

Taskforce Weekly Bugle



KEY MESSAGES

Information Access and Pricing Policy approved

Late last year the Director-General signed off on NR&M's Access and Pricing Policy. This is the culmination of more than nine months of hard work. There remains a lot to do to bed down the implementation of the policy before March 1, but this is a significant step and all involved have been congratulated.

The main task now is to lock in the actual products and prices for each product type, and get the details of licence agreements finalised. It is expected that the agreements with regional NRM bodies will be able to be negotiated in advance of the March 1 implementation date, but still need the aforementioned details to be resolved before that process can be formally initiated.

For further information contact Ken Adsett (Ph. 07 4938 4598) or Michael Mawn (Ph. 073405 6928).

Governments move to improve the Reef's water quality

The Australian and Queensland Governments have finalised a plan to protect the Great Barrier Reef from declining water quality.

Prime Minister John Howard and Queensland Premier Peter Beattie have signed the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which will now be implemented to arrest and reverse the decline in the quality of water entering the reef lagoon, within 10 years.

The Great Barrier Reef is an international icon, a world heritage site and one of Australia's most significant tourist destinations.

Changes in the intensity of activities in the catchments adjacent to the Reef have led to a decline in water quality entering the Reef. The amount of sediment and nutrient washing into the Reef has quadrupled since European settlement.

For further information visit the web site at www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/reefwater or contact Helen Klieve on Ph. 07 3896 3346.

Queensland Water and Land Carers Board announced

The Interim Steering Committee has announced that the inaugural Queensland Water and Land Carers (QW&LC) Board as: Ian Adcock, Cape York and Torres Strait; Adrienne Bode, Desert Channels; Esma Armstrong, South East Qld; Sandy Paton,

Fitzroy Basin; Sue Ferguson, QMD-Condamine; Paul Marshall, Burnett Mary; and Russell Fry, Wet Tropics.

The Interim Steering Committee will formally hand over the operation of QW&LC to the Board early in 2004. Issues to be addressed by the new Board will include: appointment of a Board Executive, appointment of an Executive Officer, QW&LC membership, 2004 meeting schedule and arranging Associations Incorporation.

For further information please contact Brenda Walhain, A/Executive Officer, on Ph. 07 3224 7505 or email Brenda.Walhain@nrm.qld.gov.au

Taking a social approach to natural resource management

Social issues will be the focus of a new group of projects to improve the future management of Queensland's natural resources. Six projects have been approved by a selection panel (including departmental, university and regional body members) under SE03, the Social Aspects of NRM RD&E program, and are being funded as part of a suite of state social and economic activities under NAPSWQ.

Agreements are being drawn up for devolution of funds to the successful regional bodies and it is expected that these will be negotiated and finalised early in 2004, with the projects starting soon after. Some \$180,000 has been allocated to projects in the first round. A further \$270,000 being made available for a second round to be advertised in September 2004.

In the meantime, interest from research providers, regional bodies and other key NRM sectors about possible partnerships and priority research topics in the social dimensions of NRM is welcomed. For further information please contact Lyn Aitken on Ph. 07 3896 9601 or email Lyn.Aitken@nrm.qld.gov.au

Interim Financial Agreement Extension

Just before Christmas, JSC considered some 64 project proposals prepared by regional bodies to secure NHT2 funding under the proposed extension of the NHT2 Interim Financial Agreement. The high quality of proposals put forward at short notice by the regional bodies demonstrates that they are clear taking a strategic view of the future, even though regional plans are still in development. A list of priority projects that JSC would like to see further developed by February has been forwarded to Australian and Queensland Government Ministers for their consideration. JSC hopes to notify all regional bodies soon about the steps to take for further development of these proposals and revised timeframes.

Wording of the Interim Financial Agreement Extension has been agreed at officer level, though Ministerial signoff is yet to be secured. For further information about the Interim Financial Agreement Extension contact Trevor Stanley (Ph. 07 3224 2149). For further information the process of project development under the Agreement Extension, contact David Wildermuth (Ph. 07 3224 2475).

