

1.4 South Gippsland Salinity Management Strategy

The South Gippsland Salinity Management Strategy was produced in draft form in August 2000 by the Yarram Salinity Group and the then Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The Strategy remains in draft form. The key recommended programs were:

- **Monitoring and Research Program** – This program includes groundwater and environmental monitoring, recharge and discharge mapping, groundwater pumping investigations and land subsidence investigations.
- **Treatment of Discharge Program** – This includes the planting of salt tolerant pastures, investigating alternative land uses, Whole Farm Planning and on-farm soil salinity mapping and sea wall and surface drainage works.

- Recharge Reduction Program – This includes the promotion of farm forestry, the protection and establishment of indigenous vegetation and irrigation management.
- Coordination and Implementation Program – This includes community education, plan administration and evaluation and integration with other Natural Resource Management Plans.

Some of the programs have commenced implementation with the key activities including:

- Drilling and construction of additional monitoring bores;
- Monthly monitoring of approximately 80 observation bores across the region;
- Salinity risk assessment around the Yarram region (SKM, 1998);
- Investigation into the causes of salinity in the Tarraville area (SKM, 1996);
- Investigation into the use of electromagnetic techniques for mapping saline areas in the Yarram region (Joyce, 1998);
- Extension activities undertaken by the then Department of Natural Resources and Environment and now the Department of Primary Industries to provide farmers with advice on how to manage salt affected land; and
- Extension activities to build the community's understanding and ownership of the problem.

The key outcomes of the limited implementation of the strategy to date has been an improved understanding of the extent and effect of salinity, information on the causes of the problem and advice to farmers on how to manage salt affected land. However, the specific local causes of salinity are still not well understood especially the groundwater flow systems contributing to dryland salinity. Consequently, there has been little strategic effort in implementing control options that address the cause of the problem (eg tree planting).

As discussed later in this plan, the salinity occurring in the South Gippsland region is generally a private cost and remedial options are likely to involve a substantial landowner input. Therefore, building the capacity of landowners to take ownership of the problem and solution is crucial to a successful salinity management program in the area.

This new plan builds on the current and previous experiences in addressing salinity in the South Gippsland region and details management actions for the implementation of on-ground works.

actions recommended for the South Gippsland area in the current plan have had their genesis from the South Gippsland Salinity Management Strategy.

- **The development of the draft West Gippsland Strategic Plan for Salinity Management** (Nolan ITU, 2002) involved significant community consultation. Although the draft plan was never adopted, it provided an excellent platform for the development of the current plan. The Steering Committee overseeing the plan had community representatives that guided the development of the plan. During the Public Consultation phase three community meetings were held, one each in Traralgon, Yarram and Maffra at which the public were invited to make comments on the draft plan. There were also two formal public presentations and draft copies of the report were sent to stakeholders for comment. The meetings were extensively advertised in the local newspapers.
- **Community representation on the Steering Committee for this plan.** Community representatives on the Steering Committee helped guide the plan's development.
- **Community consultation on the "public exposure draft" of this plan.** Community consultation was undertaken during three facilitated workshops in the towns of Yarram, Leongatha and Maffra on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd February 2005 respectively. Advertising in local newspapers was undertaken throughout the catchment for two weeks prior to the consultation. Prior to the consultation, copies of the Draft West Gippsland Salinity Management Plan were available to the general community on request. Copies were also sent to relevant agencies and stakeholders. An agency consultation workshop was also undertaken in Traralgon. The comments from the various workshops were consolidated and incorporated into this current version of the plan.

The CMA are committed to addressing the issues raised by community members and have endeavoured, through the Steering Committee, to respond to all issues raised during the consultation process.