the progress of their individual deliverables, providing a holistic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that tracks the execution of strategy down to on-ground implementation works.

5 The Strategic Theme Areas

Supporting its vision statement, Wheatbelt NRM Inc has developed a series of organisational-wide strategic objectives that will realise a strategic position for the organisation by 2012.

To ensure a holistic and balanced scorecard approach to planning, each strategic objective has been developed in alignment to one of the following four key strategic theme areas:

1. **Healthy Environments** – to protect and enhance the physical and cultural environment with a focus on biodiversity conservation, management of water in the landscape, climate change adaption and Aboriginal participation in NRM;
2. **Sustainable Industry and Livelihoods** –to develop and adopt sustainable (environmental, social and economic) industries that operate using best practice;
3. **Productive Partnerships** – to collaborate with partners in mutually beneficial and cooperative business to achieve greater NRM outcomes; and
4. **Organisational Excellence** – to focus on strong governance supported by efficient and effective business systems and processes..

6 Strategic Objectives for 2010-2012

There exist seven strategic objectives for the 2010-2012 period as defined in the following table, categorised by strategic theme areas:

SO Ref	Strategic Objective	Intended Purpose (Aims)	Deliverables - Means of Verification (Outputs)	Key Benefits (Outcomes)	Strategic Theme Area
SO01	To deliver NRM programs that protects and enhances the Wheatbelt environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the current extent and condition of priority species, communities and habitats. Improved Avon River and tributaries water quality and ecology. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of an applied prioritisation process to identify target locations, species, communities and habitats. Percentage of populations of the prioritised species where improved management occurred. Number of hectares of priority vegetation that have improved management. Percentage of relevant management actions achieved as defined in the Waterways Assessment documents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved trends in conservation status of prioritised species, communities and habitats. Protected prioritised vegetation. Improved ecological function of the Avon River and tributaries. Improved water quality of the Avon River and tributaries 	Healthy Environments
SO02	Create opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge into NRM, supporting cultural development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the overall knowledge and management of natural resources. Improve inclusivity of social, economic and cultural knowledge. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of opportunities that incorporate Aboriginal knowledge into NRM. Evidence of the capture of Aboriginal knowledge and its inclusion into the knowledge brokering information system. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of Aboriginal information and knowledge that contributes to the enhancement of NRM outcomes. Better engagement with, and acknowledgement of, the Nyungar community. Capture and safeguarding of Aboriginal information that may be otherwise lost. 	Healthy Environments
SO03	Apply a social-ecological systems approach to determine how,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To review and update the Regional NRM Strategy using a 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A revised Wheatbelt NRM Strategy produced and published Community recognition of the Wheatbelt Regional NRM Strategy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An adaptive long-term strategy that is recognised by community and drives NRM investments. Engagement for a regional focus 	Healthy Environments

SO Ref	Strategic Objective	Intended Purpose (Aims)	Deliverables - Means of Verification (Outputs)	Key Benefits (Outcomes)	Strategic Theme Area
	where and what we invest in NRM	resilience approach.	document.	on on-ground works	
SO04	Supporting industry practice for the sustainable use of natural resources (land, soil, water, energy)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption of recommended industry practices to improve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Soil quality; water use efficiency Support alternative industry development for improved NRM outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of project sites established on-ground Evidence of engagement through education, training and research that contributes to resource management knowledge. Number of industry support activities (committee participation, knowledge sharing, project partners) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Existing and new industries adopt sustainable resource use practices Positive trends in industry impacts on the environment Increased community commitment to developing and deploying recommended industry practices. 	Sustainable Industry and Livelihoods
SO05	Explore and secure new business opportunities to deliver environmental solutions to the Wheatbelt.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase opportunities to implement environmental solutions. Increase and diversify funding to increase the organisation's financial sustainability. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Documented existence of the investigation of prioritised business opportunity themes. Evidence of implementation of new business opportunities. Evidence of increased funding (amount and streams). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better support to the regional investment priority areas. Diversity in funding streams to better support financial sustainability. Increased partnership opportunities. Reduced dependence on Government funding, with less impact from policy constraints set. Opportunities as early adopters of new initiatives that result in specialist expertise. 	Productive Partnerships
SO06	Ensure Wheatbelt NRM has a strong relationship with it's community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enable community and other key stakeholders to better engage with the organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of an implemented Communications and Engagement framework and related engagement activities. Evidence of partnership agreements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders are identified and engaged through productive relationships. Mechanisms exist for community to be involved in strategy and 	Organisational Excellence

SO Ref	Strategic Objective	Intended Purpose (Aims)	Deliverables - Means of Verification (Outputs)	Key Benefits (Outcomes)	Strategic Theme Area
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Build an evidence model of community-based NRM. 3. Ensure community has access to NRM information 4. Enable a united regional community voice in WA NRM. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> and business relationships that align to programs or projects. 3. Existing structure to enable community input planning. 4. Contact and effective engagement with Members and other community groups to build relationships. 5. Percentage of NRM Regional Leaders Group meetings attended. 6. Evidence of the population of information and data into the knowledge brokering information management system. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> planning processes. 3. Formal mechanisms exist for establishing and maintaining relationships. 4. NRM information is accessible and useful in supporting NRM and other decision making processes (e.g., Land use and planning). 5. Better management and sharing of information and knowledge, with the ability to protect intellectual property and create an information asset that serves the organisation and community. 	
SO07	Ensure WNRM has a strong governance framework supported by efficient and effective business systems and processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To drive organisational performance through the new governance and planning frameworks 2. To be recognised as an organisation of employee and Director choice, supporting prioritised skills and capacity development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board and CEO evaluation processes implemented. 2. Board subcommittees established. 3. Publication of key policies and procedures. 4. Quarterly performance reporting to Board. 5. Evidence of ongoing training for the CEO and Directors 6. Retention rates of Directors and staff. 7. Director and staff satisfaction levels as part of the performance appraisal process. 8. Evidence of professional development and outcomes in prioritised skills and capability areas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board and CEO performance is monitored and evaluated. 2. Effective use of resources directed by the strategy. 3. Embedded risk management and budgeting into the planning processes. 4. Clarity between strategy and operational functions 5. High quality Directors and staff attracted and retained 6. Improved relationships with community. 7. Improved retention through providing professional development 	Organisational Excellence