

National Natural Resource Management Regions' Working Group

c/o ACT Natural Resource Management Council
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the Reform of the Australian Federation
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

20 August 2010

Dear sir/madam

Select Committee on the Reform of the Australian Federation

In response to the Committee's term of reference:

- (b) (v) *strategies for strengthening Australia's regions and the delivery of services through regional development committees and regional grant programs.*

I would like to submit the attached report *Australian NRM Governance System – Foundations and principles for meeting future challenges* for consideration by the Select Committee on the Reform of the Australian Federation.

The report was commissioned by the National Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions' Working Group and endorsed by the Chairs of the 56 regional Natural Resource Management organisations. These organisations are a mix of State statutory bodies and not-for profit community groups whose 56 strategic natural resource plans cover the whole of Australia.

We work closely with the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts and the Minister Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and State and Territory governments in implementing natural resource management programs. In our local regions we also work with Local governments and regional communities to combine investments from multiple sources so that they produce the best returns in terms of improved land, water and biodiversity outcomes.

Our discussion paper was motivated the Chairs believing there is:

- A lack of shared understanding the roles of organisations at all scales in the Australian NRM Governance System; and
- Lack of enduring NRM infrastructure at the regional level.

The current regional NRM arrangements are the product of independent changes and decisions over time and that as a consequence the agreed roles of the different players in the system, particularly regional NRM bodies, are unclear.

You will see that the attached paper identifies several principles that we believe will help strengthen Australia's NRM regions in responding to the substantial challenges facing our land, water and biodiversity assets.

I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you further.

Yours sincerely



Dr Sarah Ryan
Chair, National NRM Regions' Working Group