

Pilbara NRM Newsletter

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



May 2009

Welcome



Deep Reach Pool on the Fortescue

Welcome to the first edition of the Rangelands Pilbara NRM newsletter. It aims to reach out to stakeholders who have an interest in the management of natural resources in the Pilbara.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) is a term regularly used, but what does it actually mean?

It can be defined as the...

'sustainable management of natural resources (the land, water, marine and biological systems) to facilitate ongoing social, economic and environmental wellbeing'.

NRM is about striking a balance between caring for our environment and working with those who make a living from these

resources, use them for recreation, or value them for their cultural significance.

The Pilbara has a range of community organisations, Indigenous groups, industry bodies, local, state and commonwealth government agencies that have a direct interest in promoting and practicing NRM in their daily activities. There are a wide number of groups, organisations and communities that do not have direct dealing with natural resources, but are indirectly influenced by them through their commerce, recreation and identity every day.

Natural resources sustain Pilbara communities and towns. It is in everyone's interests to sustainably manage them to achieve social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes.

Why not get involved!

Who is the Pilbara NRM Group?

The Pilbara NRM reference group consists of members representing a wide variety of stakeholders from the community, industry and government. This group represents the Pilbara in advising and guiding Rangelands NRM (see back page) on matters relating to current and future investment in the region. Rangelands NRM spans more than 90 percent of

Western Australia's land mass and 75 percent of its coastline. Rangelands NRM is the regional group responsible for the establishment, management, evaluation and monitoring of a wide range of NRM projects.

The Pilbara NRM group meets around four times a year at different venues in the region.

Points of Interest

- RANGELANDS NRM IS THE REGIONAL BODY THAT REPRESENTS THE PILBARA AREA AT A NATIONAL SCALE
- THE PILBARA NRM GROUP MEETS TO COLLABORATE IN REGIONAL NRM MATTERS
- TO DATE RANGELANDS HAS INVESTED IN VARIOUS PILBARA LAND, WATER, BIODIVERSITY AND SEA PROGRAMS
- THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT HAS RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT UNDER ITS CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY INITIATIVE

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Pilbara Proposal; Caring for our Country



Parnngurr landscape East Pilbara. Natural resources providing environmental and cultural values.

“RANGELANDS SEE ‘CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY’ AS A MEANS TO SUPPORT NRM INVESTMENT IN THE PILBARA, BUT FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES NEED TO BE PURSUED”



Pilbara beaches. Natural resources providing recreation values.

The ‘Caring for our Country’ business plan guided Rangeland’s proposal for the Pilbara in April 2009. It was one of eight proposals that Rangelands submitted across the whole region.

The business plan identified specific targets which were then matched to the 2007 Pilbara NRM plan, and priority natural assets identified by the Pilbara NRM group.

The proposal requested resources to deliver projects from a pool of funds allocated to Australian regional groups (like Rangelands NRM) and from a competitive grants pool which is open to any organizations across Australia.

What is ‘Caring for our Country’?

The Australian Government will invest \$2.25 billion in funding over five years through the ‘Caring for our Country’ initiative. It integrates a number of existing NRM measures into a consolidated approach, including the Natural Heritage Trust, the National Landcare Program, the Environmental Stewardship Program, and elements of the Working on Country Program.

Support for community groups

One aspect of Rangelands NRM’s proposal for the Pilbara under Caring For our Country is to establish a devolved grants scheme.

Such a scheme, if funded, would operate from 2010 for community and not for profit groups to access small amounts of funds to deliver on the ground NRM activities.

The final proposal was made up of three components;

- **Fortescue River Catchment**
Requesting a combination of regional allocation and competitive pool funding to deliver sustainable pastoral industry support, fire planning, feral animal control and Indigenous NRM.
- **Ashburton River Catchment**
Requesting competitive pool funding to deliver sustainable pastoral industry support.
- **Weeds of National Significance across priority Pilbara wetlands**
Requesting a combination of regional allocation and competitive pool funding to deliver control and planning activities.

Rangelands NRM also submitted a proposal for resources to deliver biodiversity outcomes through Indigenous engagement in the Western Desert Region.

The outcomes of the proposal will be known around June 2009 and delivery organizations will be looking at implementing these programs as soon as possible.

More detail on the Pilbara proposal is available from the Rangelands office Ph (08) 99419743.

The initiative aims to secure improved strategic outcomes across six national priority areas:

- the National Reserve System
- biodiversity and natural icons
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- sustainable farm practices
- natural resource management in northern and remote Australia, and
- community skills, knowledge and engagement.

From 2009, funding for Caring for our Country will be offered through annual business plans.

For information about the funding, visit: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/business-plan/index.html>

Some examples of the types of projects that would be encouraged include things like;

- Erecting signage on beaches alerting 4WDs to the threats driving poses to turtle nesting
- Facilitating community weeding days around town waterways

- Producing educational material on Pilbara flora species for gardens

Like the Pilbara proposal put forward to the Australian Government, we will watch this space.....

Rangelands NRM Project update



Pilbara Weeds of National Significance

The Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee delivered this project on behalf of Rangelands NRM.

In the Rangelands, mesquite has transformed grazing pastures into thickets of thorny shrubs, reducing the diversity of fauna and flora, accelerating erosion and restricting access of stock to water.

On-ground control programs have been conducted across

the Rangelands. More than 650 days of control work were completed across 90,000 ha of pastoral leases and town reserves.

Mechanical treatment of the more dense infestations of mesquite is proving effective since a purpose-built blade plough was trialed at Mardie Station.

An accurate picture of the extent and locations of

mesquite in the Rangelands is being created, with aerial surveying and mapping of infestations being completed. The maps will help pastoralists to develop on-ground control programs, ensuring strategic investment of resources and finances.

For more information contact Linda Anderson
(08) 91441844
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Pilbara natural resources supporting the pastoral industry.

Pilbara Northern Biodiversity

The Department of Environment and Conservation has delivered three components of this project in the Pilbara.

1. Threatened fauna species in the Little and Great Sandy Deserts.

Working with Martu Native Title holders to track vulnerable species and the cats and foxes that threaten them. Traditional burning is also undertaken as way of managing the landscape. In addition, a program of large scale fire management and a strategy for managing feral camels is being developed.

2. The Community WEED project has delivered weed education and on-ground weed control in several areas of the west Pilbara. The project has concentrated on-ground work in Dampier and Tom Price, where escaped garden plants are becoming a major problem in surrounding conservation areas. New Weeddeck identification cards were funded by Rangelands NRM and are available through the Weeds Australia website: www.weeds.org.au/weedident.htm. A series of weed awareness brochures

which promote locally indigenous plants will soon be available on the Rangelands NRM website.

3. Feral animal control has occurred in the Fortescue Marshes, an area of high biodiversity significance, with the Department of Agriculture and Food. Funds were also directed to the Meekatharra Zone Control Authority to expand their donkey and camel management in the south-eastern area of the Pilbara in November 2008.

For more information contact Alison McGilvray
Ph (08) 9182 2041

...THIS PROJECT HAS ENABLED TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO BE RECOGNIZED AND UTILIZED IN PROTECTING PILBARA BIODIVERSITY VALUES....

Addressing human use threats on the Pilbara Coast

The University of Western Australia is due to complete its project for Rangelands NRM on the 'Addressing Human Use threats to Priority Coastal and marine Values from Carnarvon to Broome'.

The Pilbara coast through the Ashburton, Roebourne

and Port Hedland statistical local areas was mapped.

Each of these localities was considered in terms of;

- i. the major human activities occurring;
- ii. the concerns related to these,
- iii. actions and recommendations.

The project is also developing a website where all this information is available at

<http://www.rangelandswa.info>

For more information; Dr Amanda Davies, University of WA
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Pilbara marine and coastal natural resources supporting the tourism, and oil and gas industries. Providing cultural, environmental, and recreation values.

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About the Rangelands NRM

In order to facilitate the integrated delivery of Natural Resource Management (NRM) priority issues, the Australian Government, in association with state and territory governments in 2003, established 56 regions covering all of Australia.

Rangelands NRM is one of six regional NRM groups originally established in Western Australia. Rangelands NRM 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. Rangelands NRM strives to balance the needs of the environment with the needs of those who use the land and water resources.

For more information on Regional NRM organisations visit www.nrm.gov.au/nrm/region.html. For more information on Rangelands NRM WA visit our website www.rangelandswa.com.au



Pilbara natural resources supporting the mining industry.

Our Vision

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

Our Purpose

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

A history of Rangelands NRM investment in the Pilbara

Rangelands NRM have invested in a number of projects that are related to the sustainable management of Pilbara Natural Resources.



Pilbara natural resources supporting the tourism, pastoral and mining industries. Sustaining communities and biodiversity.

Below is a sample of some these projects completed.

1. Assessing the cumulative impacts of altered hydrology in the Pilbara: Delivered by Dept of Water Karratha looking at developing tools at measuring the effects of specific site mining on water assets across whole catchments.
2. Survey populations and chemical control of Mesquite: Delivered by Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee, Karratha. A state action plan for mesquite containment and control is being developed with community, industry and government consultation.
3. Management of Invasive Species (Parkinsonia): Delivered by DeGrey LCDC targeting Infestations of Parkinsonia along the Nullagine, Oakover and DeGrey rivers .
4. Community Turtle conservation through cross -regional collaboration: Delivered by Dept of Environmental and Conservation Exmouth and Karratha providing skills, training and knowledge for turtle monitoring in Port Hedland and the West Pilbara.
5. West Canning Artesian Basin Rehabilitation Program: Delivered by Dept of Water Perth that significantly reduced the volume of uncontrolled flow from bores in the East Pilbara .
6. Community Weeds education program in the Fortescue River: Delivered by Department of Water Karratha developing community awareness and education of Parkinsonia on the Lower Fortescue River.

If you wish to gain more information on any of these, please contact Rangelands NRM or the stated delivery organisation.