



NSW Land for Wildlife Conference

Dr John Williams
Commissioner
Natural Resource Commission, NSW

1 August 2008



Key Message: The importance of Natural Resource Management

Our environment sustains us. We must care for our natural systems so they can support thriving rural and urban communities.

We are all aware of the pressures on our environment, such as climate change, population growth and drought. The NSW Government is taking a visionary long-term approach so that we can adapt to and mitigate the effects of those pressures, ensure that our landscapes continue to sustain and support us.

Natural resource management is about health, functioning landscapes and communities.

[photo Coffs Harbour]



Key Message: How biodiversity helps to deliver NRM

[paperbark forest, myall lake]

“Biodiversity is vital in supporting human life on Earth. It provides many benefits, including all our food, many medicines and industrial products, and it supplies clean air and water, and fertile soils.” [FROM DECC WEBSITE]

Biodiversity is integral to natural resource management.

“Australia is home to more than one million species of plants and animals, many of which are unique. About 82 per cent of our mammals and 93 per cent of our frogs are found nowhere else in the world. But over the past 200 years, the Australian environment has been modified dramatically. Australia has lost 75 per cent of its rainforests and has the world's worst record of mammal extinctions. [FROM DECC WEBSITE]”

Native vegetation has a role in physical, chemical & biological processes

Loss leads to: land degradation - salinity and declining water quality - biodiversity loss

Native veg faces Anthropogenic pressures - land clearing, unsustainable grazing pressure, inappropriate fire management, unsustainable firewood gathering, neglect

Native veg also faces Natural processes - insect attack, disease, weeds, rising water tables

Interestingly, native vegetation is a good indicator and victim of climate change



Key Message: What happens if we lose those values?

[salinity, Albury]



Key Message: The worth and value of doing something important – we all have a role to play

[regrowth, Olney State Forest]

Biodiversity	
	1 By 2015 there is an increase in native vegetation extent and an improvement in native vegetation condition.
	2 By 2015 there is an increase in the number of sustainable populations of a range of native fauna species.
	3 By 2015 there is an increase in the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities.
	4 By 2015 there is a reduction in the impact of invasive species.
Water	
	5 By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of riverine ecosystems.
	6 By 2015 there is an improvement in the ability of groundwater systems to support groundwater-dependent ecosystems and designated beneficial uses.
	7 By 2015 there is no decline in the condition of marine waters and ecosystems.
	8 By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of important wetlands, and the extent of those wetlands is maintained.
	9 By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of estuaries and coastal lake ecosystems.
Land	
	10 By 2015 there is an improvement in soil condition.
	11 By 2015 there is an increase in the area of land that is managed within its capability.
Community	
	12 Natural resource decisions contribute to improving or maintaining economic sustainability and social wellbeing.
	13 There is an increase in the capacity of natural resource managers to contribute to regionally relevant natural resource management.

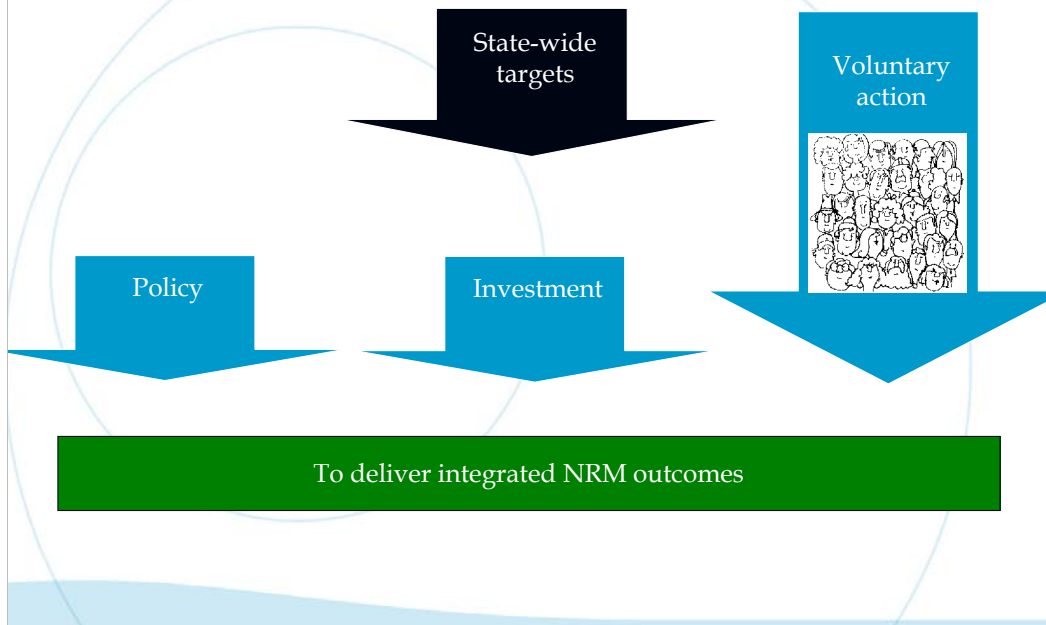
What are the purpose of the targets and what do they mean?

Key message: The targets are for everyone – we are all probably contributing to them without even realising it

LINK

What is being done to meet those targets?

Prioritising Conservation



Policy: Regulations, strategies, planning mechanisms, parks program, etc.

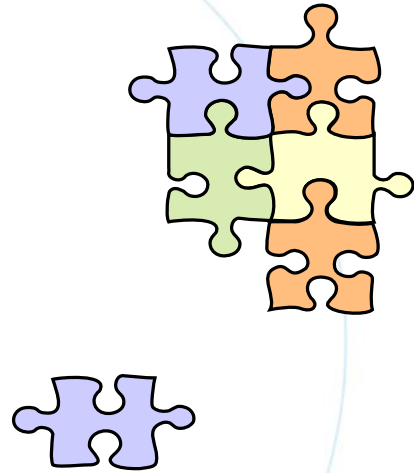
Investment: Eg through CMAs or through the Conservation Partners Program (Lynn Webber will talk about later)

Voluntary action: this could be anything from avoiding non-native or invasive species in our garden, to joining the land for wild life program, to entering into a voluntary conservation agreement.

Key Message: We all play a key part in delivering integrated NRM outcomes.

Conservation on Private Land – a key link in the chain

- 70%+ land privately owned
- NRM knows no boundaries
- Does not have to affect property rights (eg Land for Wildlife)
- Flexible; can run alongside existing landuses
- Most simple form of conservation



Key message: Conservation on private land is the key link in the chain.

It also allows conservation to parallel other land use activities rather than locking up land in reserve systems.

Private Land Conservation – A call to Action

- Critical work
- Must be acknowledged
- Requires effort from everyone
- Special skills to make it work



Key message: Importance of private land conservation – the worth and value of doing something important in itself

Key message: Requires effort from a number of parties to make this work

Landholders – to recognise and maintain values on land

Agencies – to help landholders identify values and suitable management actions to maintain or improve those values

– to promote conservation on private land as part of a range of tools to meet targets

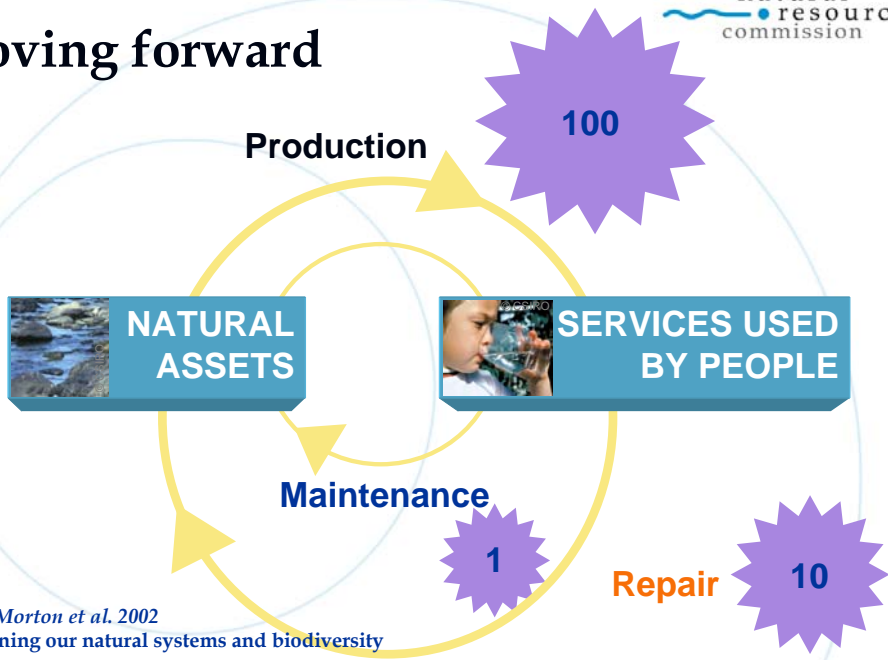
– to promote the benefits of conservation

– to ensure that any new instruments do not discourage private land conservation (REECE paper – CROWDING OUT)

– to possibly work towards a simple form of ecosystem services, where landholders are paid for conservation

Key message: Requires special skills to make it work – sharing information and knowledge, working at different scales, working together and engaging the community

Moving forward



Steve Morton et al. 2002
Sustaining our natural systems and biodiversity

For the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council



[Photo Montane peat swamp. Image: Shane Ruming, © Shane Ruming (DEC)]

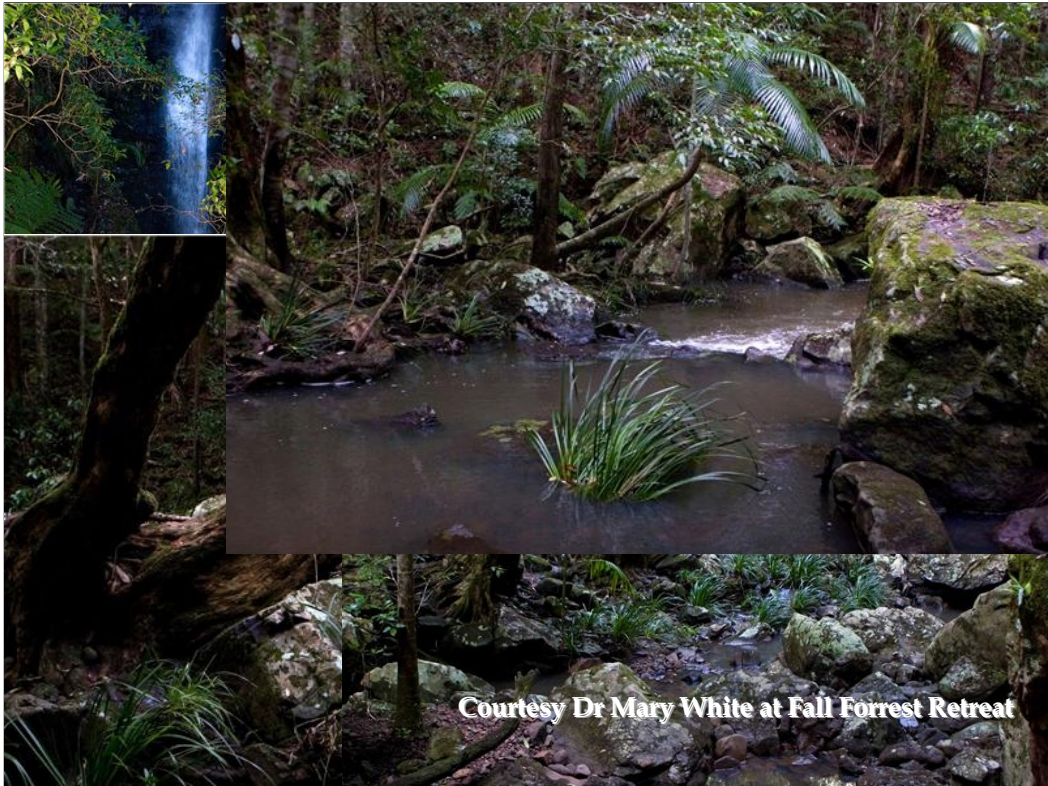
Lasting thoughts

It is easier to maintain the wonderful natural resources that we have. I'm not sure whether we are clever enough to replace them.

Land for Wildlife



Some examples courtesy Dr Mary White at
Fall Forrest Retreat



Courtesy Dr Mary White at Fall Forrest Retreat