



# ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

## DRAFT

For discussion and approval at the AGM  
This draft will then be designed for final printing and  
distribution

## WHO WE ARE

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Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group Inc. (Rangelands WA) is a non government organisation which represents community needs and encourages the sustainable use of land, flora and fauna, fresh water and coastal marine environments.

We are one of six regional NRM groups established in Western Australia in accordance with the agreement between the Australian and Western Australian Governments originally to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) programs, and the National Landcare Program (NLP).

*We are a dynamic organisation driven by a passionate team of committed and valued individuals and community members. Through partnerships we make a real difference in the rangelands.*

## WHAT INSPIRES US

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*The sustainable use of our natural heritage for today and tomorrow*

## OUR PURPOSE

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*Leading, inspiring and fostering partnerships to sustainably manage our region's natural heritage*

## OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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In line with the Commonwealth, State and regional priorities Rangelands WA aims to:

**Provide sound NRM planning and investment** – to conserve and enhance our natural resources.

**Develop and implement sound, logical and practical management actions** – to improve the condition of key resources and enhance on-ground outcomes.

**Activity coordination** – integrate and co-ordinate NRM activities both across the region and with State and Commonwealth partners.

**Community** – ensure high levels of community input into the initiatives is encouraged and maintained.

**Members and stakeholders** – enhance the capacity of members and stakeholders in NRM initiatives.

**Investment** – increase the level of investment in NRM initiatives.

## OUR REGION

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The rangelands region is the largest of 56 established regions through Australia. Spanning more than 90 percent of Western Australia's land mass and 75 percent of its coastline, the region has a low population density. Due to the vast size of Western Australia, the region is divided into five sub-regional areas to maximise the project outcomes.

### Kimberley

Located in the north-west of Western Australia, the Kimberley region covers nearly 425,000 square kilometres.

With a population of approximately 40,600 the Kimberley region has fewer people per square kilometre than almost anywhere else in the world; 50 percent of the Kimberley population is Aboriginal.

The Kimberley has distinct dry (May to October) and wet (November to April) seasons and the region includes vast areas of unspoiled land, coastal marine and waterways. The region's ecosystem remains largely intact and holds a rich diversity of unique species.

The Kimberley region's major industries include mining, tourism, pastoralism, pearling and irrigated agriculture.

### Ord Catchment

Located in the far north-east corner of Western Australia, the Ord region encompasses approximately 53,500 square kilometres of the Kimberley; approximately 14,000 hectares of this is Ord Irrigation Area.

The region's population is low with majority of people living in the town of Kununurra, or on pastoral stations and in small Aboriginal settlements.

The Ord Catchment experiences a tropical monsoonal climate with two distinct dry (May to October) and wet (November to April) seasons. The Ord Catchment is rich in natural resources including water, fertile soils, minerals and flora and fauna.

The Region's predominate industries include mining, cattle production and irrigated agriculture.

### Pilbara

Spanning across the central-north of the rangelands region, the Pilbara covers approximately 500,000 square kilometres.

With approximately 39,500 people living within the region the Pilbara accounts for approximately two percent of Western Australia's population.

With natural landscapes dating back over two billion years the region lies entirely within the arid topics and includes approximately 4665 kilometres of coastline.

The Pilbara's primary industries include mining and agriculture.

### Gascoyne-Murchison

Encompassing approximately 930,000 square kilometres the Gascoyne-Murchison region is located in the central region of the rangelands.

The Region's population is approximately 20,000 people, with an estimated 12 percent Aboriginal.

The Gascoyne-Murchison has an arid climate, with hot summers and mild winters. The region is noted for the large amounts of acacia shrubland and inclusions of hummock grasslands.

The Region's major industries include pastoralism, fishing and tourism.

### Goldfields-Nullarbor

Situated in the arid shrublands and woodlands of the southern rangelands the Goldfields-Nullarbor region includes over 930,000 square kilometres.

Of the estimated 44,000 people who live within the region a significant proportion is Aboriginal.

The Goldfields-Nullarbor is a semi arid climate with hot summers and mild winters.

The Region's major industries include mining, agriculture, fishing and forestry, manufacturing and construction and tourism and culture.

## OUR FUNDING

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The first phase of NHT stakeholder involvement in NRM in the rangelands was primarily via small and medium sized projects addressing local issues that were not generally within the context of a broad overarching plan or strategy. A notable exception to this was support provided through the Gascoyne-Murchison Strategy which resulted in an average annual investment of around \$5 million for that sub-region. However other than the Gascoyne-Murchison Strategy, NHT funding of projects averaged around \$1 million per year and was spread throughout the remainder of the region. This was pre-Rangelands WA.

The second phase of NHT (NHT2) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) (2003-2008) saw a major increase in funding to the rangelands NRM and a major increase in the breadth and number of projects sponsored. It was early in this period that Rangelands WA was established and incorporated. Many projects were identified through the development of the Rangelands WA Strategic Plan and contracted through the second Rangelands WA investment plan. Commonwealth funding allocated to Rangelands WA under NHT2 and the NAP was approximately \$18.7 million. Over 80 projects have been funded under NHT2 and NAP and summaries of some of these are shown in the next part of this document. These projects were all aimed at Management Action Targets which addressed a series of priority Resource Condition Targets for natural resources in the rangelands of WA.

Commonwealth investment in the rangelands NRM was usually matched by State, industry and community investment at a ratio of between \$1.90 and \$2.50 for each NHT dollar invested, particularly through the first phase of NHT.

In broad terms the themes of current NRM investment in the rangelands, and examples of projects delivered are:

### **Impact of Fire on Landscapes, Land Management and Ecological Values**

- Kimberley Fire Management Project – social and cultural attitudes towards fire and the land management and habitat impacts of fire in the Kimberley (as much as 30 percent of the Kimberley is impacted by fire each year).
- The Kimberley Fire Management Project is complemented by the Northern Australia Fire Project operating throughout the Kimberley, Northern Territory and North Queensland NRM Region.

### **Impact of Range of Land Uses (primarily pastoral activity) on Landscape, Ecological and Hydrological Processes**

- Raising the awareness of pastoral lease stakeholders (in the southern rangelands) in approaches to improve the ecological, hydrological and production management of pastoral lease areas.

### **Sustainable Grazing**

- Completion of the upper Murchison River fencing and grazing management initiative (physical and management improvement of a greater than 200 kilometre section of river area).
- Catchment and river restoration work in the Roderick River (major tributary of Murchison River) and Lyndon River catchments.
- Upper Gascoyne River Rehabilitation Project.
- Total grazing management initiative in Goldfields-Nullarbor.
- Sustainable and Profitable Pastoral Management in Western Australia's Southern Rangelands.
- Building Partnerships to Improve Rangeland Management and Pastoral Profitability in Semi-Arid Australia (cross-regional project).

### **Baseline Marine and Near Coastal Environments Information**

- Derivation of marine water quality objectives for heavy marine traffic areas of the Pilbara's North-West Shelf.
- Determining baseline sediment quality for the Pilbara's North-West Shelf area.
- Coastal and marine management, including Indigenous understanding and management input to the North-Kimberley coastal area (Salt Water Country Project)

### **Baseline Biological Information**

- Broadening (in scope and coverage) of the State initiated Pilbara Bioregion Biological Survey.
- Targeted biological investigation of under-surveyed area in rangelands.

### **Management of Water Areas for Ecological Values**

- Establishing priorities for wetland conservation and management in the Kimberley.

### **Restoration / Rehabilitation of Water Areas for Ecological and Sustainable Use Values**

- Implementation of the Lower Gascoyne River Action Plan – features improvements to and rehabilitation of degraded areas in the river and riparian zones.
- Extension of river rehabilitation work at lower and mid-Gascoyne River sites.
- Improved environmental management in the Ord River Region – includes key aspects of water use efficiency and water quality from the Ord irrigation area as well as Local Government planning, social and cultural aspects of Indigenous engagement in NRM and land management in the upper Ord catchment.

### **World Heritage Areas (Management Support)**

- Project management, education and interpretative signage and committee support (community consultation and scientific advisory) for the Shark Bay World Heritage Property (three discreet projects).

### **Weeds and Feral Animals**

- Developing Capacity to Manage Noogoora Burr Infestations in the West Kimberley.
- Developing Pastoralists Capacity to Manage and Control Parkinsonia in the DeGrey Land Care District Committee.
- Development of Strategies to Manage Vertebrate Pests in the Goldfields-Nullarbor.
- Mapping and Control of Satellite Populations of Mesquite and Parkinsonia in the Gascoyne and Murchison Catchments.

### **Ord River (NAP) Region – Kimberley**

- Improve Water Management in the Stage One Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA).
- Other projects to target sustainable land management, water use and water and land quality aspects of the operation and potential expansion of the ORIA are under consideration.

### **Indigenous Engagement and Capacity Development**

- Employing Indigenous Facilitators to support engagement and the building of partnerships with Aboriginal groups to support and enhance NRM outcomes in the rangelands.
- Through coastal and marine management projects, including Indigenous understanding and management input to the North Kimberley coastal area (Saltwater Country Project), developing the capacity of remote community people in NRM and for the care of their country.

## OUR PARTNERS

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Over the past year Rangelands WA has focused on establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships with the following partners:

### **Australian Government**

*Australian Government*

### **State Government Agencies**

*State Government*

*Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA)*

*Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)*

*Department of Fisheries (DOF)*

*Department of Water (DOW)*

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI)*

*Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)*

*State NRM Office*

### **Local Government**

*Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)*

### **Industry Bodies**

*Upper Gascoyne Land Care District Committee (LCDC)*

*Lyndon Land Care District Committee (LCDC)*

*Cue Land Care District Committee (LCDC)*

*DeGrey Land Care District Committee (LCDC)*

*Halls Creek East Kimberley Land Conservation District Committee*

### **Research and Development Institutions**

*University of Western Australia (UWA)*

*Murdoch University*

*CSIRO*

*Geo Science Australia*

*Charles Darwin University*

### **Indigenous Organisations**

*Kimberley Land Council - Land and Sea Unit*

*Kimberley Law and Culture Centre*

*Kimberley Language Resource Centre*

*Kimberley Aboriginal Pastoralists Inc*

*Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrggeb Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation (MG Corp)*

*Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation*

*Burringurrah Aboriginal Community*

*Mungullah Community Aboriginal Corporation*

*Buurabalyi Thalanji Corporation*

### **Non-government Organisations**

*Australian Wildlife Conservatory*

*Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee*

*Environs Kimberley*

*Ord Land and Water*

### **Private Industry Organisations**

*Ord Irrigation Cooperative*

*Emu Services*

## OUR COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT (BOARD)

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### Mr Bill Mitchell

Chair

Bill has been the President of WALGA and Vice President of the Australian Local Government Association since 2004. He has been involved within Local Government for more than 30 years and since 1976 has been a Councillor for the Murchison Shire Council. As the Chair of Rangelands WA and Commissioner of the Conservation Commission of WA, Bill is an avid supporter of natural resource management, particularly within the Western Australian rangelands. Bill has been Chair of Rangelands WA since it was formed on 30 December 2002.

### Ms Elaine Gardner

Vice Chair

As the Vice Chair of the Board, Elaine joined the Rangelands WA Board four years ago. Since 1996 Elaine has been Chair of the Ord Irrigation Co-operative and is also the Chair of the East Kimberley Reference Group. Elaine is a Board Member of the Northern Australian Land and Water Task Force, the Director of Cambridge Gulf Ltd and Water Commissioner of the National Water Commission. Elaine was previously a Board Member of Ord Land and Water and is the current President of the Northern Territory Polocrosse Association. Elaine has actively farmed sugar cane and bananas for the past 24 years.

### Mr Mark Halleen

Treasurer / Secretary

Mark is an inaugural member of the Rangelands WA Board. He has been the Chair for the Murchison Land Care District Committee for the past four years and is also the Deputy Chair of the Murchison Shire Council and Carnarvon Zone Authority. Mark is the Manager of Boolardy Station since 1996 and is involved in the Roderick River Wooramal Catchment Project. Mark is passionate about restoring the rangelands to a natural land system.

### Mr Laurie Caporn

Agency Representative (Department of Fisheries WA)

Laurie is a Principal Management Officer in the Department of Fisheries Environment Branch. Laurie has been involved in regional NRM processes for the past four years and is an Association Member of the South West Catchment Council. Throughout Laurie's 30 year career with the Department of Fisheries, his previous roles included Trainee Fisheries and Wildlife Inspector and Operations and Regional Manager. Laurie is keen to improve and promote the role and value of regional NRM delivery to both Government and the community.

### Mr Chris Chilcott

Agency Representative (Department of Agriculture and Food WA)

Chris is the Department of Agriculture and Food's Rangelands Regional Manager. With more than 15 years of experience in rangelands management and science Chris formally worked with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries as Science Leader of the Sustainable Grazing Systems Unit. Chris jointly led the development of the Grazing Land Management Education Program along

with leading a number of multi-disciplinary research projects in grazing management, native vegetation management, simulation modelling and effective extension techniques. Chris' focus areas include the impacts of clearing and reforestation on pastoral production and soil ecological processes.

### Mr Peter Kneebone

Community Representative

Peter has been involved in NRM for the past 35 years. Peter is a member of the Zone Control Authority and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association for the Agriculture Protection Board. Involved in Local Government for 25 years Peter was previously elected as the Shire of Derby / West Kimberley President for five years. Peter is the current Chair of the Kimberley NRM group and an active member of the North Kimberley Land Care District Committee. Peter is passionate about preventing negative change to the rangelands.

### Mr David McQuie

Community Representative

David has been involved in NRM for 24 years and is a producer of wool and beef. He is currently the Deputy Chair of the Zone Control Authority and Sandstone Shire and is the Chair of the Ecologically Sustainable Rangelands Management (ESRM) committee. David also manages an earth moving services and believes in sustaining the rangelands for future generations.

### Mr David (Dave) Munday

Agency Representative (Department of Water)

Involved in NRM since 1989, Dave is currently the Department of Water Kimberley Region Manager. In 1998 Dave was awarded the Victorian Government Department of Natural Resources and Environment's Dr Sidney Plowman Farm Management award for his outstanding contributions to reversing land degradation on farms. Dave's previous roles have included Area Manager for national parks in Western Victoria, Regional Landcare Facilitator, NRM facilitator for the Northern Territory and Property Management Planning Program Manager. Dave has been involved in the Landcare movement for the past 15 years, during this time he has contributed to the Landcare Australia limited planning sessions, decade of Landcare in Victoria and has been a key committee member of Victorian Landcare conferences. Studying community involvement in land management in Canada and Alaska, Dave is passionate about community involvement and development in NRM that lead to real on-ground improvements.

### Mr Mark Piggott

Community Representative

*To insert on receipt*

### Mr Nevin Wittber

Agency Representative (Department for Planning and Infrastructure)

Since 2007 Nevin has been an agency representative (Department of Planning and Infrastructure), is currently the General Manager of the State Land Services and a DPI representative for the Indigenous Engagement in NRM Taskforce. Formally the General Manager of the Pastoral Land Business unit, Nevin has extensive skills in project planning and management. In 2006 was responsible for the planning and

coordination of activities under the Strategic Tree Farming project – Australia’s biggest single National Action Plan funded project which crossed four NRM Regions in the south west of WA. Nevin supports sustainability principles in consumption of natural resources and applying good governance to all aspects of NRM activities.

## OUR TEAM THROUGH 2007-08

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Dr Brian Warren – General Manager	Ms Alex Harper – Landcare Coordinator
Mr John Silver – Program Manager	Gascoyne / Murchison
Ms Liz Brown – Program Manager	Ms Alison McGilvray – Biodiversity
Kimberley	Facilitator North
Ms Kriss Hand – Office Manager	
Ms Leslie Abreu – Finance Officer	RESIGNED
Mr Tim Thompson – NRM Coordinator	Mr Scott Brain – Program Manager
Mr Bevan Gray – Indigenous NRM	Mr Rod Williams – General Manager
Facilitator Gascoyne	Mr Matt Reimer – Project Manager
Ms Beth Hales - Information Management	Kununurra
Officer	Ms Corrin Everitt – Project Officer
Mr Melissa Coates – Coastal and Marine	Kununurra
NRM Officer	Mr David Witney – Aboriginal Facilitator
Ms Linda Anderson – NRM Project	Kununurra
Manager	

## CHAIRS REPORT

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In presenting this report I shall do so in three parts: the Australian Government interaction; the Western Australian agencies and CONRACE workings; and our own Board and management structures.

On the Australian Government scene it has been another challenging year of stop-start policy and timelines.

With the launch of Caring for Our Country (CfoC) by the incoming Commonwealth Government, the scene was set for a clean changeover from one program (NHT2 and NAP) to the next. However, there has been a less than smooth transition and the inevitable extensions and pushing out of project timelines has led to frustration from both management and the community.

As I write this report, the long awaited business plan from the Australian Government that will map the way forward for CfoC is yet to be delivered. Assuming it is delivered in the next couple of weeks, this still effectively cuts six months out of the program.

The other major change to come about with the new CfoC program will be the competitive funding program in the last four years of CfoC. No region will be guaranteed a base allocation and once again this will impact on the Rangelands WA's ability to employ and retain quality staff.

These will be challenging times, but times I believe lean towards the rangelands favour more than any other region in Australia.

The Western Australian scene for the past year has been dominated with the need to clean up and finish projects from NHT2 and NAP. Again the ability to retain key staff and engage the community has been problematic. At the agency and Ministers' level, a great deal of effort has been put into a State NRM plan. The final draft is set to be approved by the NRM Council in November and then presented to the Minister for final endorsement by December.

With the realisation that there will be no State-Commonwealth bilateral agreement on funding, considerable thought is being given as to how the State and Regions will work together on business to be done in the future. The new CfoC program offers a unique opportunity for the region and the State to operate in a new partnership where both are equally important in implementing and achieving the NRM outcomes for future State and regional NRM strategies.

The Board and our management team have gone through a great deal of change over the last year. Brian, our General Manager, has bedded down the two office hubs of Carnarvon and Kununurra and conducted a series of workshops on the future operations of the Rangelands WA. This has been very timely and necessary and I congratulate Brian for his leadership. As I have written earlier, the game has changed significantly and the Rangelands WA, both at Board and management level seems to be ready for that change. We have faced burn out from both the community and the Board as a result of increasing competition for time and changing community structures, but I believe the steps that Brian and senior management have taken have been necessary and timely.

And finally, as this will be my last meeting as Chair of the Rangelands WA, can I say to the Board and various General Managers and senior staff that it has been my privilege to have chaired a group of people who at all times had the best interests of

their communities at heart and who I am sure will continue with that ethos. The role of Chair is a time consuming one, and the inability to get to all the meetings required by the role has led to my resignation.

I will continue to take more than a cursory interest in the Rangelands WA and wish you all well with your deliberations into the future, and I thank you all for the considerable support you have shown me in the past.

Bill Mitchell  
**Chair**  
**Rangelands WA**

## GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

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### Looking Back

Last year Rod Williams, the former General Manager reported that NRM in the rangelands remained a challenge with staffing and support to deliver the projects constrained by competition from the resources boom and full employment around the city areas. This challenge remains but I believe we are also seeing opportunities develop from this. Rod also noted that it is rewarding to work in an environment supported by a professional and dedicated team and this hasn't changed in 2007-08. The competition for staff resources means that we have a team of people who really want to work in NRM and are committed and dedicated. It has also meant that we have become innovative in how we work and certainly have built a significant network of community providers. As a result we have made significant progress in spite of the competition for our human resources.

Where did we start the year? We had a lot of balls in the air with many of our approximately 78 projects running from the early stages of implementation through to near completion. We had staff based in five different centres and eight different host agencies. This led to a high turnover of staff and constrained our delivery and development early in the year and produced inefficiencies with staff working in less than ideal environments where our expectations were high but the support mechanisms were not in place to achieve good outcomes.

### Reviewing for the Future

**During the year we undertook a comprehensive review of Rangelands WA to assess “who we are, look at where we are going and what is needed to get us there”.**

The initial analysis highlighted a low awareness of Rangelands WA and our activities, limited ownership of the organisation by both the Board and the staff and no shared vision or understanding of what we are. We have lost some contact with our communities as the Sub-Regional Groups have generally struggled to survive and promote Rangelands WA.

Even so, the overall result of the review was positive in that it identified a clear set of opportunities. It highlighted the fact that we are in a position where we can quickly develop a strong profile which can be focused on new NRM programs. We are also in a strong position to target new funding and to market ourselves to industry and other potential partners.

As a result of the reviews and internal discussions we began a refreshing process for Rangelands WA to develop a shared understanding and ownership of the group particularly by those directly involved in the operational parts of the program and our Board and Sub-Regional Groups. We began this with workshops in Darwin and Albany in June and August this year. Participation by the Board and the operational staff gave us a chance to assess where we are in our development, and where we need to be to meet our communities and funders expectations. We began by looking at what is happening with NRM funding and what the implications are for Rangelands WA. We spent time identifying the role and purpose of Rangelands WA in the scenarios proposed and discussed how we fit into this whole picture.

## Moving Forward

We determined that what we want to achieve is the best possible NRM investment and delivery in the region for everyone; that we should be leading communities to manage our natural assets for current and future generations and that our aim is an “*environment for everybody*”. We want to continue to work with local communities to promote healthy land and water and achieve sustainable use of our natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

**Our purpose is to “lead, inspire and foster partnerships to sustainably manage our region’s natural heritage”.**

We agreed that the **Rangelands WA role** is to coordinate and plan NRM activities across the region and bring together organisations and communities to deliver on-ground outcomes either directly or in partnership with other organisations, and turn priorities into action. We have a key role in involving and informing stakeholders in NRM in the rangelands. Accessing and brokering funding for NRM priorities from Government and other sources is an important function for Rangelands WA and we can support this by providing a communication pathway between community and Government. We have a responsibility to ensure good science and knowledge underpins our NRM planning and actions and to assess the success of the actions we support.

**Rangelands WA must continue to develop a culture of “can do, being professional but approachable, and able to facilitate positive outcomes”.**

Opportunities exist for Rangelands WA to diversify our income and develop partnerships outside those we presently have. We have a wide range of stakeholders and need to put more emphasis on developing partnerships with them. A key for Rangelands WA future is the reestablishment of connection with community. My experience with the Rangelands WA is short but the competition in our communities for people’s time is evident. Our connections with community have declined, as shown by the difficulties of getting people to participate regularly at our sub-group meetings; we must address this.

**Key outcomes of 2007-08** have been the evolution of Rangelands WA to having two operational staff ‘hubs’, improved Indigenous engagement, the change in our relationship with DAFWA which includes undertaking our own employment and the installation of our own accounting system, updating of the website and development of a structured communications plan, and new funding under Caring for Our Country (CfoC).

We now **have staff teams based in two offices** in Carnarvon and Kununurra supported by four satellite staff hosted in agencies at other centres. This team-based model will continue with Rangelands WA in the future but it is likely that we will still have a few project-based support staff in locations most appropriate to the project delivery. Where we do, we will be working to ensure that the satellite staff are provided with the mentoring and on-going support of the Program Managers to assist project delivery and their personal development.

Although this change of staffing structure has not had a major impact on the delivery of old projects it has been very beneficial in the development and implementation of the new Caring for Our Country projects. It is allowing us to address the criteria for new funding opportunities, to negotiate the project outcomes and have better ownership and understanding of the activities.

Another area where we have made significant progress in the last 12 months is in **Indigenous engagement** and development of some activities with Aboriginal groups. This still has a long way to go but employing two Indigenous Liaison Officers in the Rangelands team has made a major impact. We are now in a position where the *Kimberley Aboriginal Reference Group* has become the Steering Committee for a new CfoC project '*Working with Kimberley Aboriginal Communities: Caring for Country Plan*' and this is a very positive step forward. A whole suite of new projects in the Gascoyne-Murchison area with Aboriginal communities has begun and there is a real opportunity from these to put in place a whole-of-life process with the local people which will 'educate' in NRM applicable to their country, and hopefully lead to on-going employment opportunities.

Under the MoU with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA we utilised the agency HR system and were provided with access to their accounting system. Both were complex and not well suited to running an organisation the size of ours. We now advertise for and **directly employ staff** and this is proving much more time efficient and practical. We have also implemented our own **MYOB accounting system** and this has proved to be a trouble free change. One of the key benefits to this is the access it provides to all project managers to monitor expenditure in their projects. Nevertheless, DAFWA continue to be great supporters of Rangelands WA and we sincerely appreciate this.

One of the real benefits of our relationship with The Hub Marketing Communications has been the **redevelopment of Rangelands WA website** and the implementation of a **structured communications plan**. These were a focus of the contract with The Hub and are both now in place and will form the backbone of our contacts with community and in disseminating new information. We will continue to review the website and the communications plan to ensure they remain relevant to the Rangelands WA as we also continue to develop.

The initiation of the **Caring for Our Country** program from the Australian Government was an interesting exercise and led to a **2008-09 budget allocation to the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group Inc. of \$4.41 million**; this will support eight major project areas as well as provide core funding for Rangelands WA. The identification of CfoC projects and the development and submission of project designs was over in a very short period which precluded community consultation and led to a very much internalised process. This is unfortunate as we now have a suite of projects which are generally not owned by the communities and this will mean some cynicism when we move into the next phase of the CfoC. The Rangelands WA team concentrated on producing projects which are generally around collection of information and planning to help identify opportunities for the future. Rather than try to develop a whole suite of new projects to deliver on-ground outcomes over a one-year timeframe, we took the view that we should use this as an opportunity to refocus Rangelands WA and identify priority areas where we can focus in the future. We are now waiting on the release of the business plan for the remainder of the CfoC (2009-2013) and will be looking to optimise our partnerships through this.

There are a number of **funding risks** associated with the on-going management of Rangelands WA in its current form. We are almost entirely dependent on the Australian Government for real funds and this needs to change as it is a high risk situation. We are in a unique position where we potentially have the opportunity to access funds from a range of industry partners and the refreshing workshops highlighted this opportunity. We also agreed that we should look to have a **Business Development** team and this must be progressed in the next year. One of the real advantages of acquiring industry funds is the leverage they provide in dealings with Government. In my experience, funders prefer to work with an organisation with a range of funding options and real money from several sources; it is good for their risk

management and it demonstrates broader commitment to a particular project. This must be progressed but is highly dependent on completing some of our existing projects satisfactorily and being able to demonstrate to potential funders that we are a can-do, highly committed organisation focused on quality outcomes.

Of the five **sub-regional groups within Rangelands WA**, three are struggling and we will need to give considerable support to reinvigorate these. Over the period since the development of the last investment plans the roles of the sub-groups has been unclear and there is no obvious function for them during the implementation phase of the projects. We need to change this and develop a process which provides the sub-groups with a role in projects from the identification stage through to the close-out phase. It basically means that the sub-groups need to move from being almost entirely strategic in early stages of a project, to taking on a real role as a board of management, perhaps as steering committees. If we can't redefine the roles and clearly state these then the sub-groups will fail completely and we will lose our **connection with the community**, one of the key criteria for the existence of regional groups.

### Thank You!

***An organisation such as Rangelands WA cannot succeed without assistance from many stakeholders, so thank you to all Rangelands WA supporters.***

I specifically want to recognise the very considerable assistance and support from the State NRM office, particularly Barbara Morrell, as the person responsible for Rangelands WA. I have also had great support and help from Craig Watson, the Australian Government facilitator responsible for the rangelands. Without the help and assistance of these two people and their groups I suspect that my role would have swamped me and we would have made significantly less progress in the implementation of all aspects of Rangelands WA investments.

The Delivery Organisations have been beavering away through sometimes trying circumstances to provide us with the outcomes we need to demonstrate to the Australian and State Governments that we can achieve great NRM results in the Rangelands. Without these groups and organisations we cannot succeed and I am fully appreciative of their efforts. Our partners in the State Agencies also deserve a special mention as their expertise and the other resources they provide are key instruments in helping us deliver the programs.

I have had very good support as needed from the Chair and members of the Rangelands WA Committee of Management. The involvement of the Committee of Management in the refresh of Rangelands WA was an essential component of our change to now and their on-going support to complete this will be critical; thanks for your inputs and insights, I look forward to working with you through 2009 as we continue to develop our business.

I have also had fantastic support from the Staff of Rangelands WA and their dedication and commitment has been one of the real positives of my role. Without the support of all the staff in the delivery of NRM initiatives associated with the regional delivery model the whole process would have failed and many times I have had to ask for their tolerance as I either didn't understand or was so overwhelmed that my responses were tardy and often inadequate; so thanks to you all.

I am confident that the frameworks, linkages, partnerships, and business principles we have established through our refreshing process will provide a very sound structure for the on-going development of robust investment in Australia's largest

NRM region. We need to finish off the remaining tasks and quickly move into the next phase of developing our business for the future.

Brian Warren  
**General Manager**  
**Rangelands WA**

## YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

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### **Governance Workshops – October 2007**

In October 2007 Board members and project staff undertook a governance focused workshop. This workshop aimed to build the capacity of the Board and the operational team and improve their operations and accountability. Since the workshop the Rangelands WA management team have worked on refocusing the organisation and new strategies, and identified areas for further improvement.

### **Comprehensive stakeholder research – February 2008**

This research included a variety of face-to-face, phone and written interviews with Rangelands WA staff, Board, sub-groups, Government Representatives and community stakeholders. The research identified a low level of awareness of Rangelands WA and its services. From this research the Rangelands WA team has reviewed its strategic position and implemented an integrated marketing communications plan.

### **NRM Community Day – February 2008**

Organised by the Ord Catchment Reference Group, the NRM Community Day offered the community the opportunity to explore NRM activities and issues in the region. The community day included displays for school children and guest speakers.

### **Appointment of Indigenous facilitators – March 2008**

In March 2008 the Rangelands WA team welcomed two new Indigenous facilitators – Bevan Gray and David Whitney. The two facilitators, located in Carnarvon and Kununurra, work closely with the regions Indigenous communities and have implemented Indigenous forums and local school programs.

### **East Kimberley Fire Forum – March 2008**

The East Kimberley Fire Forum included three different sessions which discussed the issue of fire in the East Kimberley region and explored successful fire techniques implemented in Northern Australia. The Fire Forum was well received by community members and NRM groups and eventuated with the East Kimberley Fire Project.

### **Cross regional partnership formed – May 2008**

Since May 2008 Rangelands WA has been working with other NRM groups in Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and New South Whales. These NRM groups have formed two specific alliances – the Northern Alliance (Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland) and the Arid Lands Alliance (South Australia, New South Whales, Western Australia and Queensland).

The Northern Alliance aims to work with other regional groups with interests in tropical issues and northern development across tropical and Northern Australia. The alliances currently focus on invasive species.

The Southern Alliance is collaborating to address common problems and opportunities across the regions. The alliance is currently exploring possibilities to employ a coordinator to address the camel problems in the region.

### **Program Logic – May**

Held in Kununurra and Perth, key Rangelands WA staff and delivery organisations completed a Project Logic Workshop in May this year. The workshop highlighted key project progressions and the process for project completion. From this, Rangelands WA Staff are equipped to manage projects more effectively.

## Business Development Workshop One – June

Following the stakeholder research in February Rangelands WA conducted the first of the Business Development Workshops. The team, including staff and Board members, travelled to Darwin to assess the organisations purpose, strategic direction and competitive advantage.

## OUR VISION

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*'To be the leading natural resource management organisation empowering rangelands users to sustainably manage the unique resources of the region'*

## OUR VALUES

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We are **committed** to making a **real difference** in natural heritage management in Western Australia.

We are **passionate** about the sustainable use of our natural heritage.

**Connecting the community** with natural resource management is crucial to our success.

We are a **dynamic** organisation.

At the heart of our success is building on our community **partnerships** which **empower** us to represent the communities we live in.

Being **open** and **transparent** is at the core of our business philosophy.

## WHY WE EXSIST

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Sustainable use of the rangelands is critical to Western Australia's future. With proper management of these resources including land, water, biodiversity and marine biological systems, WA communities will continue to prosper economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.

### **Rangeland NRM is able to:**

**Achieve cost effective, on-ground outcomes** across a large diverse area.

**Develop and enhance relationships with the Region's community** to identify NRM priorities at a grass roots level.

By working closely with funders we are able to **identify and capitalise on NRM funding opportunities**.

**Provide a 'conduit' for development** and a **'voice' for local community**.

**Dedicate resources to projects based on NRM importance** at a 'whole of region' level whilst targeting key strategic NRM in iconic areas.

**Provide marketing communications resources and expertise to maximise project exposure** and the communication of positive outcomes.

**Foster partnerships with other organisations to achieve multiple project objectives** and rich learning outcomes that can be transposed across different areas of the rangelands capitalising on knowledge management.

A practical and balanced staffing structure which utilises **experienced, skilled staff** across numerous complex projects throughout the region.

## OUR PRIMARY CUSTOMERS

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Australian and State Government Agencies  
Local Government  
Peak Industry Bodies  
Research Institutions  
Indigenous Organisations  
Non-Government Organisations  
Private Industry Organisations

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

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### EcoFire

The EcoFire project aims to reduce the Kimberley's prevailing fire patterns of extensive mid-to-late dry season fires. These fires have become a common occurrence in the Kimberley in the past few decades and have great economic costs for the pastoral industry and cultural impacts for Indigenous communities. These fires also have devastating ecological consequences and have been associated with declines in threatened bird species, small mammal populations and sensitive vegetation communities.

#### Outcomes:

- Decrease in the size and incidence of late season fires.
- Increased 'patchiness' of fires.
- Greater protection to environmentally significant areas.
- Increased pastoral and asset protection.
- Greater community engagement and awareness of the impact of fire in the central and northern Kimberley.
- Greater protection of endangered species including the Purple-crowned fairy wren and Gouldian finch.

### Saltwater Country

The aim of the Saltwater Country project is to document the Indigenous natural and cultural values for the coastal and marine environment to allow for better NRM planning in the region. This has been achieved through undertaking a number of 'on-country' sea trips and planning activities with traditional owners.

#### Outcomes:

- Over 200 Indigenous Australians have been involved in the program and returned to the land.
- Greater understanding of Indigenous culture and knowledge.
- Increased insitu (on location) learning for Indigenous.
- Increased economic benefits from tourism / knowledge sharing.
- Development of tourism facilities (paths, information etc.)

### Ecologically Sustainable Rangelands Management (ESRM)

ESRM is an integrated project that aims to streamline delivery of information, training, investment and funding to pastoral properties and rangelands communities. Project officers work with pastoralists to develop property action plans. These plans identify the factors that drive landscape function, biodiversity and livestock productivity.

#### Outcomes:

- Completion of eight property action plans;
- Developed partnerships with key industry organisations;
- ESRM objectives have been successfully integrated into the Gascoyne Catchments project;
- Development of self assessment and monitoring tools for the Gascoyne Catchments;
- Development of project logics for ESRM and Gascoyne Catchment projects.

### Key Actions for Lake Kununurra

This project aims to eradicate noxious weeds including Neem and Parkinsonia along Lake Kununurra by a range of weed control methods. These weeds prevent the growth of native vegetation along the lake, potentially destroying this internationally recognised bird habitat.

#### Outcomes:

- Protection of local horticultural industry against exotic fruit tree pests;
- Greater protection of the tourism industry in Kununurra;
- Conservation of an internationally recognised bird habitat;
- Protection of native flora and fauna including bats and crocodiles;
- Increased protection of cultural sites from exotic pests;
- Increased accessibility to Lake Kununurra and the Ord Dam;
- Protection of social / tourism sites.

### Fitzroy River Catchment Action Management Project (FitzCAM)

The FitzCAM project aims to develop a framework and agreement on the management priorities for the Fitzroy River Catchment. A policy group with broad community representation was created to encourage local experts to provide input into the future of the Fitzroy River Catchment. This group is responsible for developing a framework for the entire FitzCAM project and will report on damage within the area and discuss an integrated approach to improve the catchment's condition.

#### Outcomes:

- Establishment of a policy group to develop a framework for addressing Fitzroy River Catchment issues;
- Collaboration of expertise to manage the Fitzroy River Catchment.
- Increased employment opportunities;
- Increased community awareness of Fitzroy River Catchment issues.
- Protection of native flora and fauna.

### Management of Invasive Species – Mesquite

This project aims to control and eradicate infestations of Mesquite (a nationally recognised weed of significance) located in the Pilbara, Gascoyne and in pockets in the Kimberley. The project is testing methods including controlled burning, mechanical and biological control and herbicide spraying.

#### Outcomes

- Containment of dense monocultures on Mardie Station by using the *Evippe* moth, strategic fencing and stock management protocols;
- Strategic control of outlying infestations of mesquite in the Pilbara;
- Completion of an aerial survey and mapping program of Mesquite in the Gascoyne;
- Public awareness programs and partnership development has increased awareness of the threat of Mesquite in the Western Australian rangelands;
- Flood plain and major river system protection against invasion of Mesquite through the use of the Mesquite control toolbox: fire, chemical control, blade ploughing and biological control.

### Additional Projects

Total Grazing Management to Improve Pastoral Productivity, Land Condition and Biodiversity

Demonstrate Erosion Control Best Management Practices in the East Kimberley

Community Landcare Coordinator Funding for 2003-04 for the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group - WA

Surveying population and implementing chemical control on satellite infestations of mesquite and parkinsonia in the Gascoyne-Murchison Region of WA

Co-ordinated and collaborative weed control in the Goldfields Nullarbor region

Delivery of Rangelands Management Courses across the Kimberley, WA

A community-based approach to vertebrate pest management in the Rangelands

Fire Management on Violet Valley Aboriginal Reserve

Adopting New Technology for Sustainable farming in the Ord River Irrigation Area

Ruminant Nutrition in the WA Shrublands: to Improve Sustainable Productivity

Protection and Conservation of the Lyndon/Minilya River Basin – Stage 2

Upper Gascoyne Total Grazing Pressure Management

Foundation Funding/Priority Projects (Natural Heritage Trust & National Action Plan)

Sediment Survey of Lake Argyle

Demonstrating Sustainable Farm Management Systems

Developing and Implementing Best-Practise Management for Fire Tolerant Mesquite in Australia

Establishing Priorities for Wetland Conservation and Management, Kimberley Region

Implementing targeted biological investigations of under surveyed areas of the Rangelands

Community Coastal Works in WA Rangelands

Regional NRM Facilitator funding for 2003 - 08 for the RCG.

Building Partnerships to Improve Rangeland Management and Pastoral Management and Pastoral Profitability in Semi-Arid Australia

Community Turtle Conservation through Cross-Regional Collaboration

Pesticide Risk Assessment in Aquatic Organisms

## FINANCE

### Audited statement: Core funding

Financial Year: July 2007 – June 2008

Income	\$	Expenditure	\$
Grant received	\$400,000	<b>Employment</b>	
Interest earned	\$16,324	Salaries	
		General Manager, RCG	} \$164,499
<b>Income from other sources</b>	\$2,000	Office Manager, RCG	
		Finance officer, RCG	
		<b>Operating expenses</b> <b>(please detail major items)</b>	
		Administration Expenses	26,056
		Board & committee Fees	37,540
		Staff Training (1)	21,262
		Vehicle costs	20,790
		Travel and accommodation (2)	60,150
		Consultants/Contractors	43,780
		Non Entertainment- MTG Meals & refreshments (1)	14,592
		Staff (GEHA) Accommodation	13,936
		Capital expenses (computer)	1,750
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$404,355</b>
<b>Unspent funds carried over from previous financial year</b> (n/a this year)	<b>\$138,711</b>	<b>Unspent funds</b> (to be carried over to next financial year)	<b>\$152,680</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$557,035</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$557,035</b>

(1) Staff training – Inductions, Project mgt, program logic

(2) Board, Sub-groups, core staff

#### Notes

Income from other sources – Scott Brain provided support and comments for NLP applications

Time/Length of employment - General Manager (8 Months), Office Manager (12 months x 0.8) and Finance Officer (5months x 0.8)

As at the 2 October 2008 core funding is minus \$127,303.87 (over spent) as the CfoC funds have not yet become available

*The statements below are directly from the Audit Statements which are with the Auditor and will be presented at the AGM*

**Audited statement: Sustainable Land Management**

**Financial Year: July 2007 – June 2008**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Grant received from NAP/NHT</i>	\$1,560,000	<b>Operating expenses</b> (please detail major items)	
Interest earned	\$88,474	Contract payments to Delivery Organisations	\$2,786,545
<b>Income from other sources</b>	\$34,572	Program Management funds	\$204,428
(returned unspent project funds: Kimberley Fire Project \$30,026.91; and RCG ORD11 \$4,545.46)		Vehicle Lease (Old fire Project) DEC	\$22,644
		Other	\$4,068
		Salaries (Eyre Salary recoup)	\$16,991
		<b>Capital expenses</b> (please detail items > \$5,000)	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,034,676</b>
<b>Carryover from 06/07</b>	<b>\$2,175,713</b>	<b>Unspent funds</b> (to carry over to next financial year, or at completion of program)	<b>\$824,083</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,858,759</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,858,759</b>

**Audited statement: Sustainable Management of Water**

**Financial Year: July 2007 – June 2008**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Grant received from NAP/NHT</i>	\$1,684,646	<i>Employment</i> <i>Salaries / Wages</i> (Project Support)	\$2,781
Interest earned	\$23,361	<b>Operating expenses</b> (please detail major items)	\$1,957,171
<b>Income from other sources</b>		Contract payments to Delivery Organisations	\$99,903
		Program Management funds	
		Other	
		<b>Capital expenses</b> (please detail items > \$5,000)	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,059,855</b>
<b>Carryover from 06/07</b>	<b>\$1,179,064</b>	<b>Unspent funds</b> (to carry over to next financial year, or at completion of program)	<b>\$827,216</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,887,071</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,887,071</b>

**Audited statement: Sustainable Management of Coastal & Marine**

**Financial Year: July 2007 – June 2008**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Grant received from NAP/NHT</i>	\$0	<i>Employment</i>	
Interest earned	\$35,878	<i>Salaries / Wages</i>	\$662
<b>Income from other sources</b>		<b>Operating expenses</b> (please detail major items)	
		Contract payments to Delivery Organisations	\$344,418
		Program Management funds	\$77,772
		Other	\$722
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$423,574</b>
<b>Carryover from 06/07</b>	<b>\$745,255</b>	<b>Unspent funds</b> (to carry over to next financial year, or at completion of program)	<b>\$357,559</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$781,133</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$781,133</b>

**Audited statement: Sustainable Communication, Capacity and Planning**

**Financial Year: July 2007 – June 2008**

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Grant received from NAP/NHT</i>	\$650,000	<i>Employment</i>	
Interest earned	\$10,794	<i>Salaries / Wages</i>	
<b>Income from other sources</b>		<b>Operating expenses</b> (please detail major items)	
		Travel & accommodation (Capacity Building)	\$44,506
		Contract Payments to Delivery Organisations	\$325,750
		Contractors (Hydro smart Hosting costs)	\$53,750
		The Hub (ex-contract work)	\$13,566.60
		Kathryn Edgerton-Warburton (develop RCG renew planning)	\$600
		Dr G Fitzhardinge (Darwin Workshop)	\$1424.91
		Reimburse Land & Sea Conference Consultancy	\$2,000
		Operating	\$4,679
		Other	\$8,321
		Program Management funds	\$81,400
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$535,998</b>
<b>Carryover from 07/08</b>	<b>-\$42,246</b>	<b>Unspent funds</b> (to carry over to next financial year, or at completion of program)	<b>\$82,550</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$618,548</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$618,548</b>

