



# Rangelands NRM Board Evaluation Survey Results

June 2013

# Feedback received from surveys held in November 2012 and February 2013

## Background

As a component of good governance it is essential that organisations regularly review the performance of their management committees as well as the regular reviews that are conducted of staff performance. In the case of Rangelands NRM, the Board agreed in mid-2012 that we would provide an opportunity for assessment of our Chair, the Board as a whole, and the General Manager.

The evaluation of our executive adds to the evaluation process we implemented for Rangelands NRM early in 2012 with the Organisational Review which indicated that there are a number of areas where we need to improve, including how we work strategically. The Review also highlighted the need to better utilise the Board skills, especially as our funding program changes and hopefully other opportunities develop where Rangelands has more discretion in which projects are supported and in utilising our own resources.

The first stage of the evaluation process involved asking Board members to answer a suite of questions covering all aspects of executive performance. Responses were somewhat limited and we followed up the initial questionnaire with an on-line survey and received some additional responses which have been collated with the earlier responses.

The hard copy survey questionnaire distributed to the Rangelands NRM Board members in November 2012 sought their assessment of:

- the board's performance (35 questions);
- self-assessment of their own performance as a board member together with endorsement by the Chair (16 questions); and
- assessment of the General Manager's performance (31 questions).

This was completed by 5 of the 16 board members (response rate of 31%).

Given the less than desired response rate a decision was taken to resurvey the board members using a shorter electronic questionnaire via Survey Monkey™ in February 2013. Key questions from the original survey were re-used so that if the responses from the initial respondents could be amalgamated into the responses received in the subsequent survey and provide a more complete picture. The electronic survey totalled 16 questions including an optional question asking for the name of the respondent.

The questions were mostly based on a scaled response type question where a statement was made and 4 options were available to choose from (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree). Opportunity to provide an open ended comment was also available. Question 16 required an open ended response only.

There were 7 responses to the Survey Monkey™ questionnaire. A comparison was then undertaken against the previous survey to identify any overlaps in completion between the two. The expectation was that a different set of respondents would complete the shorter survey. Those who had completed the November 2012 survey before were not required to provide an assessment, however 4 of the Board members did respond again. One of the initial respondents had not completed the second survey and so responses for this member were entered into Survey Monkey™ so that a complete picture could be sought. This led to a total combined response rate of 8 (50%). All respondents except one, across both surveys, had provided his or her name. The one anonymous response was carefully compared to the responses of the transferred results in an effort to ensure that it was unlikely that the transfer would result in duplication.

## Results

The results of the Survey Monkey™ questionnaire (including transfer of responses from the 1 respondent who completed the November 2012 survey) are outlined below.

All questions were completed by 7 of the 8 respondents (88%). The remaining respondent stopped providing information after question 5.

Q1: Name (optional)

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) provided their name.

Q2: When did you join the Board?

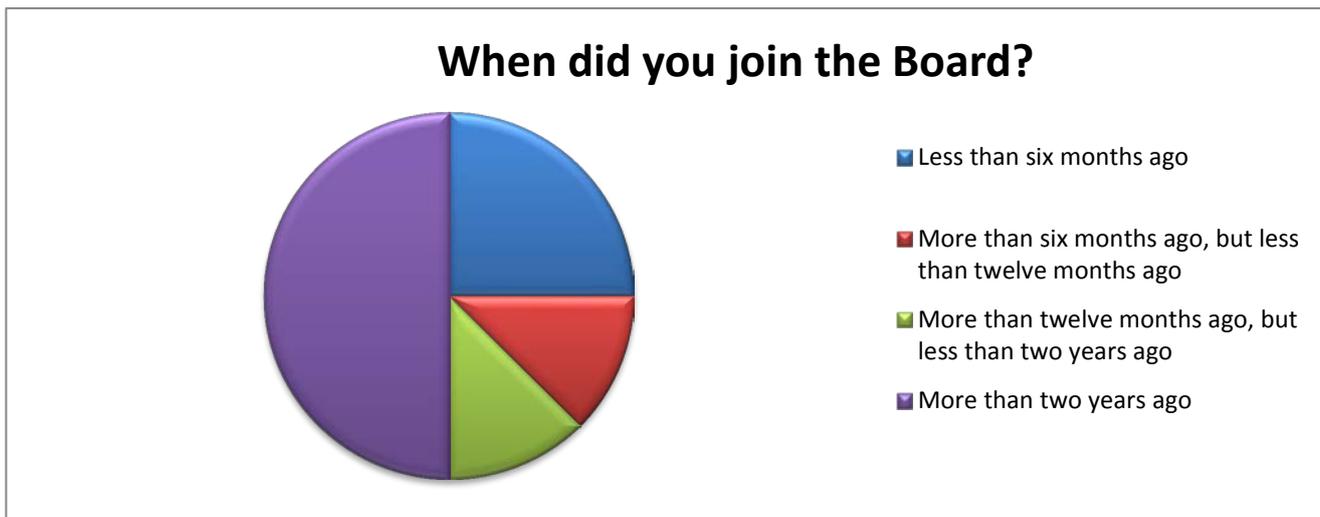
This question was asked so that an understanding could be gained of the responses provided for following questions. Those members who have been board members for only a short period were deemed likely to have different feedback than longer serving members. If members were new to the board they were given the option of answering Not Applicable if they were new to the Board. This option was provided with a request that this option only be selected if they were new to the Board within the last six months and did not have sufficient understanding to accurately respond.

Available responses to this question were:

- Less than six months ago
- More than six months ago, but less than twelve months ago
- More than twelve months ago, but less than two years ago
- More than two years ago

All respondents answered the question (100% response rate). Results found that, of the 8 respondents, 50% (n=4) were long standing members who had been involved for more than 2 years. Two (25%) of the respondents joined the board less than 6 months before completion of the survey.

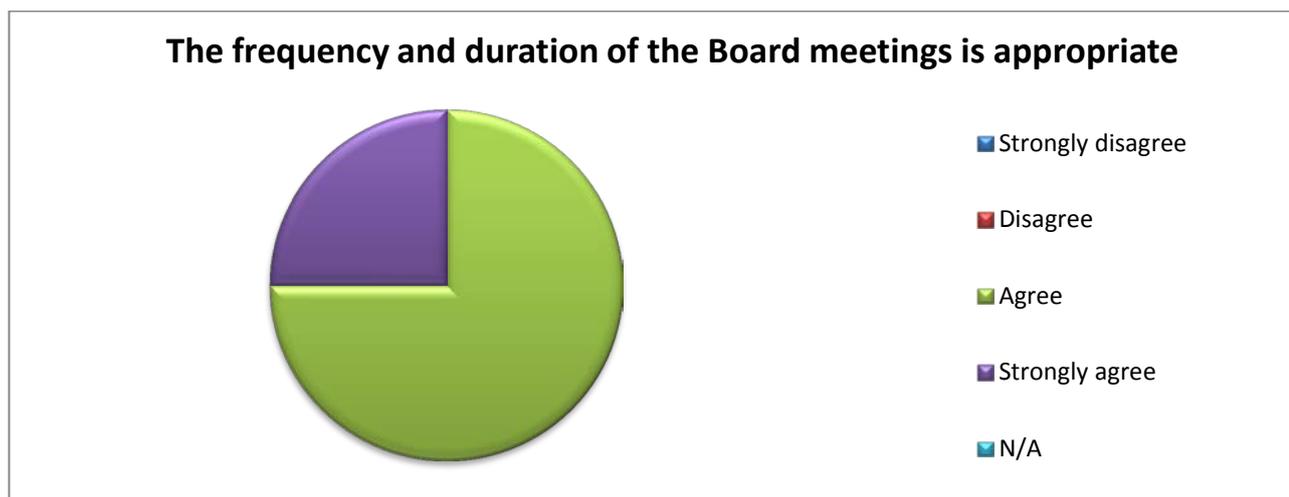
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than six months ago	25.0%	2
More than six months ago, but less than twelve months ago	12.5%	1
More than twelve months ago, but less than two years ago	12.5%	1
More than two years ago	50.0%	4



**Q3. The frequency and duration of the Board meetings is appropriate**

All respondents answered this question (100% response rate). All responses were positive. One respondent also provided a comment about how the duration of the Board meeting could be improved.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	75.0%	6
Strongly agree	25.0%	2



**Comment**

*“There may be an opportunity to refine the duration of the Board meetings by identifying timings on the agenda and sticking to it. With an unusually large group everyone needs an opportunity to be heard but by tightening up the format it may focus us on Board not operational issues and avoid the potential to be side-tracked”*

**Q4: The Board papers (support materials - meeting agendas, minutes, briefing papers) are timely, accurate, and informative**

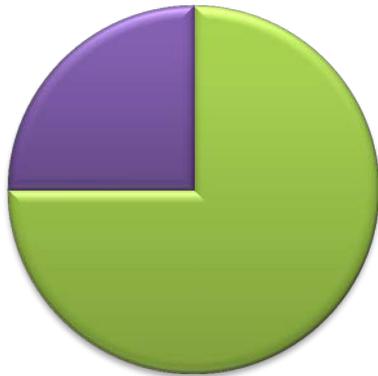
All 8 respondents completed this question positively (100%). One respondent also provided a comment about how the delivery of the Board papers could be improved.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	75.0%	6
Strongly agree	25.0%	2

**Comment**

*“The papers do tend arrive in bits and pieces and then there is another set when you arrive at the meeting and you never quite know if they are different. Perhaps they could be all pdf'd and set out as one timely pack with no late additions. It would be good to get the draft minutes before the next meeting.”*

**The Board papers (support materials - meeting agendas, minutes, briefing papers) are timely, accurate, and informative**



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

Q5: The Chairman makes sure there is sufficient time to discuss the important issues on the Board agenda

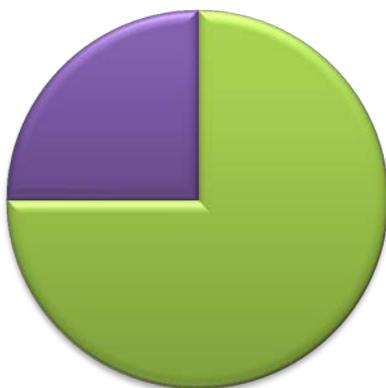
All 8 respondents completed this question positively (100%). One respondent provided a comment about the need to focus the work of the Board.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	75.0%	6
Strongly agree	25.0%	2

**Comment**

*“The Chair does an excellent job but has a difficult task with such a large Board contingent. I think the strategy work will further help focus on the important issues for the Board.”*

**The Chairman makes sure there is sufficient time to discuss the important issues on the Board agenda**



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A if new to Board

Q6: Board Directors come to meetings well prepared and participate effectively in debate and discussions

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. Two respondents opted for the N/A response that was available to those too new to the Board to have sufficient understanding to answer; however only one of those taking this option was new.

Most of the remaining responses were positive but one respondent did not feel that members come to meetings prepared.

Comments about were made by 2 respondents about the possible unpreparedness of members.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	14.3%	1
Agree	42.9%	3
Strongly agree	14.3%	1
N/A	28.6%	2

**Comments**

*“It is hard to tell how prepared people are as little is taken as read and people can therefore get away with little preparation. The regions are usually well prepared with their reports. There is also usually a fair bit of “death by PowerPoint” which is unusual for Board meetings and also allows participants to be less well prepared.”*

*“Sometimes not overly prepared on some agenda items.”*



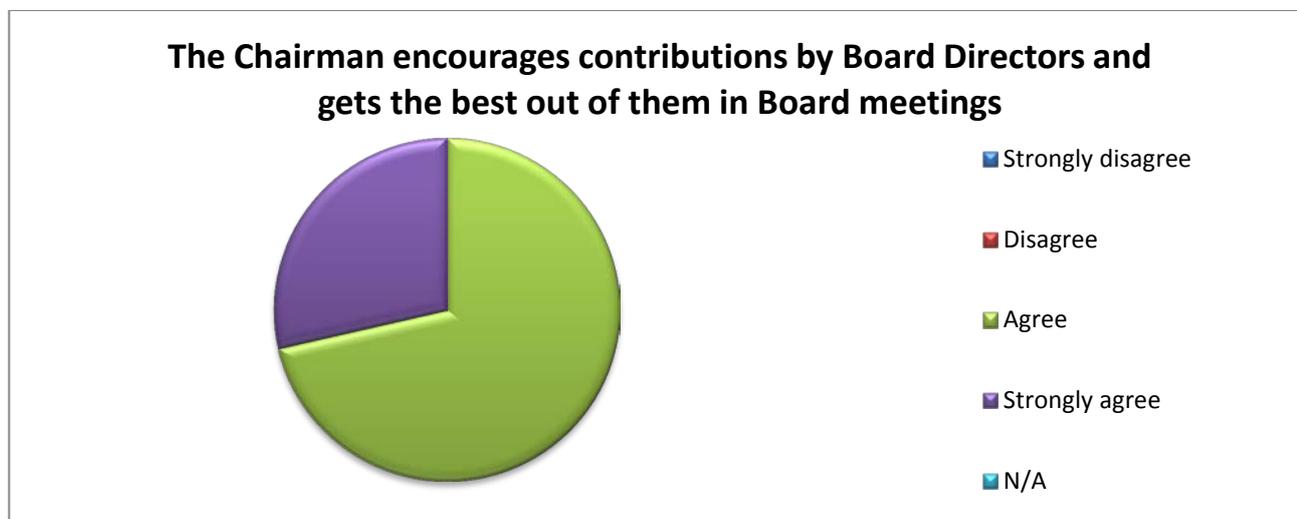
Q7: The Chairman encourages contributions by Board Directors and gets the best out of them in Board meetings

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. All responses received were positive. One comment was made about the role of the Chair in encouraging members to contribute.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	71.4%	5
Strongly agree	28.6%	2

Comment

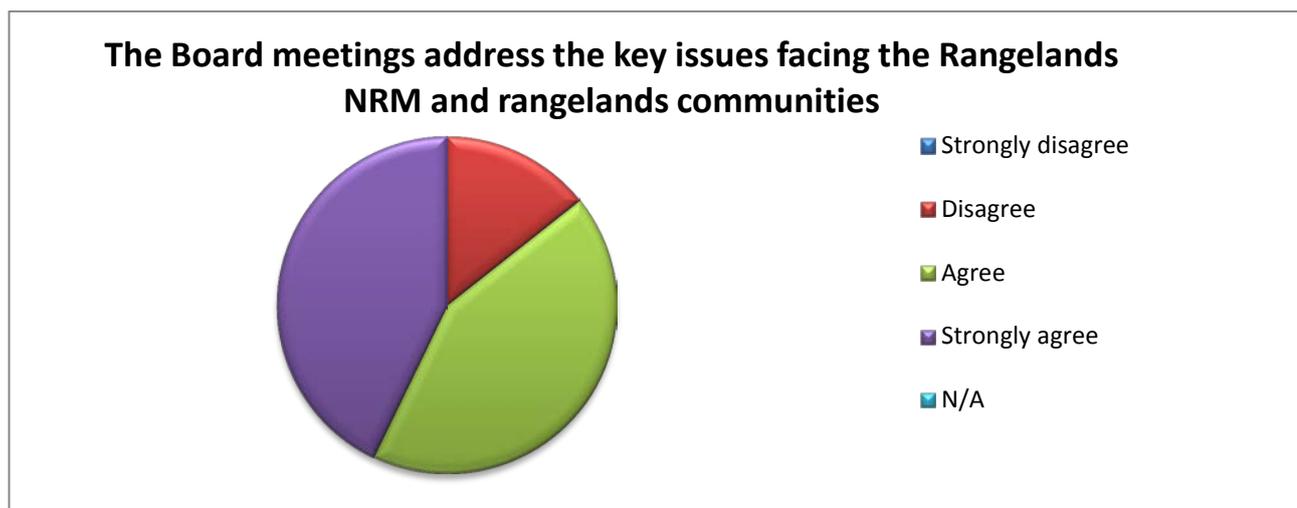
*“The Chair does a great job juggling a heavy agenda and generally a large number of participants and allows everyone to have their say.”*



Q8: The Board meetings address the key issues facing the Rangelands NRM and rangelands communities

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. Most (86%) of these were positive but one respondent disagreed. Two respondents made a comment about how work on strategic issues has resulted in improvements to this area.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	14.3%	1
Agree	42.9%	3
Strongly agree	42.9%	3



Comment

*“This has not always been fully the case but the strategy work is now contributing to this.”*

*“I’m still getting up to speed, but there seems to be a strong alignment to the strategy.”*

**Q9: The Board regularly inputs into strategy development and review**

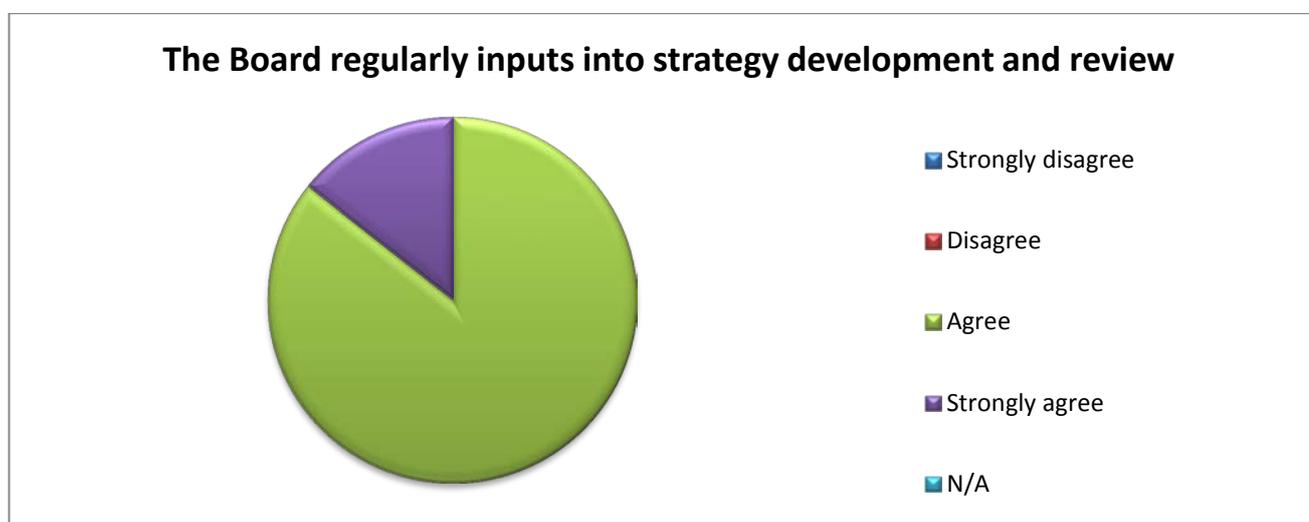
Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. All responses (100%) were positive. Two respondents provided comments about the recency of focus on strategic development and the originators of key discussions about strategy development and review.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	85.7%	6
Strongly agree	14.3%	1

Comments

*“This input is more recent.”*

*“Often the leads come from the EO and Chair.”*



**Q10: The Board has been effective in setting the direction of Rangelands NRM**

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. Six of the respondents answered positively and one did not. Three respondents provided comments about the effectiveness of direction setting activities.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	14.3%	1
Agree	71.4%	5
Strongly agree	14.3%	1

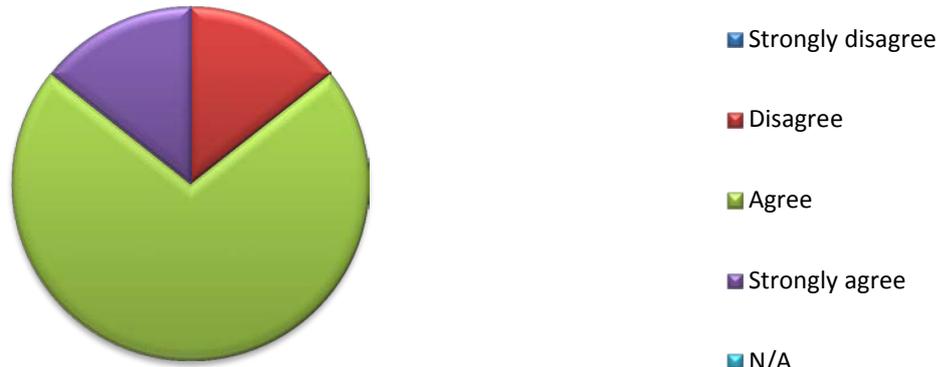
Comments

*“I feel the Board role may have been a bit passive in setting the direction.”*

*“Often the leads come from the EO and Chair.”*

*“Probably need to review.”*

### The Board has been effective in setting the direction of Rangelands NRM



Q11: The Board is effective in considering and determining all major policy issues

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. Six of the respondents (86%) answered positively but not as positively as previous questions. Two respondents provided comments about the efficacy of the board in working on policy issues.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	14.3%	1
Agree	85.7%	6

#### Comments

*"I am not sure how well the Board considers and debates policy issues. Again it feels like the Board has been a bit passive."*

*"Need to review."*

### The Board is effective in considering and determining all major policy issues



Q12: As a Board Member I am satisfied with the level of support (financial, mentoring, other) that is provided to me in undertaking my role as a Board Director

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. The level of positivity was lower for this question with almost 30% disagreeing with the statement. Two respondents provided comments about the need for support of Board members.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	28.6%	2
Agree	42.9%	3
Strongly agree	28.6%	2



#### Comments

*"I feel the expectation is that we manage this ourselves although the governance training was welcome."*

*"I don't think there is anything specific developed here. Something to look at? (At WALGA we run some of our councillors through the Australian Institute of Company Directors course. Not sure of the cost)."*

Q13: There are specific areas in which professional development would enhance my effectiveness as a Board Director (e.g. governance, financial mgt., risk mgt., strategic planning)

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question; however 2 of the responses were noted as not applicable. Only one of those selecting N/A had indicated that they had been on the Board for less than 6 months and therefore unable to adequately comment. Two of the respondents don't feel that they require professional development to improve their effectiveness; less than 50% feel that they do. These three respondents identified the areas that they would like professional development.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Disagree	28.6%	2
Agree	42.9%	3
N/A	28.6%	2

Comments

*"I think the Board needs to evaluate its needs to ensure members are able to contribute effectively and function well as a Board. There should be on-going Board training."*

*"Financial and planning."*

*"Strategic planning."*

**There are specific areas in which professional development would enhance my effectiveness as a Board Director (e.g. governance, financial mgt., risk mgt., strategic planning)**



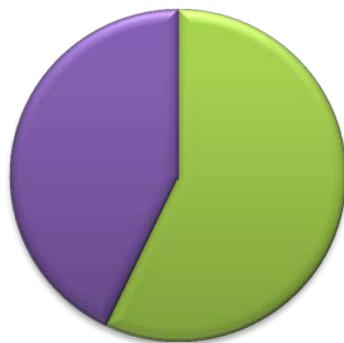
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

14: The Board monitors appropriate financial and non-financial performance indicators

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. All responses were positive.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	57.1%	4
Strongly agree	42.9%	3

**The Board monitors appropriate financial and non-financial performance indicators**

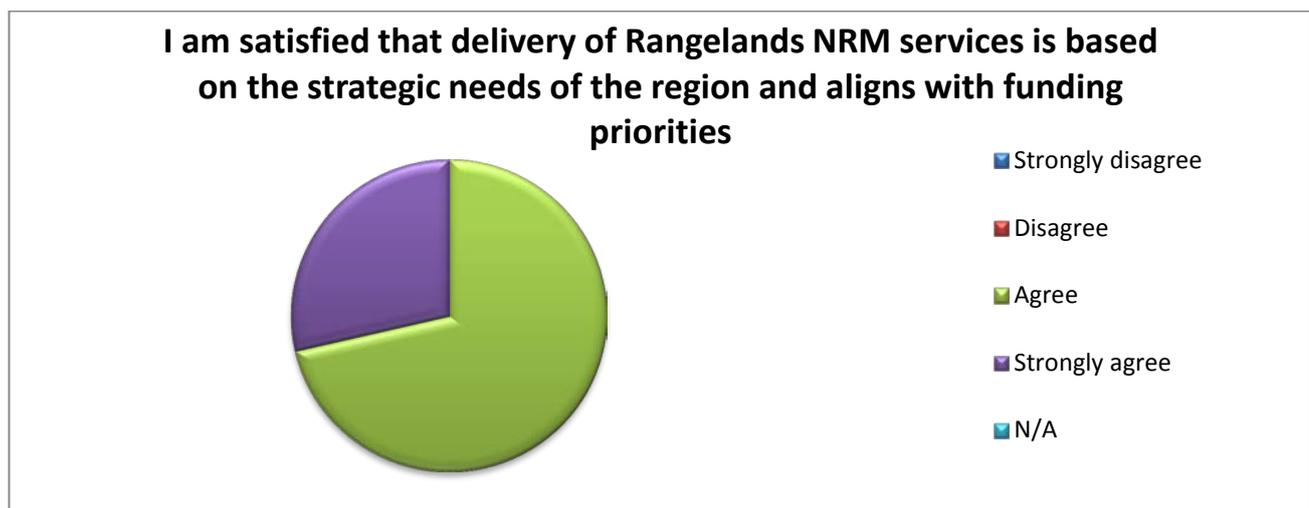


- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

Q15: I am satisfied that delivery of Rangelands NRM services is based on the strategic needs of the region and aligns with funding priorities.

Seven of the 8 respondents (88%) answered this question. All responses were positive. Two respondents provided comments about the alignment between delivery of services and strategy.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	71.4%	5
Strongly agree	28.6%	2



Comments

*“It is getting better.”*

*“Can only rely on input from the regions - maybe need to look at whole of state approach on strategic issues - particularly drought management.”*

Q16: Any additional comments on the performance of the Board or how we can improve the functioning of the Board?

Four respondents provided additional comments (50%).

Comments

*“I think there needs to be a common understanding of what the group wants to achieve, how that can be best achieved and with whom. I am not quite sure that the group is functioning as a Board in the true sense yet although the Chair and GM are taking us in the right direction.”*

*“The Board members need to get better at putting more pre-thought into some of the items discussed to enable better discussion on the day. It's an outside the meeting thing.”*

*“If costs permit possible regional rotation of meetings with local involvement.”*

*“Not at this stage.”*

## Analysis

This survey is based on feedback from only half of the Board and as such should be viewed with caution, particularly as one of the members completing the survey did not answer most of the survey items. Three quarters of the respondents have been members for more than 6 months and so sat through several meetings and are sufficiently experienced to comment.

The majority of feedback was positive but certain areas stand out as requiring additional work or improvement. These relate to a need to:

- better processes to provide members with timely Board Papers, encourage full and prepared participation of all members, and keep to time during meetings;
- continue to focus on working through strategic issues as this is felt to be a vital component of the Board's role – however full involvement of all Members is required for this to be successful; and
- provide more opportunities for professional development in areas that would provide direct benefit to full involvement by all Members.