

National Land & Water Resources Audit

An initiative of the Australian Government

Outcomes delivered by the Audit collaborative program

2002 – 2008

The National Land & Water Audit (NLWRA) a collaborative program between all States, Territories and the Australian Government, to provide data, information and nationwide assessments of Australia's natural resources is winding up on the 30th of June 2008. The objectives of the second phase of the NLWRA over this six year period have been to develop information to support the assessment of change in natural resources as a result of government programs. To deliver these objectives the NLWRA has focused on:

- identifying information needs
- information management
- reporting through assessments
- building capacity through partnerships
- providing strategic advice.

Information needs

Identified and tested indicators of resource condition and social and economic information to underpin assessments of natural resource management initiatives:

- extent indicators – established national baselines:
 - vegetation extent (as at 2004)
 - inventory of wetlands extent datasets (2007)
 - extent of weeds – (20 WoNS, 78 additional species) (as at 2007)
 - extent and distribution of Invasive vertebrates – 10 - 15 species (as at 2007)
 - agreed classification and extent of coastal habitat
 - land use – 2001, 2006
 - regional institutional capacity (2007)
- condition indicators – established and tested frameworks in which to place indicators – and identified relevant indicators:
 - vegetation condition (developed an agreed approach)
 - river condition (working with the National Water Commission)
 - wetlands condition framework and indicators
 - estuarine and coastal indicators and reporting mechanism
 - social and economic information framework
 - a draft species and communities indicator
- developed indicator methodologies:
 - soil condition
 - salinity
- developed a proposal for assessment of invasive fish species.

Information management

Supported the development of improved information management arrangements to enable information to be discovered and made available to those that need it:

- a vision and guideline for an improved Australian Natural Resources Information Infrastructure (ANRII)
- information collection and collation systems for invasive species
- estuarine and coastal information portal (on-going development of Ozestuaries and Ozcoast)
- supported further development of the Australian Soil Resources Information system

- supported the development of the Australian Natural Resources Atlas and the data library
- developed Australia's Resources Online – an addition to the Atlas for reporting on monitoring and evaluation indicators
- assisted in developing water information web based standards and relevant information products
- developed the information management framework for information pertaining to Australian agriculture.

Assessments

In collaboration with key stakeholders interpreted and integrated information to provide reports on natural resource condition change:

- Rangelands 2008 – an assessment of rangeland condition
- Biodiversity Assessment 2008 – the next national biodiversity assessment
- Signposts for Australian Agriculture – trialing a reporting framework for identifying the contributions of agriculture to the environment, society and the economy
- National Vegetation Assessment 2007/2008 – through the Bureau of Rural Sciences
- scoping assessment of the estuaries and coasts
- review of integrated regional reporting of natural resource condition including :
 - regional report cards
 - testing a reporting method in selected regions (Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas)
 - developing a method for national reporting.

Partnerships

Built and maintained partnerships with key stakeholders to provide national perspectives on information needs and associated issues:

- supported national data access and sharing through partnerships with ANZLIC and the Australian Government Information Management Office and Spatial Data Managers Group
- maintained a partnership with all jurisdictions to advise on national data and information needs and to build capacity to collect, collate, manage and report on resource condition – via the National Land & Water Resources Audit Advisory Council
- built technical and executive coordination capacity using National Coordination Committees related to natural resource themes
- maintained a collaborative partnership with all jurisdictions in developing nationally agreed indicators, national data and information needs and aligned information systems.

Advice

Provided advice to:

- the Australian Government, specifically the Australian Government Natural Resources Management Team on information needs and evaluation programs, through contributions to program evaluations
- the Natural Heritage Ministerial Board on natural resource information issues
- jurisdictions on information management and national needs.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about natural resources is available on the Audit website (www.nlwra.gov.au), or the Australian Natural Resources Atlas (www.anra.gov.au).

For information on National Land & Water Resources Audit legacy activities contact the:

Audit Office: Land & Water Australia – (02) 6263 6000

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