

## PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY FUTURE SALINITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

- a) *Costs to Benefits*: Shift focus from the 'costs of salinity' to the 'net benefits of salinity management';
- b) *Public benefits*: The top priority public investments are those generating the greatest net benefits per dollar of public investment;
- c) *Target investments using an asset-based approach*: Investments should be targeted to particular assets with priorities based on ecological, economic and community values, threats, and feasibility.
- d) *Limited information*: Priority setting will involve ongoing learning and feedback. Setting priorities should use the best available information, but must proceed even when there is limited or imperfect information together with monitoring and evaluation programs.
- e) *Selection of appropriate policy tools from a broad range*: Selection of the policy tools for each situation should follow a rigorous and systematic process. The full range of tools should be considered (e.g. extension, incentives, Market-based Instruments (MBIs), regulation, Research & Development (R&D) land retirement, engineering). Consideration should be given to a suite of tools that can achieve the desired outcomes most cost effectively, together with on-going evaluation and improvement. Solutions need to be multi-objective so that the practices to address salinity are not in conflict with other natural resource assets.
- f) *Research*: Priorities for investment should consider latest research knowledge. In particular, plans and targets need to recognise the scale and nature of intervention needed to achieve NRM outcomes (physical science), the impact of interventions on farming and natural systems (agricultural/biological research), and the likely scale of adoption of desired changes under different conditions (socio-economic research). Where information or management tools are lacking, they may be the priority needs for investment.
- g) *Landscape Systems and Multiple benefits*. Public investment into salinity must be considered in the context of natural resource management at a landscape scale. The current knowledge of salinity and how to manage it is built upon a long history of R&D investment, whereas comparable knowledge is less available for many other NRM issues, including an evaluation of trade-offs.