



South East Pest Management Strategy

A regional biosecurity plan for
the control of invasive species



Part 3: Community Engagement Strategy

Community Engagement Plan for the
Implementation of the South East Pest
Management Strategy

Community Engagement Plan for the Implementation of the South East Pest Management Strategy



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Executive Summary

The *Community Engagement Plan for the Implementation of the South East Pest Management Strategy* provides the framework for the South East Natural Resources Management Board (SE NRM Board) to work in partnership with rural landholders, the wider community and other stakeholders to achieve the SE NRM Board's pest plant and pest animal control objectives.

This partnership approach recognises that a range of people need to be informed and involved in pest management. Helping people to understand the key pest issues as identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy, involving people in pest control using the right techniques and focusing people's energy in the right direction is critical to pest plant and pest animal control in the region.

The preparation of this Plan has involved a number of key information collection processes. These have included the conduct of a widespread, statistically valid market research telephone survey with 408 rural and 375 urban landholders, a range of targeted consultation processes such as one on one interviews and workshops and analysis of other relevant projects such as the *Dynamic NRM Community* project and the *Local Government Communication and Engagement Strategy* project. Resources have also included the *Local Government and SE NRM Board's Relationship* project initiated by the Local Government Association and *Non-government Organisation Engagement in Regional Natural Resources Management Processes in South Australia* project undertaken by the Conservation Council of South Australia.

The review and synthesis of the information collected in preparing the Plan has identified that **there is a significant amount of awareness and understanding** about pest plant and pest animal control issues in the South East as well as **a range of efforts being undertaken on private land to manage pest plants and pest animals**. In addition, the project has revealed that **overall, most people understand that it is their responsibility** to undertake pest plant and pest animal control measures on their land, and most are not looking to the SE NRM Board for significant support in terms of financial resources or to shifting responsibility back to the SE NRM Board in terms of providing labour/contractors to do the work.

Rather, **the emphasis has been more on information provision and the need for the SE NRM Board to use a range of communication and engagement methods that better suit the needs** of the target audience. In addition, it was identified that there is a need for the SE NRM Board **to communicate better about what needs to be done when, and why** it has identified certain pest plant and pest animal priorities in the region. Perhaps the most consistent message that was identified throughout the information collection processes was that there is a mismatch between what landholders and the community perceive to be the priority issues and where they are focussing their efforts, and what the SE NRM Board considers the priority issues to be and where the SE NRM Board wants people to be focusing their efforts.

In preparing the Plan it has also become evident that the efforts that the SE NRM Board are already undertaking in the area of pest plant and pest animal control are significant and this Plan aims to recognise and build on this. For example, the SE NRM Board is already very active in undertaking hands on demonstration workshops, working with schools in the region, distributing information brochures, fact sheets and weed alerts, responding to weed/pest identification enquiries, and, has 12 Authorised NRM Officers working "on the ground" throughout the region.

In addition, it is evident that **there is a strong desire** from the SE NRM Board, rural and urban landholders and other stakeholders **to work together** to address pest plant and pest animal control issues in the region.

Key messages that have been identified during the preparation of the Plan include:

- **Take appropriate action on the ground.** A common perception identified by the consultation was that the “wrong” species are being targeted by the SE NRM Board. This perception is likely the result of many landholders being more familiar with existing weeds than new threats and not understanding the risk assessment process that identifies new threats as a higher priority in management action than existing, commonly known pests. This is certainly a key challenge for the SE NRM Board.

The level of action that is currently being undertaken by landholders managing pests, is good, and by no means to be discouraged. However, what is also important is that action is undertaken to appropriately manage other pest species which are identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy as key risks in the South East region and that these species are also placed on the ‘radar’ of landholders.

- **Maintain enthusiasm and on ground efforts.** Many rural and urban landholders indicated that they are seeing success from their pest control activities, although a significant number identified that nominated species were becoming a bigger problem in spite of their efforts. There is a need for much more communication about the successes; “people want to know that their efforts can pay off”. Maintaining enthusiasm and efforts of landholders over time is one of the key challenges facing the SE NRM Board.
- **Sources of information and solutions.** The most commonly cited source that urban landholders use to seek information and solutions about pest issues is local Councils. This is consistent with feedback from urban landholders who consider local Councils to be responsible for pest plant and pest animal control.

The reliance on Councils for information reiterates the lack of awareness that Councils are no longer responsible for pest plant and pest animal control. It also emphasises the need for a close working relationship between the SE NRM Board, in particular the Authorised NRM Officers and operations team, and Council staff as well as a common approach to the delivery of key pest plant and pest animal control messages such as preferred management techniques.

- **Format of information delivery.** Urban landholders prefer to receive information material and learn about pest plant and pest animal management via information brochures and via the internet on the SE NRM Board and other websites.

Rural landholders identify a range of preferred methods including information brochures, field days, one on one with an SE NRM Board officer, via the internet on the SE NRM Board website and other websites and hands on demonstrations. These responses emphasise the need for a variety of approaches to information provision and communication.

- **Raise awareness.** There is a need for the SE NRM Board to market its message better in order to get pest plant and pest animal control messages across. This includes clearly communicating why certain pests are identified as priority risks over others. Feedback received during the consultation identified that there is a “disconnect between farmers understanding the *need* to do it (i.e. pest control) and *why* they need to do it”. This is an important point as it speaks directly to the ultimate goal of

engagement in pest plant and pest animal control. Knowing that you have to do something is not the same as knowing why.

- **Role of Authorised NRM Officers.** Authorised NRM Officers are considered an important resource and are critical to ongoing pest plant and pest animal control in the region. There is a need to ensure that Authorised NRM Officers are well utilised given that they operate at the 'front line' and are for many landholders the only direct contact they have with the SE NRM Board and its operations.
- **Get urban landholders involved.** There is a high level of agreement that urban landholders have a major role to play in pest control. However, it is also recognised that the challenge will be in getting urban landholders and the wider community engaged and involved. This emphasises the need for communication to be clear about why pest plant and pest animal control is important, and, to make it relevant to people.
- **What people want from the SE NRM Board.** Much of the feedback regarding what the SE NRM Board could do differently to better support rural and urban landholders to undertake pest control measures emphasised the provision of information.
- **Don't reinvent the wheel - use existing networks and structures where possible.** Where possible, the SE NRM Board should tap into existing networks and groups already operating in the South East when undertaking community engagement activities rather than holding separate events/activities.
- **Understand who and what is out there.** To help tap into existing groups and networks, an inventory is required of all groups and networks in the region with an interest in pest plant and pest animal control. Key information to be identified includes the name of the main contact for the group, when and where the group meets, and what its objectives are.
- **Take it to the people.** It was identified that there is too much expectation placed on people going out of their way to specifically attend an NRM community engagement event (such as a workshop, public forum, meetings etc). Instead it was suggested that the SE NRM Board should take its message directly to the people by, for example, setting up an information booth or similar in places that people are already going to be such as shopping centres, sporting events (particularly relevant in regional areas) and school events.
- **Establish a pest plant and pest animal network group.** To better communicate with peak bodies/organisations in a more genuine and detailed way a pest plant and pest animal network group should be established. This group could represent a variety of interests such as peak industry bodies relevant to the region. With representation from peak bodies, this type of group could provide another opportunity to access existing groups and networks and utilise their consultation mechanisms to reach a wider audience.
- **Understand and work better with Non-governmental Organisations.** There is opportunity for the SE NRM Board to work better and more closely with a range of allied Non-governmental Organisations such as the Conservation Council of South Australia and Trees For Life to achieve mutual benefits. This includes utilising their networks to distribute information as well as their skilled and trained volunteer workforce on the ground.
- **Understand and work with Local Government.** Given the significant community perception that local Councils are responsible for pest control, it is critical that the

messages conveyed by Councils to the community about pest control issues and techniques are consistent with those identified by the SE NRM Board. There is also opportunity to utilise Councils better given their established links with the community and the community's regard for Council's as an "information hub". One simple action includes linking Council and the SE NRM Board's websites.

- **Involve young people.** There is ongoing opportunity to inform and involve young people in pest control and better facilitate the involvement of schools and young people in activities. School newsletters also provide an important communication link with a wide range of people and could be utilised to communicate key pest plant and animal control activities/issues through the placement of short editorials on issues of the moment or advertise community engagement events.

The key messages identified above, have directly informed the development of the five key goals which underpin this Plan:

1. Support the translation of awareness into action
2. Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives
3. Make it easier for people to understand the message
4. Work with all sectors to identify and address issues
5. Get young people involved in their future

1 INTRODUCTION

This Community Engagement Plan provides the framework for the South East Natural Resources Management (SE NRM) Board, landholders, the wider community and other stakeholders to work in partnership to implement the South East Pest Management Strategy.

The successful implementation of the South East Pest Management Strategy is (in part) dependent on the active engagement of all parties in the management of pest species to achieve desired outcomes. Helping people to understand the key pest issues as identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy, involving people in pest control using the right techniques and focussing people’s energies in the right direction is critical to pest plant and pest animal control in the region.

The South East Pest Management Strategy prepared by the SE NRM Board provides the framework for pest management in the South East over the next 5 years. The South East Pest Management Strategy has been developed based on a risk assessment of pest issues in the region and identifies a range of actions to be undertaken by the SE NRM landholders and the wider community to protect the region from the negative impacts of pest species.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RELATIONSHIP TO SOUTH EAST PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

This Community Engagement Plan forms one part of the four part South East Pest Management Strategy. Figure 1 below describes the relationship of the Community Engagement Plan to the other key documents of the pest management strategy.

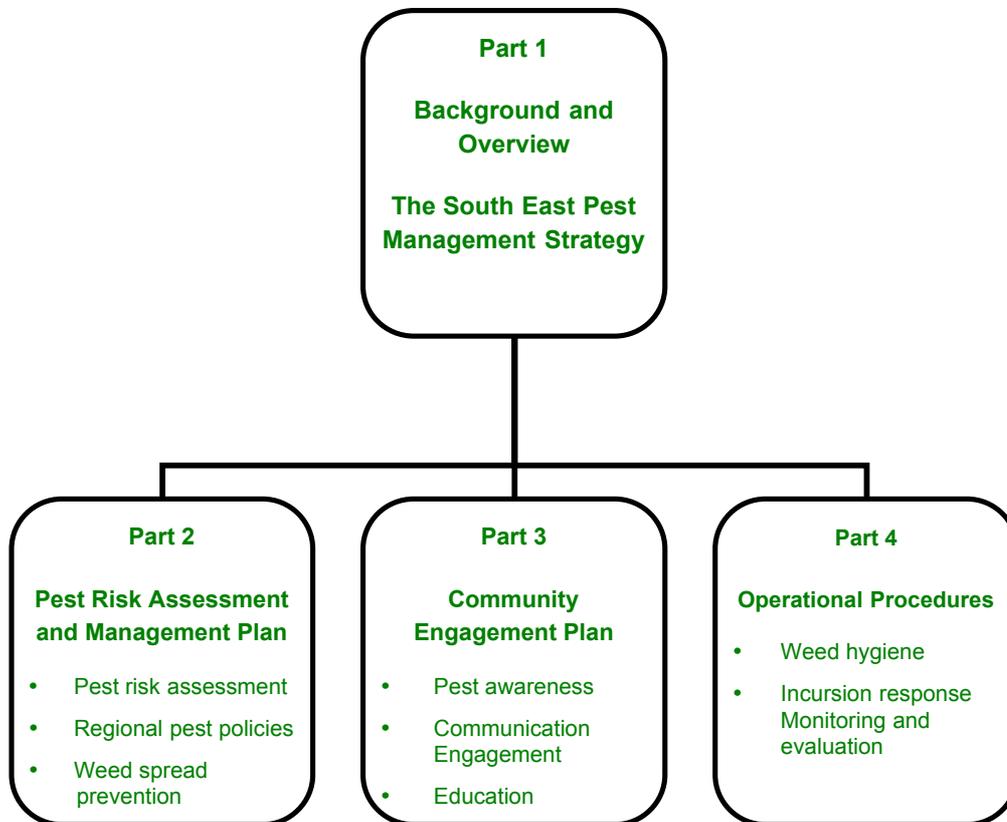


Figure 1: South East Pest Management Strategy



The South East Pest Management Strategy identifies the following purpose:

“A coordinated approach to strategic invasive species management through identifying and prioritising threats, educating the community and implementing best practice control techniques”

Under this purpose are three goals which include:

Goal 1: An informed community proactively undertaking pest management

Goal 2: No new pests become established in the South East

Goal 3: Effective management of established pest species

Essentially, this Plan provides the framework for delivering on the first Goal of the South East Pest Management Strategy identified above. Inherent to the implementation of the South East Pest Management Strategy is the recognition that a range of people need to be informed and involved in pest management and that a partnership approach is required.

This presents many challenging questions for the SE NRM Board including:

- What are the best ways for the SE NRM Board to communicate with landholders, community members and other stakeholders regarding the need for pest control?
- How should the SE NRM Board communicate and educate people about preferred techniques to manage identified pests?
- How can the SE NRM Board enthuse and involve people in pest control?
- How can the SE NRM Board help to sustain enthusiasm and participation over time?
- What support needs to be provided (e.g. financial, information materials, equipment etc)?
- Who should do what?
- How can success be measured?

It is the role of this Community Engagement Plan to respond to these questions and establish a clear framework for working with landholders, the wider community and other stakeholders regarding pest management issues.

1.2 WHO IS THE “COMMUNITY” IN THIS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN?

The South East Pest Management Strategy identifies that

Pest management is a shared responsibility, biosecurity is everybody’s business.

Therefore the ‘community’ in this Community Engagement Plan is really anybody who has an interest or stake in pest management and essentially every individual in the region plays an important role in achieving successful pest management.

More specifically, the ‘community’ referred to in this Plan can be broken down as follows:

- Landholders: people holding large areas of (mostly) rural land and engaged in primary production activities such as grazing, cropping, irrigated cropping/pasture, perennial horticulture and dairying (for example)

- Wider community: particularly urban dwellers or people not engaged in primary production but including “hobby farmers”
- Local Government: constituent Councils of the SE NRM Board region
- Government agencies such as (but not limited to): Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation; Department for Environment and Heritage; and, PIRSA
- Non-governmental organisations and industry bodies such as: South Australian Farmers Federation; Conservation Council of South Australia; Trees for Life; and Friends groups (for example)
- SE NRM Board - including SE NRM Board members, SE NRM Group members and staff of the SE NRM Board

1.3 HOW HAS THIS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN BEEN PREPARED?

The preparation of this Community Engagement Plan has comprised two information collection processes as described below.

1.3.1 Market Research Telephone Survey

The first process involved undertaking a market research telephone survey to gather statistically valid information from community members. Two surveys were designed and administered by Truscott Research; one survey targeted rural landholders and the other targeted urban landholders living in urban areas. In total 408 rural landholders and 375 urban landholders participated in the survey process. Participants were randomly selected across the SE NRM Board region.

The aim of the surveys was to gather statistically valid information regarding the following matters among others:

- The level of awareness of the SE NRM Board and its activities in relation to pest control
- Perceived responsibilities of the SE NRM Board and the community regarding pest control
- Priority pest issues for landholders and the community
- Pest control action undertaken by landholders and community members
- The best ways to involve people actively in pest management
- Barriers to landholder and community involvement and capacity to be involved
- Landholder views on the SE NRM Board’s role and responsibilities regarding pest management
- Landholder and community member’s knowledge of SE NRM Board technical staff and the assistance they can provide regarding pest management
- Preferred methods of communication and engagement

1.3.2 Other Information Collection Processes

In addition to the market research telephone survey a range of other processes have been used to collect information to inform the preparation of the Community Engagement Plan.

These processes were identified taking into account the consultation already undertaken in relation to the preparation of the South East Pest Management Strategy and other strategic SE NRM Board projects such as the “Dynamic NRM Community project” and the “Local Government Communication and Engagement Strategy project”. Resources have also included the “Local Government and NRM Relationship project” initiated by the “Local Government Association and Non-government Organisation Engagement in Regional Natural Resources Management Processes in South Australia project” undertaken by the Conservation Council of South Australia.

This approach recognises the need to not over consult on similar issues and places value on input already provided. This is particularly the case for stakeholders such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations and Local Government who are continually consulted about a range of issues.

The following processes were used to gather information:

- Workshops with the SE NRM Board members, SE NRM groups and SE NRM Board staff
- Speaking one to one with a range of stakeholders including:
 - Representatives of the South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF) and the Conservation Council of South Australia, both of which are statutory stakeholders of the SE NRM Board as identified under the NRM Act 2004
 - Non-governmental organisations such as Trees For Life
- Tapping into existing groups/networks such as the Environmental Educators Working Group
- Conducting of an on-line survey via the SE NRM Board website
- Identifying and speaking with local champions (i.e. key individuals that have a keen interest in, or negative opinion about, pest management. This process has helped with the identification of pest control issues and provided the opportunity to test proposed community engagement processes. In this way information can be gathered and understood at a very detailed level regarding what engagement processes are likely to work well and why
- Providing an open invitation to be contacted by telephone at any time throughout the project by interested people
- Promotion of the project through editorial/information articles in the local papers, SE NRM Board and other publications such as the Stock Journal

2 WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is a term often used to describe a variety of activities ranging from communication and consultation through to collaboration and empowerment. Each of these activities can be found on the “spectrum of public participation”¹ which is a well known model that describes different levels of community participation (refer Figure 2).

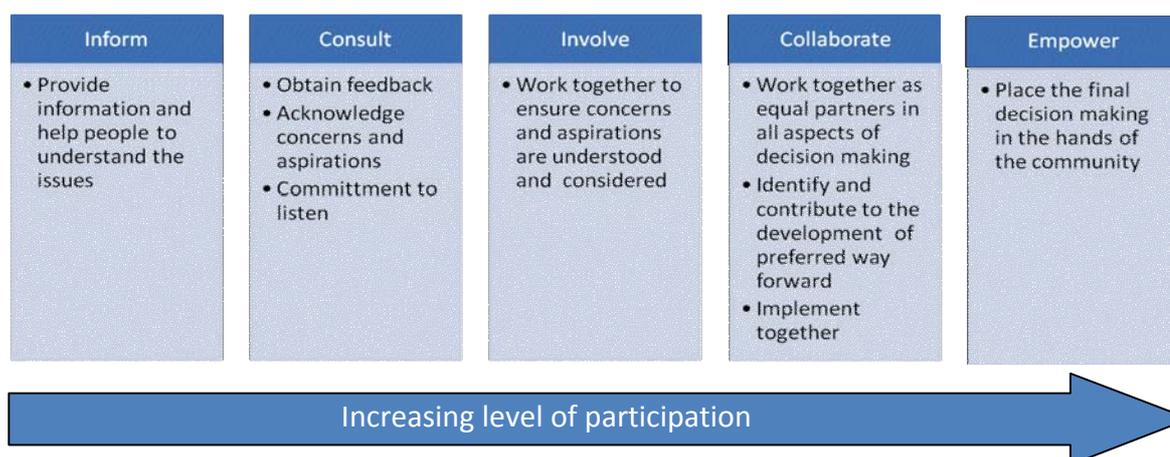


Figure 2 Participation Spectrum (adapted by URPS from IAP2)

It is important when identifying and implementing community engagement activities to be aware that each activity has a different meaning and is used in different circumstances to achieve different ends. The further along the spectrum an activity is located, the greater the involvement, and therefore the engagement and participation, of the community.

2.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Community engagement is a fundamental component of NRM and is embedded in the NRM Act 2004. The NRM Act 2004 recognises the importance of people in NRM and identifies a range of responsibilities that NRM Boards have regarding community education and awareness raising including:

- Promoting public awareness and understanding of NRM
- Undertaking and supporting educational activities and increasing community capacity to undertake NRM

These responsibilities are further reflected in the SE NRM Board’s Regional NRM Plan² which identifies the following goals:

- Regional communities active in NRM
- Effective partnerships and good governance

¹ IAP2, International Association of Public Participation 2007

² The SE NRM Board is currently in the process of preparing a new Regional NRM Plan

Therefore, there is clear legislative and strategic support regarding the need for the participation of the community in NRM, including pest control, which includes but is not restricted to, communication and consultation. In order for communities to be active in NRM, capacity needs to be built which goes beyond awareness raising to empowering individuals and groups to take action³.

2.2 DETERMINING THE 'SCOPE OF INFLUENCE'

Before attempting to undertake any activities on this participation spectrum, the first and most important issue to be resolved is what level of opportunity is going to be provided for community and stakeholder input to influence the final outcome. Often this is described as the 'scope of influence'.

Identifying the scope of influence will determine what level of participation is possible. It is important that the scope of influence is clarified as it will dictate what community engagement (or communication) activities are designed and implemented.

For example, if the intent of a process is to identify that landholders are required under the NRM Act 2004 to manage declared pest species then this is clearly communication as it provides no scope for community input or influence as it is a legislative requirement.

Communication is where the intent of the process is to deliver a message about a particular issue, process or project but does not provide the opportunity for stakeholder and community input to influence the final outcome. Communication is a process of providing information and is underpinned by key messages such as:

- This is what the issue is
- This is what we have done
- This is what we found out
- This is what we now propose to do
- This is what the SE NRM Board needs the community to do

However, if the intent of a process is to develop ongoing relationships with other key stakeholders such as Councils, non-governmental organisations or government agencies through the establishment of regular meetings and development of an action plan around common issues this is consulting and involving. Likewise, if the SE NRM Board is seeking input to the development of a Strategy or Plan and comments can be made by the wider community that influence the final content and direction of the strategy, this too is consulting.

Consultation is used where the intent of the process is to not only deliver a message but seek genuine feedback about a particular issue, process or project or aspects of it, and provides genuine opportunity for stakeholder and community input to influence the outcome. Consultation is a process of providing information, engaging with people and asking for feedback and identifying how people can participate. It is underpinned by key messages such as:

- This is what the issue is
- This is what we have done
- This is what we found out
- What do you think the issues are?
- What do you think should be done in response?

³ Sustainable Focus, Dynamic NRM Community: Project report, June 2009, page 19

- What do you think of the proposed directions/ options?
- How are we going to do this together?

Collaboration is where the intent of the process is predicated on the belief that sharing information and ideas achieves better results. Collaboration is more active than involving people in that it also incorporates negotiating through a range of ideas and perspectives to achieve a preferred outcome. Collaborative processes are used where there is more opportunity to influence the outcome for all parties involved.

Empowerment is where the intent is to increase the strength of individuals and communities and develop confidence in their own capacities.

Empowerment can be considered within the following contexts:

- Empowering and motivating the community to choose to undertake a specific action (e.g. choose to willingly comply with legislative requirements because they believe the requirement will result in a worthwhile outcome, as opposed to complying in order to avoid compliance action such as a fine)
- Empowering the community in a manner that transfers an organisation or authority's decision making responsibility for a certain project or program to a community group. This process is relevant at a public policy decision making task rather than a specific action focussed task
- Apart from the action of being motivated to choose to act in a certain manner or having the final decision making ability, empowerment can have a focus on process and can therefore mean "the giving of confidence, skills and power to communities to shape and influence what public bodies do for or with them".⁴ For instance, there is little value in trying to consult or collaborate with a community, if the consultation or collaborative process does not give the community the skills and confidence to participate

⁴ Local Government Association of the United Kingdom, An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success (2007) as accessed at www.communities.gov.uk

3 KEY MESSAGES FROM THE COMMUNITY

This section of the report summarises information collected from the community regarding pest plants and pest animal control. Much of this information has been distilled from the market research telephone survey as well as the other consultation processes undertaken as described in section 1.3 of this report.

The market research telephone survey targeted two distinct groups; rural landholders and urban landholders. In total 408 rural landholders and 375 urban landholders participated in the survey process. An executive summary of the market research telephone survey is provided in **Appendix A**.

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEST PLANTS AND PEST ANIMALS IN THE SOUTH EAST

There still appears to be the perception in the wider community that Local Government is the authority for pest plant and pest animal control. This is certainly supported by feedback received from the consultation undertaken for this project as well as the market research telephone survey.

45% of urban landholders surveyed identified that local councils were primarily responsible for controlling pest plants and pest animals in the South East.

Rural landholders have a greater level of awareness regarding their responsibilities, with **56% identifying that individual landholders are responsible** for pest plant and pest animal management.

There appears to be a high level of awareness regarding legislative responsibilities under the NRM Act 2004. Of those rural landholders surveyed almost all **[97%] were aware that under the NRM Act 2004, landholders are responsible** for pest plant and pest animal control on their land. Awareness was also high among the urban landholders at 87%.

This high level of awareness provides a point of entry for communication with rural landholders and the wider community. Generally, people are influenced by legal requirements, although this should be tempered with the understanding that some people disagree with those pests declared under the NRM Act 2004 and do not consider them to be priority issues on their land compared to other species/issues.

In addition feedback received during the consultation identified that there is a “disconnect between farmers understanding the *need* to do it (i.e. pest control) and *why* they need to do it”. This is an important point as it speaks directly to the ultimate goal of engagement in pest plant and pest animal control. Knowing that you have to do something is not the same as knowing why.

There was a high level of agreement that urban landholders have a major role to play in pest control. 92% of both the rural landholders and the urban landholders surveyed identified that they agreed that urban landholders have a major role to play in combating the spread of pest plants and pest animals in the South East.

This level of agreement is encouraging, however the challenge will be getting the wider community engaged and involved in pest plant and pest animal control. Other feedback received during the consultation processes has included that urban landholders “are not interested” and do not see how pest plant and pest animal control is relevant to them.

The survey also sought information about how people would prefer to get involved in pest plant and pest animal control. 93% of landholders and 73% of urban landholders indicated that they would prefer to get involved pest plant and animal control in one or more of the following ways:

- 59% of rural landholders and 32% of the urban landholders said they would **prefer to get involved by undertaking action on their own land**
- **learning more was the preferred option for 28%** of rural landholders and 30% of urban landholders respondents
- A relatively small proportion [6% of rural landholders and 11% of urban landholders respondents] expressed a preference for becoming a member of a volunteer group

3.2 IMPORTANCE OF PEST PLANT AND PEST ANIMAL CONTROL

The consultation and the market research telephone survey clearly indicated that rural and urban landholders **place a high level of importance on pest plant and pest animal control**. It was acknowledged that there is “a small minority” who do not consider it a priority issue and through inaction on their land are having adverse impacts on their neighbours.

However, the majority of feedback identified that most people to some extent realise that pest plant and pest animal control is necessary whether it be for biodiversity/ environmental reasons or because they have an adverse affect on the productivity/viability of their land.

The market research telephone survey supports this feedback with **86% of rural landholders rating the importance of pest plant and animal control as at least 8/10**. This included **39% who gave a 10/10 rating**.

The high level of importance placed on pest plant and pest animal control is encouraging, however just as important is translating this belief into action on the ground by more landholders.

3.3 KEY PEST PLANT AND PEST ANIMAL ISSUES

A fairly common theme identified by the consultation was the perception that the ‘wrong’ species are being targeted by the SE NRM Board. For some people this is very frustrating as the species that they believe are really the issue are not being addressed. In most cases the key pest plant species that were identified by survey responses as requiring more focus comprised those that are very common and widespread across the region such as horehound.

This perception is likely the result of many landholders being more familiar with existing weeds than new threats and not understanding the risk assessment process that identifies new threats higher than existing, commonly known pests. This is certainly a key challenge for the SE NRM Board.

This message is reflected in the survey responses to the question asking participants to identify key pests in the South East. Those pest species commonly identified are also those that are most widespread and impact (particularly) on farming activities such as Salvation Jane, horehound and thistles. Pest plants such as caltrop, golden dodder and Mexican feather grass which are all declared species and identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy barely featured in survey responses. The survey responses indicate that there is a mismatch between what the SE NRM Board and rural and urban

landholders consider the key pest plant and pest animal issues to be and therefore more work is required by the SE NRM Board to better convey key pest plant and animal messages to the wider community.

Overall these “**other plants**” (i.e. **Salvation Jane, horehound and thistles**) were **ranked third highest as key pest issues** in the region.

The **number one pest issue** in the South East identified by the market research telephone survey **was rabbits, closely followed by foxes**. This is consistent with feedback from the consultation which identified fox baiting as one of the most commonly identified pest control measures being undertaken in the region.

The survey also sought information from rural and urban landholders regarding their awareness of pest issues on their land. 94% of rural landholders and 41% of the urban landholders indicated they were aware of pest plant and pest animal control issues on their land. **Rural landholders identified rabbits [24%] and foxes [22%] as their major issues** followed by “other plants” [17%].

These ‘other plants’, rabbits and foxes were often specified by the rural landholder segment [32%, 27% and 23% respectively] as species they had tried to eradicate or control in the past 12 months.

These survey responses should not be misrepresented or taken out of context. Key information that should be taken is that there is a significant degree of awareness about pest species and that action is being taken. What needs to be ensured however is that action is also undertaken to appropriately manage other pest species which are identified as key risks in the South East region as identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy and that these species are also on the “radar” of landholders.

In addition, there needs to be better communication about why particular species are declared and are targeted over other widespread species.

3.4 PEST PLANT AND PEST ANIMAL CONTROL ACTION TAKEN BY THOSE SURVEYED

The survey identified that **almost all rural landholders [97%] and half of the urban landholders sample [49%] had taken action to eradicate or control plant and animal pests in the preceding 12 months**. The average amount spent by landholders in the last 12 months was \$5,890 and the average time expended was 143 hours. It should be noted that this annual amount spent may be skewed by the high proportion of cropping landholders that participated in the survey who generally have very high weed control costs but are mostly not focussed on declared pests.

Rural landholders were also asked about the success or failure of any control/eradication efforts. **85% nominated species where they perceived their activities as being successful**. However, **45% nominated species that were becoming a bigger problem in spite of their efforts**.

The species that were prominent in the “**successful**” list were **rabbits and foxes** [21% and 18% respectively]. These also headed the ‘unsuccessful list’ [8% and 5% respectively].

Once more, other plants (i.e. horehound, Salvation Jane and thistles) were a significant response, with 36% reporting some success with one or more of these species and 21% reporting failures.

Again, the level of pest plant and pest animal control action being undertaken by rural landholders and to a lesser extent urban landholders is encouraging. What is also encouraging is that many have indicated that they are seeing success from the activities, although a significant number identified that nominated species were becoming a bigger problem in spite of their efforts.

Clearly one of the key barriers to plant and animal pest control is the relentless, ongoing nature of management activities and often not being able to see success despite significant investment of time, energy and money. Maintaining enthusiasm and efforts of landholders over time is one of the key challenges facing the SE NRM Board. This is in addition to the challenges presented by the broader context of a changing environment as a result of climate change, rising oil prices and economic instability, which are all factors that will influence the degree of involvement and commitment to plant and animal pest control.

What is interesting is that **very few people could identify what the SE NRM Board could do to make it easier** for them to undertake more pest plant and animal control activities. For example, financial assistance from the SE NRM Board to pay for spraying or other control treatment was identified by only a few respondents [5%]. Other suggestions included:

- more effort on roadside weeds [8%]
- advice on techniques/products [6%]
- research and development-biological controls, new rabbit viruses [6%]

3.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SOLUTIONS ON PLANT AND ANIMAL PESTS

The market research telephone survey identified that **urban landholders most often source information on plant and animal pest issues from local Councils [27%]**. When asked about sources of solutions on plant and animal control issues, the urban landholders response was again dominated by local councils [28%].

The reliance on Councils for information about pest plant and animal control by the urban landholders reiterates the lack of awareness that Councils are no longer responsible for pest plant and animal control. It also emphasises the need for a close working relationship between the SE NRM Board, in particular the Authorised NRM Officers and operations team, and Council staff as well as a common approach to the delivery of key plant and animal pest control messages such as preferred management techniques.

The range of sources that **rural landholders seek information and solutions from** was more diverse and **emphasises the need for a variety of approaches** for providing information and conveying management techniques to landholders. The survey identified that 14% of rural landholders look to journals for information, 13% to agronomists, 12% to supplier representatives and 11% to the SE NRM Board. Rural landholders also seek solutions from agronomists [20%] and supplier representatives [18%]. For rural landholders therefore, supplier representatives and agronomists play a key role in information delivery.

3.6 PREFERRED MEDIA FOR LEARNING ABOUT PEST PLANT AND PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

When asked about their preferred media for receiving information material and learning about pest plant and animal management, urban landholders had two clear favourites. These were information brochures [33%] and via the internet on the SE NRM Board and other websites [21%].

Among the rural landholder sample, it was not so clear cut. Information brochures and field days [26% and 21%] were preferred a little ahead of one on one with a SE NRM Board officer and via internet on SE NRM Board and other websites [17% and 16%] which in turn were a little ahead of hands on demonstrations [21%].

When asked specifically about attending field days, **61% of rural landholders said they would be likely to attend a field day or demonstration** day about pest management, with 17% very likely.

Again the responses from rural landholders emphasise the need for a variety of approaches to information provision and communication. One on one contact with an SE NRM Board officer is supported by feedback received during the consultation, and the desire to develop a face to face relationship with a person who can provide expert advice and ongoing support was emphasised. In reality it was expected that the likely regularity of these one on one visits could be annually or six monthly and could happen at a regular time of the year so that they are “expected”.

The timing of these visits could coincide with key pest issues in the area/region at the time and act as a prompt/reminder for action to be taken by landholders.

Field days although popular, were considered “preaching to the converted” by some people. The challenge is reaching those people who are not already doing the right thing regarding plant and animal pest control.

Hands on demonstrations were also valued but with the proviso that they are held at appropriate times of the day (e.g. first thing in the morning is good for some people as it still leaves time to do work in the afternoon). Sessions should not go for a full day, and should be mindful of key seasonal primary production activities. The location of such sessions is also important and should be in close proximity to the intended audience (to encourage attendance) and value the time it takes people to travel. It was also identified that people are time poor (particularly landholders) so the SE NRM Board need to “take it to the people”. That is, don’t ask people to attend extra events/workshops etc but instead “piggyback” off existing events such as Field Days, service group meetings, school fetes etc.

It was commented by one participant in the consultation that workshops “don’t work for farmers”.

Regarding the provision of information it was identified that a variety of communication methods be used ranging from printed, hard copy information, face to face contact, trusted media sources such as ABC radio and the Stock Journal, school newsletters, direct email and direct phone calling.

A range of opinions were provided regarding the format hard copy printed information should take. It was identified that large documents are difficult for many people living in the South East to download over the internet and therefore hard copies should be provided. At the same time it was identified that people don’t have the time or inclination to read large volumes of information. One preferred approach is to provide summary material which has enough information to gain an understanding of the issue/s and provides details regarding where to access further information if desired.



3.7 AWARENESS OF SE NRM BOARD INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

75% of rural landholders and 50% of the urban landholders sample surveyed indicated they were aware of at least one of the SE NRM Board's information campaigns when prompted. Campaigns identified included summer and winter weed circulars, Mexican feather grass, golden dodder, deer, foxes, rabbits and caltrop. Individual campaigns had recall levels of around 10% or less.

20% of rural landholders and 11% of the urban landholders sample had seen any of the campaigns and taken action as a result.

Traditional mass media sources such as newspapers, television and radio are now competing with other information sources and methods of communication such as the internet, Twitter and Face Book. Taken in the context of an ever competing world of information from a wide range of sources, the recall level of information campaigns undertaken by the SE NRM Board is not considered unduly low, particularly where these campaigns have been primarily printed. Print campaigns usually have a very low recall level unless the printed material is in front of a person when they are questioned about it.

It should not be concluded from these recall levels therefore, that these forms of information campaigns should cease. However, more consideration may need to be given to the method of delivery of these messages including the overall presentation of material (i.e. what it looks like), the content (i.e. the words used and how the messages are conveyed) and mode of delivery (i.e. direct mail, direct email, as insert in newspapers, as insert with rates notices etc).

Comments received during the consultation identified that it is critical for any communication materials, especially those seeking action from rural and urban landholders to use the right language and avoid the use of jargon; terms such as “biosecurity” should not be used as people are not familiar with it and “switch off”.

As a result what was originally intended to be termed the South East Biosecurity Strategy, is now called the South East Pest Management Strategy.

Having acknowledged this however, it should be recognised that the SE NRM Board has deliberately chosen to continue to use the term biosecurity. Biosecurity is an important national theme that brings focus and priority and more importantly funding. It also conveys a wider range of concepts and activities associated with pest control and more accurately describes what the SE NRM Board does in regards to pest control. The aspects of preparedness, prevention and response are often overlooked in the SE NRM Board's daily efforts to manage the pests in the region, yet they are essential activities which the term biosecurity describes more accurately.

Therefore, given that the SE NRM Board has made a conscious decision to adopt this terminology, the use of the term “biosecurity” should not be restricted, despite feedback from the consultation to the contrary. Rather, the SE NRM Board needs to introduce and explain biosecurity as a concept and consistently use it in all information materials so that people come to understand it and get used to it. A similar challenge has been presented by the term “natural resources management” or “NRM”.

Other comments about communication included that there is a need to help landholders make the connection between not taking pest control action and the consequences of this inaction. The time lag between when pests occur and then spread and become a larger problem is too great and some people don't understand what impacts this has.

There is also a “disconnect between farmers understanding the *need* to do it (i.e. pest control) and *why* they need to do it”. “Rural landholders don't perceive weeds as an

economic risk. Farmers need to see that they threaten their hip pocket; they are easy to ignore while they are not a serious threat”.

3.8 AWARENESS OF SE NRM BOARD TECHNICAL OFFICERS

The Authorised NRM Officers working throughout the SE NRM Board region are considered an important source of information and support for landholders. Given that the Authorised NRM Officers live in the area that they work in there is opportunity to develop ongoing and sustainable relationships with rural and urban landholders.

The Authorised NRM Officers were identified by the consultation as an invaluable resource that is underutilised currently and can facilitate pest plant and pest animal control activities. One example that was given as to how Authorised NRM Officers can help deliver more action in the SE NRM Board region is by way of convening groups of neighbouring landholders and working with them to identify the pest plant and pest animal issues and assist them to take action in a coordinated manner.

58% of rural landholder survey participants and 45% of urban landholders claimed to be aware that the SE NRM Board has technical staff who can come out to their property and advise on pest management.

42% of all rural landholders participating in the survey claimed to have had this contact. This contact was most prevalent among cropping properties [47%]. Overall, the survey identified that this contact with Authorised NRM Officers has been very positive.

3.9 INFORMATION, PREVENTION AND COMPLIANCE

The market research telephone survey asked two questions of rural landholders regarding the level of emphasis that should be placed on information, prevention and compliance. Definitions of information, compliance and prevention were provided [i.e. information is about raising awareness and educating landholders, compliance is about ensuring control of established pests and prevention is about preventing the establishment of new weeds and includes activities such as surveillance and planning].

The survey results indicated that prevention is preferred to information with compliance the least favoured approached. 42% of rural landholders were of the opinion that prevention should be given more emphasis, while 13% considered it should be given less. This means that overall, **29% of rural landholders preferred to see more of a focus on prevention.**

35% were of the opinion that information should be given more emphasis, while 24% considered it should be given less. This means that overall **11% of rural landholders preferred to see more emphasis on information.**

16% were of the opinion that compliance should be given more emphasis, while 36% considered it should be given less. This means that overall, **20% of rural landholders preferred to see less emphasis on compliance.**

It is heartening that prevention rated higher than information and compliance, and that prevention should be given more emphasis. It is also interesting that a fairly large proportion of rural landholders (36%) considered that compliance should be given less emphasis which may reflect perceptions about how much enforcement activity is currently being undertaken by the SE NRM Board. Whether or not this perception is warranted is another question, but it may speak to the type of media coverage and the way in which the negatives are often emphasised.



This is supported by feedback received during the consultation which identified that there is a need for much more communication about the successes; “people want to know that their efforts can pay off”. One specific example cited was to ensure that photographs are taken of weed management sites before and after activities are undertaken so that change can be observed over time and used to positively publicise action.

3.10 WHAT COULD THE SE NRM BOARD DO DIFFERENTLY TO PROVIDE MORE HELP TO LANDHOLDERS?

The role of information and communication is critical to pest plant and pest animal control and educating rural landholders and the community about pest species and appropriate management techniques.

This view is supported by feedback from the consultation which identified that many people desire to be “kept up to date” with recent information about weed management techniques and reminded about when they need to take action. There was also the view that the SE NRM Board needs to provide “direction about what needs to be done”. This includes providing clear information and direction about pest control techniques.

This emphasis on information provision is (in part) reflected by the survey responses. Rural landholders were asked if there is anything the SE NRM Board should be doing differently to give landholders more help in dealing with plant and animal pests. Half of participants offered suggestions. The top three comprised:

- information and communication [12%]
- be more hands on/less bureaucratic [8%]
- more enforcement [8%]

4 KEY MESSAGES FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND INDUSTRY BODIES

This section of the report summarises information collected from a range of stakeholders (other than rural landholders and the wider community) regarding pest plant and pest animal control. As previously stated, this project has recognised consultation processes and projects already undertaken regarding pest plant and pest animal control specifically as well as NRM issues generally, particularly where these projects relate to engagement of other stakeholders by the SE NRM Boards.

This approach recognises the need to not over consult on similar issues and places value on input already provided. This is particularly the case for stakeholders such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations and Local Government who are continually consulted about a range of issues.

4.1 TAP INTO EXISTING GROUPS AND NETWORKS

It was identified that where possible, organisations such as the SE NRM Board should access existing networks and groups already operating in the South East rather than starting up a new network/group to address particular issues such as pest plant and pest animal control. The objectives of these groups can be wide ranging and do not necessarily have to be associated or aligned with NRM.

These groups can provide an already established group of people meeting on a regular basis and a forum for conveying and sharing information. Such groups could include service clubs such as Apex and Rotary, Country Women's Association, Friends groups, sporting clubs, South East Local Government Association, South East Development Board etc. In addition, such groups often undertake other activities in the community including volunteering which could extend to providing labour relating to pest plant and pest animal control measures.

It was also suggested that the credibility, relationships and trust already associated with established groups and networks should be better utilised in undertaking engagement activities by the SE NRM Board. For example, it may be possible to “piggy back” on an event already being held by the local Country Women's Association, sporting club or similar, rather than holding a separate engagement activity.

Another good example of tapping into an existing structure is to take up the invitation that has been extended to the SE NRM Board by constituent Councils of the SE NRM Board region regarding the establishment of an NRM standing item on Council meeting agendas. Where appropriate, pest plant and pest animal control issues should be raised under this item and representatives of the SE NRM Board attend the Council meetings to facilitate the building of relationships and provide opportunity for information sharing.

4.2 UNDERSTAND WHO AND WHAT IS OUT THERE

One of the most common issues experienced by any organisation trying to consult with its stakeholders is to understand who or what is actually out there that may have a particular interest in the issue at hand. Just as challenging is keeping track of who is the main contact for the group, when the group meets, where the group meets and what its objectives are.

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It was suggested that an inventory be developed of all groups that may have a particular interest in pest plant and pest animal control. This inventory will help facilitate the ability to “tap into” existing groups and networks and representatives from the SE NRM Board could attend meetings at appropriate times to seek feedback, communicate issues, involve groups in activities and develop ongoing relationships between the SE NRM Board and other allied groups. There are at least 32 groups that could be on this inventory that already exist in the South East including:

Association of South East Field Naturalists Societies	Friends of Coorong	Millicent Field Naturalists	Friends of Nene Valley Conservation Park
Beachport District Development Association	Friends of Dingley Dell Conservation Park	Mount Gambier Field Naturalists	Bool Lagoon
Birds SE	Friends of Harding Springs Park	Naracoorte/Lucindale Field Naturalists	Robe Tourism & Traders Association Inc.
Bordertown Field Naturalists	Friends of Lake Ormerod	Native Wildlife South East	Robe KESAB Committee
Cape Jaffa Foreshore Residents Group	Friends of Little Dip Conservation Park	Pebble Point Coastcare Group	SE Soil Association
Coorong District LAP	Friends of Mount Gambier Area Parks	Port MacDonnell Landcare Group	Threatened Orchids group
Finger Point/Aboriginal Dune Coastcare Group	Friends of Mount Monster Conservation Park	Port MacDonnell Tourist Association	Friends of Shorebirds SE
Friends of Butcher Gap Conservation Park	Friends of Naracoorte Caves	Friends of Canunda and Beachport Parks	Friends of Upper South East Parks

In addition, there may also be groups located outside the region that would have an interest in pest plant and pest animal control in the South East such as conservation groups that own property in the South East as well as non-governmental organisations such as the Nature Conservation Council and Conservation Council and adjacent NRM Boards and Catchment Management Authorities across the border in Victoria.

It should also be noted that the Landcare Association of South Australia has recently been re-established and can provide a useful mechanism/network for information sharing and communication.

4.3 TAKE IT TO THE PEOPLE

It was suggested there is too much expectation placed on people to go out of their way to attend a community engagement event (such as a workshop, public forum, meetings etc). People are “time poor” and have limited capacity to participate in extra activities; particularly those associated with issues that they may not consider to be relevant to them, such as pest plant and pest animal control.

A different approach involves “taking it to the people”. That is, setting up an information booth or similar in places that people are already going to be such as shopping centres, sporting events (particularly relevant in regional areas) and school events. In this way,

people don't have to go out of their way to gather information or engage in a process. Information materials can be handed out and one on one discussion can occur. Often people feel more comfortable speaking about issues in this more personalised way than in open forums or public workshops.

Depending on the target audience the chosen location/s can change too. For example, it may be appropriate to hold sessions in the local fodder store to target rural landholders about a particular pest issue at a certain time of the year. The relevant Authorised NRM Officer working in the area could help staff at such an event and provide information and answer questions one on one.

This type of approach although simple, can be very effective in engaging with targeted audiences.

4.4 ESTABLISH A PEST PLANT AND PEST ANIMAL RELATED NETWORK GROUP

The consultation identified that some people have the perception that existing processes used by the SE NRM Board to communicate with some peak bodies/organisations is "superficial" and that there is no genuine engagement occurring about common NRM related issues. It was suggested that one way to address this lack of genuine discussion about issues relating to pest plant and pest animal control is to establish a Round Table or network group. This group could be called something that people identify with such as the "Pest Eradication Round Table" (PERT) or "Pest Eradication South East" (PESE).

This group could represent a variety of interests at a regional level such as peak industry bodies relevant to the region such as the South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF), Forestry SA, PIRSA Forestry, the dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry and horticulture industry as well as representatives from key non-governmental organisations and Local Government.

With representation from peak bodies, this type of group could provide another opportunity to access existing groups and networks and utilise their consultation mechanisms to reach a wider audience. For example, SAFF has its own members and associated database. On a particular issue that seeks feedback/input from farmers, SAFF could prepare a letter (either jointly with the SE NRM Board or on its own) and distribute it to its members. The SAFF representative/s on the stakeholder group can then coordinate responses received and feed these back into the group along with information received via other representatives on the group.

The role and responsibilities of this group would need to be determined but in general could provide a direct line of communication and consultation into a range of bodies/organisations. **Appendix B** provides an example of a proposed approach to establishing a similar body in Alexandrina Council as well as draft Terms of reference.

4.5 UNDERSTAND AND WORK WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) is the peak non-governmental organisation conservation body for South Australia and is recognised as such under the NRM Act 2004. The CCSA and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can add value to the work already undertaken by the SE NRM Board given their established connections and influence within the wider community. Many environmental NGOs have significant information resources and networks of volunteers that could be better utilised in relation to NRM generally, and pest plant and pest animal control specifically.

The 'Non-government Organisation Engagement in Regional Natural Resources Management Processes in South Australia' project recently undertaken by the CCSA has concluded that many barriers exist to the effective engagement of NGOs in regional NRM processes. This project identified a number of recommendations to assist NRM Boards to better engage with NGOs.

Certainly there is a genuine willingness of NGOs to work more closely with NRM Boards. The challenge is finding the best way to do this, which will be different for many NGOs. This is a conclusion also reached by the CCSA project.

The CCSA NGO NRM Facilitator position which is funded by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation provides an excellent entry point to not only the CCSA but other environmental NGOs.

NGOs have extensive member databases which may be able to be utilised to disseminate information and seek feedback on strategies, processes and activities. They also can provide contact with trained volunteers who may be able to assist with pest plant and pest animal control measures on the ground. An issue raised through the consultation was that there is a lack of trained people who know the right techniques for managing certain pests. It is not enough to have willing people, they also need the right training and support.

Programs such as Bush For Life, conducted by the organisation Trees For Life's, may be worth investigating to assist with engaging the community in on-ground work in vegetated areas as well as a resource for training and education. The Bush For Life program can offer a range of services including:

- Holding workshops where landholders can learn minimal disturbance techniques and target specific weeds to allow native vegetation to regenerate
- Holding working bees whereby trained volunteers undertake a day's work in a particular location
- Establishing Bush For Life sites on private land and providing assessment and advice, organising volunteers to work on the site and providing ongoing support and equipment (this would be dependent on funding support from the SE NRM Board)

Most importantly at this stage Trees For Life is interested in developing a relationship with the SE NRM Board and working together to combat pest plants. In the short term Trees For Life can conduct hands on workshops and provide support to private landholders if sponsored by the SE NRM Board. In the long term a Bush For Life officer could be located in the region to provide ongoing support to volunteers, landholders and manage a network of Bush For Life sites.

4.6 WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government is a statutory stakeholder of NRM as identified under the NRM Act 2004. Local Government can play a critical role in NRM generally and in pest plant and pest animal control specifically given its well established links with the community and the community's regard for Council's as an information hub. The market research telephone survey supports this view and identified a significant number of people believe Councils to be responsible for pest plant and pest animal control and is the source from which they most seek information and solutions about pest plant and animal management. It is important therefore that the pest plant and pest animal control message conveyed by Councils to the wider community is consistent with those messages being conveyed by the SE NRM Board.

It is not necessarily critical to change the wider community's perception of responsibility for pest plant and pest animal control away from Councils to the SE NRM Board. However, what is critical is that the right message/information is conveyed when Council is contacted and that linkages are made between Councils and the SE NRM Board.

One simple way of achieving this is for Council websites to provide a navigation tab about pest plant and pest animal control. The information contained within this information panel can then identify that the SE NRM Board is the relevant body for pest plant and pest animal control and provide a direct website link to the SE NRM Board's website. A review of Council websites relevant to the SE NRM Board region identified that all but one Council website is silent on pest plant and pest animal management. Only the Wattle Range Council website provides a reference about pest plant and pest animal control and identified the SE NRM Board as the relevant organisation. A link to the SE NRM Board's website is also provided.

It is also important to understand that there are two key levels at which pest plant and pest animal control operates in Local Government. The first is the policy making/strategic level. This refers to the internal policy making processes (such as the preparation of management plans for Council owned land) undertaken by Councils regarding a range of issues including pest plant and pest animal control. It is important that the SE NRM Board has input to these policy making processes and that the strategic directions identified by Councils are consistent with those identified by the SE NRM Board.

The second level is at the operational works level of Council. This refers to the on ground activities undertaken by parks and garden staff (or similar) on Council owned and managed land. Again the pest management techniques undertaken at this level need to reflect those promoted by the SE NRM Board.

The *Local Government NRM Engagement and Communication Strategy* recently prepared by the SE NRM Board is a comprehensive strategy that specifically addresses communication and engagement between the SE NRM Board and constituent Councils of the SE NRM Board region. Those most relevant objectives/actions identified by the *Local Government NRM Engagement and Communication Strategy* to this Strategy include:

- Facilitate NRM awareness sessions / workshops for LG Elected Members and new Council staff including topics such as resources and NRM within Local Government
- Determine the specific needs of Local Government in relation to natural resources topics such as soils, water, vegetation, pest plants and pest animals, coastal issues
- Include editorials on SE NRM Board and Local Government jointly funded projects within Council newsletters and continue to communicate ongoing activities and /or campaigns of the SE NRM Board through Council newsletters
- Continue to develop user friendly, simple to read information brochures on key NRM issues (e.g. weeds, machinery hygiene)
- SE NRM Board officer to attend all SELGIG meetings and once a year brief the group on relevant policy and planning
- Promote and run a number of hands on NRM workshops e.g. roadside management (water and vegetation focus)
- Continue to send out key NRM information (e.g. status of WAP, how to address weeds or pests) in Council rates notices
- Develop a collective approach to emergency management on issues such as fire, flood, and pest plant and pest animal control (biosecurity)

4.7 INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

“We need to get young people involved, they are our future” was a common message identified by the consultation. Certainly, there are a number of activities already being undertaken in the South East which are successfully engaging young people in pest plant and pest animal control. These include the Junior Youth Forum, the Senior Youth Conference and the Weed Warriors program. In addition there is the South East Environmental Educators group which is comprised of representatives from a range of NRM related roles such as Waterwatch, Landcare and Coastcare.

Teachers working in schools in the region identified an interest in working with the SE NRM Board regarding NRM issues. To better facilitate activities which involve education of students about NRM related issues the following needs to be provided:

- Plenty of lead time so that activities can be well planned and publicised
- Financial assistance to pay for buses, teacher relief time and resources
- Multi phased approach to publicising events e.g. emails, flyers, telephone calls and face to face contact
- Clear concise information about what is involved and why it is important
- Information kits about the issue/proposed activities

It was identified that teachers (and students) have a lot of commitments and a lot of choices for extra activities. Therefore the importance of a proposed activity needs to be articulated and of interest to the school and students.

In addition, using school newsletters to “get messages out” about key pest plant and pest animal control issues were identified as another method to provide information.

4.8 GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

There were a range of comments received during the consultation about the SE NRM Board needing to “market better” in order to get pest plant and pest animal control messages across and motivate people to take action.

When reading this list of things that the SE NRM Board should be doing it should be considered in the broader context which has identified that a significant number of people who participated in the market research telephone survey and other consultation processes demonstrated a high level of awareness of pest plant and pest animal control issues and were already undertaking pest plant and pest animal control action.

A number of suggestions were made about what ‘marketing better’ might involve including:

- Identify a consistent message and stick to it: what do we most want to convey?
- “Scare tactics”: show people what will happen if they don’t take action
- Hit people in the hip pocket: provide information about the financial impacts of inaction
- Celebrate and recognise the success stories: publicise good news stories and use before and after photographs
- Use simple, jargon free language: Media releases, editorials, articles and any other printed communication materials must be easy to understand, free of jargon and bureaucratic speak



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- Don't rely on one method of communication: a range of processes are often needed and should include a variety of media e.g. electronic (email or web based), hard copy in the mail or made available, editorial articles in key publications, hands on demonstrations
- Get back to basics: Place more value on face to face communication and direct telephone calling
- Use technology: hand out mini CDs/USBs at field days containing pest plant and pest animal control information
- Use live weeds: at field days use live weeds to show people what they look like
- Appeal to kids: hand out picture cards of threatened species at field days and provide hands on demonstrations for kids too

It should be noted that communicating about pest plant and pest animal control issues is always going to be a challenge for the SE NRM Board given the often highly technical nature of the subject matter, and the difficulties people have understanding why they should do it and why it is relevant to them personally.

The market research telephone survey undertaken with rural and urban landholders provides some insight into people perceptions about a range of pest plant and pest animal control issues including information provision. However, in order to really understand what messages work best, how best to phrase and present information about pest plant and pest animal control and what information delivery methods will be the most successful, more focussed and intensive market research needs to be conducted by a communications and marketing expert and could include developing and pilot testing information materials and messages about pest plant and pest animal control issues with focus groups.



5 RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOUTH EAST PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The key messages from rural and urban landholders, Local Government, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and industry bodies summarised in sections 3 and 4 of this report have been distilled into a number of recommendations. These recommendations are addressed more specifically in the action plan contained in section 6 of this report.

- **Awareness raising**

There is a need for the SE NRM Board to market their message better in order to get pest plant and pest animal control messages across and motivate people to take action.

There is already a reasonably high level of awareness among rural landholders, and to a lesser extent the urban landholders, regarding their responsibilities to manage pest plant and pest animals on their land under the NRM Act 2004. This level of awareness provides a point of entry for communication with rural landholders and the wider community.

Any messages about legislative requirements should clearly articulate not only what is required but why. There is a widespread perception among many rural landholders and urban landholders that declared pests and priorities for action are not their priorities on their land. That is, it needs to be explained why some pests over others are considered a serious threat, when other pests may be more widespread and prevalent.

- **Getting urban landholders involved**

The high level of agreement that the urban landholders have a major role to play in pest control is encouraging however the challenge will be getting the wider community engaged and involved in pest plant and pest animal control. Other feedback received during the consultation processes has included that urban landholders “are not interested” and do not see how pest plant and pest animal control is relevant to them. Again, this emphasises the need for communication to be clear about why pest plant and pest animal control is important.

- **Taking appropriate action on the ground**

A fairly common theme identified by the consultation was that the ‘wrong’ species are being targeted by the SE NRM Board. For some people this is very frustrating as the species that they believe are really the issue are not being addressed. The consultation also identified that a significant number of rural landholders, and to a lesser extent urban landholders, are undertaking pest plant and pest animal control measures on their land.

Though the level of action that is being undertaken is good, it is also important that action is also undertaken to appropriately manage other pest species which are identified as key risks in the South East region as identified by the South East Pest Management Strategy and that these species are also on the ‘radar’ of landholders.

- **Maintaining enthusiasm and on ground efforts**

Many rural landholders and members of urban landholders have indicated that they are seeing success from their pest control activities, although a significant number

identified that nominated species were becoming a bigger problem in spite of their efforts. There is a need for much more communication about the successes; “people want to know that their efforts can pay off”.

Clearly one of the key barriers to pest plant and pest animal control is the relentless, ongoing nature of management activities and often not being able to see success despite significant investment of time, energy and money. Maintaining enthusiasm and efforts of landholders over time is one of the key challenges facing the SE NRM Board.

- **Sources of information and solutions**

The most commonly cited source that urban landholders use to seek information and solutions about pest issues is local Councils. This is consistent with feedback from urban landholders who consider local Councils to be responsible for pest plant and pest animal control.

The reliance on Councils for information reiterates the lack of awareness that Councils are no longer responsible for pest plant and pest animal control. It also emphasises the need for a close working relationship between the SE NRM Board, in particular the Authorised NRM Officers and operations team, and Council staff as well as a common approach to the delivery of key pest plant and animal control messages such as preferred management techniques.

Rural landholders seek information and solutions from a more diverse range of sources which emphasises the need for a variety of approaches for providing information and conveying management techniques to them. Key sources for rural landholders include journals, agronomists, supplier representatives and the SE NRM Board.

- **Format of information delivery**

Urban landholders prefer to receive information material and learn about pest plant and pest animal management via information brochures and via the internet on the SE NRM Board and other websites.

Rural landholders identify a range of methods including information brochures, field days, one on one with a SE NRM Board officer, via the internet on SE NRM Board and other websites and hands on demonstrations. Again the responses from rural landholders emphasises the need for a variety of approaches to information provision and communication.

When designing information delivery/education activities it is important to carefully consider aspects such as:

- The appropriate time of the day to hold the activity
- The length of time of sessions
- Be mindful of key seasonal primary production activities
- The location of such sessions
- People are time poor and therefore the SE NRM Board should not ask them to attend extra events/workshops etc but instead “piggyback” off existing events such as Field Days, service group meetings, school fetes etc.

- **Role of Authorised NRM Officers**

Currently there are 12 Authorised NRM Officers working in designated regions throughout the South East. The market research telephone survey and consultation clearly identified that these Authorised NRM Officers are considered an important resource and are critical to ongoing pest plant and pest animal control in the region.

The reasonably high level of awareness of Authorised NRM Officers and their role providing information and support is positive. The SE NRM Board needs to ensure that the Authorised NRM Officers are well utilised given that they operate at the “front line” and are for many landholders the only direct contact they have with the SE NRM Board and its operations. This may require providing additional training and support to ensure that Authorised NRM Officers have the capacity and skills to communicate the key SE NRM Board messages on a wide range of issues and subjects and not just those restricted to animal and plant control matters.

Important roles for Authorised NRM Officers includes the building of ongoing relationships with landholders, facilitating linkages between neighbouring landholders and providing support for more coordinated approaches to pest plant and pest animal control on neighbouring properties, providing regular information updates, participating in information provision campaigns and events such as field days, hands on demonstrations and giving out printed information at the local fodder store.

- **What people want from the SE NRM Board**

Much of the feedback regarding what the SE NRM Board could do differently to better support rural and urban landholders to undertake pest control measures is associated with the provision of information. People identified a desire to be:

- “kept up to date” with recent information about weed management techniques
- reminded about when they need to take action
- “directed by the SE NRM Board about what needs to be done”

It should be noted that many of the comments received during the consultation about what information landholders want from the SE NRM Board is consistent with information campaigns already undertaken by the SE NRM Board. The fact that people have raised these issues during the consultation should not be interpreted as the SE NRM Board not doing this well, but rather that it reinforces the importance people place on receiving this type of information from the SE NRM Board and that these types of information campaigns should continue. In addition, consideration should be given to utilising a wide range of information delivery methods given the diverse response to questions about how landholders prefer to receive information.

- **Don’t reinvent the wheel-use existing networks and structures where possible**

Where possible, the SE NRM Board should “tap into” existing networks and groups already operating in the South East when undertaking community engagement activities rather than holding separate events/activities.

- **Understand who and what is out there**

An inventory should be developed of all groups that may have a particular interest in pest plant and pest animal control. This inventory will help facilitate the ability to “tap into” existing groups and networks. Key information to be identified includes the name of the main contact for the group, when and where the group meets, and what its objectives are.

- **Take it to the people**

There is too much expectation placed on the urban landholders to go out of their way to attend a community engagement event (such as a workshop, public forum, meetings etc). Instead the SE NRM Board should take their message directly to the people by for example, setting up an information booth or similar in places that people are already going to be such as shopping centres, sporting events (particularly relevant in regional areas) and school events.

- **Establish a pest plant and pest animal network group**

To better communicate with some peak bodies/organisations in a more genuine and detailed way a pest plant and animal network group should be established. This group could represent a variety of interests such as peak industry bodies relevant to the region including SAFF, Forestry SA, PIRSA Forestry, the dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry and horticulture industry as well as representatives from key non-governmental organisations and Local Government.

With representation from peak bodies, this type of group could provide another opportunity to “tap into” existing groups and networks and utilise their consultation mechanisms to reach a wider audience.

- **Understand and work better with NGOs**

There is opportunity for the SE NRM Board to work better and more closely with a range of allied NGOs such as the CCSA and Trees For Life to achieve mutual benefits. This includes utilising their networks to distribute information as well as their skilled and trained volunteer workforce “on the ground”.

- **Understand and work with Local Government**

Given the significant community perception that local Councils are responsible for pest control, it is critical that the messages conveyed by Councils to the community about pest control issues and techniques are consistent with those identified by the SE NRM Board. There is also opportunity to utilise Councils better given their established links with the community and the community’s regard for Council’s as an “information hub”. One simple action includes linking Council and the SE NRM Board’s websites.

Other ways to establish better linkages with Council is via policy development processes such as the preparation of management plans for Council owned and managed land and via on ground works by parks and gardens (or similar) staff and the joint preparation of Fact Sheets and information materials.

The implementation of the SE NRM Board’s *Local Government NRM Engagement and Communication Strategy* will address most of these issues and is complimentary to the implementation of this Community Engagement Plan.

- **Involve young people**

There is more opportunity to inform and involve young people in pest control. To better facilitate the involvement of schools and young people in activities the following should be considered:

- Provide plenty of lead time so that activities can be well planned and publicised
- Provide financial assistance to pay for buses, teacher relief time and resources



- Use a multi phased approach to publicising events e.g. emails, flyers, telephone calls and face to face
- Provide clear concise information about what is involved and why it is important
- Develop information kits about the issue/proposed activities

School newsletters provide an important communication link with a wide range of people and could be utilised to communicate key pest plant and pest animal control activities/issues through the placement of short editorials on issues of the moment (e.g. its time to spray for...) or advertise community engagement events.



6 ACTION PLAN

This section of the report provides an action plan for community engagement to assist with the implementation of the South East Pest Management Strategy.

The action plan has been developed around five key goals that have been identified based on the consultation and synthesis and analysis of information summarised in the preceding sections of this report.

The five goals are:

1. Support the translation of awareness into action
2. Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives
3. Make it easier for people to understand the message
4. Work with all sectors to identify and address issues
5. Get young people involved in their future

The action plan identifies key community engagement initiatives that directly respond to the recommendations identified in section 5 of this report.

Goal 1: Support the translation of awareness into action			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Methods⁵
Work with landholders to increase their understanding about the priorities set for the eradication of pests in the region and explain how and why these priorities have been identified.	Action 1.2	Rural landholders	Fact sheets
	Action 1.4	Wider community	Information displays at South East Field Days and Threatened Species Day event
	Action 3.4	Local Government State government agencies Industry bodies (e.g. SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry)	Farm visits by Authorised NRM Officers Roadside signs alerting landholders to take action (similar to those used for bushfire prevention signs) Editorial articles in Stock Journal and From the Ground Up Sessions linked to existing events and activities Links to the SE NRM Board website from other websites such as Councils Hands on demonstrations Before and after photographs
Recognise the importance of Authorised NRM Officers by strengthening their capacity to facilitate pest plant and animal control activities.	Action 1.2	Authorised NRM Officers	Train and support Authorised NRM Officers to ensure they have the capacity and skills to communicate key pest control messages and develop strong working relationships with landholders (this includes negotiation and facilitation skills)
	Action 9.1	SE NRM Board	

⁵ The methods identified are suggestions, and there may be alternative ways of delivering the community engagement initiatives than those identified.

Goal 1: Support the translation of awareness into action			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Methods⁵
Authorised NRM Officers to build ongoing relationships with landholders and assist them to take on ground pest control action.	Action 1.2	Authorised NRM Officers	Authorised NRM Officers to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate linkages between neighbouring landholders and provide support for more coordinated approaches to pest plant and pest animal control on neighbouring properties Provide regular information updates via regular farm visits (e.g. twice annually) Respond to enquiries for information and identification of pests Participate in information provision campaigns and events such as field days, hands on demonstrations and giving out printed information at the local agricultural supplies/fodder store
	Action 1.4	Landholders	
	Action 3.4	Wider community	
Continue to provide education and hands on demonstration opportunities about key pest issues in the South East.	Action 3.4	Rural landholders Wider community Local Government State Government Agencies	Hands on demonstration workshops (e.g. rabbit control demonstration) Issues to consider when designing information delivery/education activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate time of the day to hold the activity

Goal 1: Support the translation of awareness into action			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Methods⁵
		Non government organisations Existing groups and networks Industry bodies (e.g. SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of time of sessions • Be mindful of key seasonal primary production activities • The location of such sessions • Is there opportunity to “piggyback” off existing events such as Field Days, service group meetings, school fetes etc.
Continue to educate and train relevant stakeholders in the recognition and response to key new weed incursions in the region	Action 7.5	As above	Alert Weeds Workshops
Continue to educate people about decontamination of machinery and equipment and equipment for weed hygiene purposes (for example).	Action 7.5	As above	Weed Stoppers training days
Develop links with agronomists and chemical suppliers and engage them in information dissemination and hands on demonstrations.		Landholders Agronomists Chemical suppliers	Hands on demonstration workshops Distribution of information materials

Goal 1: Support the translation of awareness into action			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Methods⁵
Continue to develop and provide printed information about key pest plant and pest animal issues.	Action 7.4	Rural landholders Wider community Local Government State Government Agencies Non government organisations Existing groups and networks Industry bodies (e.g. SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry)	User friendly, simple to read Fact Sheets on key pest plant and pest animal control issues. Seasonal pest control circulars such as Winter Weeds and Summer Weeds. Key information to be provided by communication materials includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date weed management techniques • Reminders about when to take action regarding particular pests • Directions about what needs to be done from a legislative perspective • Explanation of key terms and jargon such as “biosecurity” When preparing information materials (including plans and documents for consultation) the following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large documents are difficult for many to download over the internet and

Goal 1: Support the translation of awareness into action			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Methods⁵
			<p>therefore hard copies should be made available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large documents should be summarised into summary documents which have enough information to gain an understanding of the issue/s and provides details regarding where to access further information if desired
Work with Councils to use the existing profile of Local Government in relation to pest management to provide information and links to practical support.		<p>Rural landholders</p> <p>Wider community</p> <p>Existing groups and networks</p> <p>Non government organisations</p> <p>Local Government</p>	<p>Establish a navigation tab about pest plant and pest animal control on Council websites that identifies that the SE NRM Board is the relevant body for pest plant and pest animal control.</p> <p>Establish links between constituent Councils of South East region and SE NRM Board’s website.</p>

Goal 2: Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Develop an inventory of all groups in the region who have an interest in pest plant and pest animal control.		SE NRM Board, NRM Groups and staff Existing groups and networks	Database This database will help facilitate the ability to “tap into” existing groups and networks. Key information to be identified includes the name of the main contact for the group, when and where the group meets, and what its objectives are.
Establish methods to directly engage with NGOs such as Trees For Life and utilise their networks of contacts to distribute information.		Non-governmental organisations Landholders Wider community Bush for Life program Conservation Council of South Australia National and State Government funding programs	Combined presence at Field Days and agricultural shows Training programs supported by Bush for Life personnel Bush for Life sites established and monitored Working bees and hands on on-property workshops Identify communication channels that NGOs have established and utilise these to facilitate two way communication between the SE NRM Board, NGOs and their wider networks

Goal 2: Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Utilise where appropriate, existing networks and groups already operating in the South East rather than holding separate community engagement events/activities		SE NRM Board, NRM Groups and staff Existing groups and networks Wider community	“Piggy back” on an event rather than holding separate events/activities (e.g. service club meetings, Country Women’s Association, SELGA, South East Development SE NRM Board, sporting clubs/events etc)
Promote and increase awareness of the SE NRM Board’s role, approach to and activities regarding pest plant and pest animal control.		Existing groups and networks Non-governmental organisations Educational institutions Neighbouring NRM Boards/ Catchment Management Authorities Industry bodies (e.g. SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry)	Attend and present to relevant conferences, seminars, Vertebrate Pest Control training school, grower and industry groups within the region, community groups and other NRM Boards.
Continue to foster a working relationship with the South East Deer Advisory Committee.		SE NRM Board Deer Advisory Group	Receive and consider information provided by the Deer Advisory Committee.

Goal 2: Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Utilise the existing profile of Local Government to provide information and links to practical support to the wider community in relation to pest control.		Wider community	<p>Include editorials on SE NRM Board and Local Government jointly funded projects within Council newsletters and continue to communicate ongoing activities and /or campaigns of the SE NRM Board through Council newsletters.</p> <p>Continue to send out key NRM information (e.g. how to address weeds or pests) in Council rates notices.</p> <p><i>(taken from the SE NRM Board's Local Government NRM Engagement and Communication Strategy)</i></p>
Increase Local Government awareness and capacity regarding pest plant and pest animal control.		Local Government	<p>Facilitate NRM awareness sessions / workshops for LG Elected Members and Council staff regarding pest plant and pest animal issues.</p> <p>SE NRM Board officer to attend all SELGIG meetings and once a year brief the group on relevant policy and planning (including pest plant and pest animal control issues).</p> <p>Promote and conduct a number of “hands on” NRM workshops for Local</p>

Goal 2: Strengthen the links with those who share our objectives			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
			<p>Government staff (e.g. roadside vegetation, weed control on Council owned land etc).</p> <p>Develop a collective approach to emergency management on issues such as fire, flood, and pest plant and pest animal control (biosecurity).</p> <p>(taken from the SE NRM Board's <i>Local Government NRM Engagement and Communication Strategy</i>)</p>

Goal 3: Make it easier for people to understand the message			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Simplify the language used and avoid jargon where possible.		Wider community Rural landholders Local Government Non government Organisations Government agencies Industry bodies (e.g. SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry) Media outlets Agronomists Agricultural products suppliers NRM Groups SE NRM Board	Fact Sheets Face to face All SE NRM Board communications including website and media releases
Increase understanding and awareness of the term “biosecurity”.		As above	Regularly explain what “biosecurity” means and use the term consistently in all forms of communication (face to face, printed, media releases, text on SE NRM Board website etc)

Goal 3: Make it easier for people to understand the message			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Review current SE NRM Board information/ communication materials to better understand how to present pest plant and pest animal control messages.	Action 7.4	As above	Engage a communications and marketing expert to undertake more focussed and intensive market research (for example via focus groups) to understand the messages people are receiving from current SE NRM Board information materials, what messages work best and how best to phrase and present information about pest plant and pest animal control.
Take information and programs to the people at times and in places that are convenient for them.		As above	Information booths at shopping centres, sporting events, school events, show and field days One on one and small group discussions before or after other events/workshops Establish roadside signs alerting landholders to take action (similar to those used for bushfire prevention signs)

Goal 3: Make it easier for people to understand the message

Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
<p>Use a wide range of communication tools to reach a broad cross section of the community.</p>		<p>As above</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed, hard copy information • Face to face contact via Authorised NRM Officers, NRM Groups and other SE NRM Board staff • Media such as ABC radio, regional newspapers and the Stock Journal • SE NRM Board website and other NRM related websites • School newsletters • Direct email and direct phone calling • Workshops • Hands on demonstrations • Farm visits • Information booths • Field days <p>Refer Tools and Tasks Matrix in section 7 of this report to help determine what community engagement techniques and tools should be designed and implemented.</p>

Goal 3: Make it easier for people to understand the message			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Continue to promote pest plant and pest animal issues and events through the media. Emphasis of information should be on “good news” and “success” stories where possible.	Action 7.7	As above	Articles in Regional and State newspapers, regional TV and radio and local community newsletters and school newsletters Editorial articles in Stock Journal and From the Ground Up
Continue to field public enquiries relating to weed identification and provide control advice.	Action 7.6	As above	Authorised NRM Officers

Goal 4: Work with all sectors to identify and address the issues			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Investigate establishing a Round Table for peak industry bodies with an interest in managing pest plant and pest animals.		Local Government Non-governmental organisations State Government agencies Peak industry bodies	Develop Terms of reference, call for nominations and establish group This group should be called something that people can identify with such as “Pest Eradication South East” (PESE) or “Pest Eradication Round Table” (PERT) Provide ongoing support for regular quarterly or six monthly meetings Suggested members include representatives of peak industry bodies such as SAFF, Forestry SA, dairy industry, irrigators, wine industry, horticulture industry, Local Government, key non-governmental organisations and State Government agencies
Continue to host tours of the region to view pest plant and pest animal control issues.		NRM Committee of Parliament, Minister for Environment and Conservation, NRM Groups and neighbouring NRM Boards	Hosted tour of the region

Goal 5: Get young people involved in their future			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Continue to use programs that communicate with and engage young people in NRM activities such as Weed Warriors.	Action 7.2	Junior Youth Forum Senior Youth Conference Weed Warriors program South East Environmental Educators Group School principals and teachers School communities Students Young people Schools, TAFE and other training providers Youth organisations Existing NRM focussed youth and school programs	Presentation/participation at Junior Youth Forum and Senior Youth Conference Curriculum material Weed Warriors Program Weed Busters Week Planet Ark National Tree Day Liaising with teachers and other educators Membership of/ongoing connection with the South East Environmental Educators Group School newsletters
Maintain connections with the South East Environmental Educators group.	Action 7.3	Educators Students School communities	SE NRM Board staff representation on South East Environmental Educators group.

Goal 5: Get young people involved in their future			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
Develop a framework for working with teachers in schools that supports their timely and effective participation.	Action 7.3		Framework should address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to provide plenty of lead time so that activities can be well planned and publicised • Consider ways to provide financial assistance to pay for buses, teacher relief time and resources • The need to use a multi phased approach to publicising events e.g. emails, flyers, telephone calls and face to face • Provide clear concise information about what is involved and why it is important so that schools can undertake necessary paperwork/approvals process to participate • Develop information kits about the issue/proposed activities
Utilise school newsletters as a communication tool.		Wider community	Prepare and place small articles/advertisements in school newsletters to communicate

Goal 5: Get young people involved in their future			
Community engagement Initiative	Link to South East Pest Management Strategy	Target Audience	Method
		Rural landholders School community	newsletters to communicate upcoming community engagement activities and key pest plant and pest animal issues of the moment (e.g. its time to spray for)

7 TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

One of the key challenges of any organisation like the SE NRM Board that undertakes community engagement processes is determining what level of communication and/or engagement is required. It is therefore useful to have a decision making framework that can assist SE NRM Board staff to understand what needs to be done when.

Table 1 can be used to help determine what community engagement techniques and tools should be designed and implemented.

SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION			Providing Information	Maintaining Awareness/ Updating Information	Identify Concerns and Issues	Develop Objectives/ Visions	Development Options	Test Ideas Prioritise Options	Build Relationships and Involvement	Potential for Consensus/ Agreement	Potential to Reach Large Numbers	Suitable for People who Don't Readily Participate	Suitable for Small Groups/ Individual Contact	Obtaining Input into Decision Making	Make Decisions	Satisfy Statutory Requirements
		INFORM	Advertisement / Media	✓	✓							✓				
		Letter / Phone Call / Door Knock	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓			
		Newsletter/Brochure	✓	✓							✓					
		Internet	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓		✓		
		Signs / Maps / Models	✓	✓							✓					
		Public Display / Exhibition	✓					✓			✓	✓		✓		✓
	INVOLVE	Meetings with Key Individuals	✓	✓	✓				✓				✓			
		Submissions			✓							✓	✓	✓		✓
		Telephone Hotline	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓		
		Surveys			✓				✓			✓	✓	✓		
		Presentations to Existing Groups	✓		✓								✓			
		Local Community Group Meetings	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓			
		Public Meetings	✓		✓							✓		✓		✓
	CONSULT	Search Conference	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓				✓		
		Workshops	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		
		Value Management Workshop	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		
		Seminar / Forum	✓	✓	✓							✓				
		Participatory Design Exercise	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
		Community Event	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
		Open Day Information Session	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓		
	COLLABORATE	Consultative Committee	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
		Community Forum / Precinct Committee	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
		Advisory / Reference Group	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		
	EMPOWER	Steering / Management Committee	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓	✓	
		SE NRM Board / Authority	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Tools and Tasks Matrix (as adapted by URPS from Vic Roads Consultation Guide)

8 ONGOING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is important that the implementation of the Community Engagement Plan is evaluated in order to assist with ongoing improvement of engagement processes associated with pest plant and pest animal control as well as inform other engagement processes undertaken by the SE NRM Board.

The market research telephone survey provides a range of benchmarking information that can contribute to the measurement of key performance indicators (KPIs) already used by the SE NRM Board as well as to inform the development of new KPIs. The market research telephone survey that was undertaken to inform the preparation of this Community Engagement Plan was designed to be replicated in the future. Once replicated the survey can enable observations of changes that occur (or not) over time in landholder and community perceptions about pest plant and pest animal control. It is recommended that a subsequent market research telephone survey be undertaken in 5 years and the results compared with the initial survey.

Actual community engagement activities themselves should also be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are “hitting the mark” and delivering the outcomes they intend to deliver.

One way of evaluating a workshop, public forum or hands on session is to ask participants to complete a simple feedback form (refer **Appendix C** for one example of a feedback form). This form can seek information about:

- The way in which the activity was conducted (i.e. was it easy to understand, was the timing/venue appropriate)
- The style of the presenters/facilitators (i.e. were they engaging, interesting, respectful etc)
- The relevancy of the engagement activity to their organisational role/interest in the issue at hand

Information provision and education play a key role in pest plant and pest animal management, and this Plan provides some guidance regarding the key elements which should be considered in preparing information materials.

Feedback should be sought from the target audience of the various information materials developed and distributed to understand how effective they have been in communicating “the message” and generally evaluate their “success” or otherwise. Comments received by the consultation for this project were not consistent in terms of the preferred format or source of information and therefore various forms and methods will need to be utilised by the SE NRM Board. This type of evaluation will be useful to better understand what works well and with what target audience.



9 APPENDICES



APPENDIX A



**TRUSCOTT
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**SOUTH EAST NATURAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

COMMUNITY SURVEY

RESEARCH REPORT

July 2009

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TRUSCOTT RESEARCH



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Community members in the SENRM Board area were randomly selected to take part in this telephone survey:
 - 375 residents
 - 408 landholders.
- When asked to say who is **primarily responsible for controlling pest plants and animals in the South East**, the leading response for land holders was individual landholders [56%]. The general public was more likely to nominate local councils [45%].
- Almost all [97%] land holders were aware that under the Natural Resources Management Act, **landholders are responsible for pest plant and animal control on their land**. Awareness was also high among the general public [87%].
- When land holders asked to indicate **how important an issue pest plant and animal control** is in the South East, 86% gave a rating of at least 8/10 and this includes 39% who gave a 10/10 rating.
- Rabbits was clearly seen as the **number one pest species**, closely followed by foxes. Ranking third was 'other plants' not on the original NRM Board list [horehound, salvation jane, thistles etc].
- 94% of land holders and 41% of the general public indicated they were **aware of pest plant and animal control issues on their land**. Major responses for land holders were rabbits and foxes [cited by 24% and 22% respectively] and then the 'other plants' [17%]. There were variations by sub region.
- These 'other plants', rabbits and foxes were often specified by the land holder segment [32%, 27% and 23% respectively] as species they had tried to eradicate or control in the past 12 months.



-
- Almost all land holder respondents [97%] and half of the general public sample [49%] indicated that they had **taken action to eradicate or control plant and animal pests** in the preceding 12 months.
 - The average amount spent by land holders in the last 12 months was \$5890 and the average time expended was 143 hours.
 - 85% nominated species where they perceived their activities as being successful. However, 45% nominated species that were becoming a bigger problem in spite of their efforts.
 - The species that were prominent in the 'successful' list were rabbits and foxes [21% and 18% respectively]. These also headed the 'unsuccessful list [8% and 5% respectively].
 - Again, 'other plants' were also a significant response, with 36% reporting some success with one or more of these species and 21% reporting failures.
 - Relatively few were able to suggest **something the NRM Board could do** that would make it easier for [them] to do more in this area. Suggestions made by at least 5% of land holders were as follows:

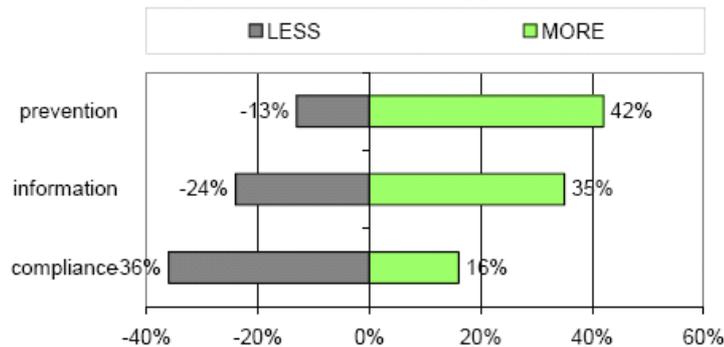
▪ more effort on roadside weeds	8%
▪ advice on techniques/products	6%
▪ research & development - biological controls, new rabbit viruses	6%
▪ pay for spraying / treatment on own land	5%
 - One land holder in three supported the idea of a **voluntary vendor declaration system**.



- For the general public, the source most often cited for **information** on plant and animal pest issues was local councils – 27%.
- The response from land holders was more diverse, with 14% saying journals, 13% saying agronomists, 12% saying supplier reps and 11% citing the NRM Board.
- Various internet sources were also mentioned – including NRM and PIRSA sites which were named by 9% of land holders and 12% of the general public.
- When asked about **sources of solutions on plant and animal control issues**, the general public response was again dominated by local councils [28%].
- The leading responses for land holders were agronomists and supplier reps [20% and 18% respectively].
- 13% nominated the NRM Board, with no other double digit response.
- 8% mentioned the NRM and PIRSA websites.
- When asked about their **preferred media** for such material, general public respondents had two clear favourites – information brochures and via internet on NRM Board and other websites
- Among the land holder sample, it was not so clear cut: information brochures and field days were preferred a little ahead of one on one with Board officer and via internet on Board and other websites which in turn were a little ahead of hands on demonstration.
- Three quarters of land holders and half of the general public sample indicated they were **aware of at least one of the NRM Boards information campaigns** when prompted. Individual campaigns had recall levels of around 10% or less. Awareness was highest in the central sub region and lowest in the south.
- 20% of land holders and 11% of the general public sample had seen any of the campaigns **and taken action as a result**.

- 58% of land holder respondents and 45% of the general public claimed to be aware that the Board **has technical staff who can come out to your property and advise on pest management**.
- 42% of all of the land holders participating in the survey claimed to have **had this contact**.
- Both awareness and actual contact were highest among northern landholders [65% aware, 56% had contact].
- Respondents were asked to give **a rating for how useful they found this contact** on a scale of 0 to 10. 71% gave a rating of 8/10 or better, with 11% giving a rating in the lower portion of the scale [1 to 5]. The mean score was 8.0.
- A pair of questions was devised to look at the balance between **information, compliance and prevention**. This revealed a desire for increased emphasis on prevention and decreased emphasis on compliance. The information function had a net positive result.

WHAT SHOULD BE GIVEN MORE / LESS EMPHASIS?



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- Land holders were asked to say if there is **anything the Board should be doing differently** to give land holders more help in dealing with plant and animal pests. Half offered suggestions. The top three concerned ...
 - information and communication 12%
 - be more hands on/less red tape 8%
 - more enforcement 8%

 - 61% of land holders said they would **be likely to attend a field day or demonstration day** about pest management, with 17% very likely.

 - 92% of each sample were in agreement that the **general public has a major role to play in combating the spread of invasive species of plants and animals** in the South East.

 - 93% of land holders and 73% of general public respondents indicated that they would **prefer to get involved** in one or more of these ways:
 - 59% of land holders and 32% of the general public said they would prefer to get involved by undertaking action on their own land.
 - learning more was the preferred option for 28% of land holders and 30% of general public respondents
 - A relatively small proportion [6% of land holders and 11% of general public respondents] expressed a preference for becoming a member of a volunteer.



APPENDIX B

Alexandrina Council Rural Areas Strategy Appendices

INITIAL APPROACH

It is recommended that Council approach representatives of those organisations who participated in the rural areas review and invite them to an initial meeting to :

- Agree to establish ASART
- Confirm Terms of Reference for its operations (draft provided below)
- Discuss the findings of the Rural Areas Review and Identify priority actions for ASART to be involved in.
- Identify the resources available to support ASART in its role.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Alexandrina Sustainable Agriculture Round Table (ASART).

Purpose : ASART has been established to provide constructive input and advice to the Alexandrina Council in its commitment to develop policies and plans that support a viable future for farming and to work as partner with Council in advocating on behalf of primary producers to other spheres of Government, service providers and regional organisations.

The key roles of ASART are as follows:

- 1 To provide constructive input and advice to the Alexandrina Council regarding implementation of Actions contained within the Rural Areas Review.
- 2 In providing input to the members of ASART agree that:
 - (a) their involvement will be limited to acting as a point of reference and providing advice to Council;
 - (b) the Council will be the ultimate decision maker.
- 3 To act as a resource to Council elected members and staff by providing available and appropriate information and enabling follow up on issues.
- 4 To report back to the organisations or interests you represent and seek their responses in an appropriate manner at key stages.
- 5 Members of ASART will not make direct contact with the media with respect to the details of matters discussed by the Round Table. All media enquiries in relation to matters associated with the project will be channelled through Mr John Coombe, CEO, The Alexandrina Council.
- 6 Members of the Round Table will listen to each other with respect and work constructively to resolve conflicts, should these occur.
- 7 Members will declare a conflict of interest should any proposal be likely to result in a financial or material benefit for them, their family or the organisation they represent.



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Members declaring a conflict of interest will be asked to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion on that particular matter.

- 8 Matters presented as confidential will be dealt with in confidence.
- 9 Information will be provided in a timely manner, ie at least five working days before meetings to assist in undertaking the tasks required.

Members are responsible for:

- attending all scheduled meetings of the ASART or arranging for their nominated proxy (see below) to be briefed and provided with all relevant materials;
- responding to written communication within the nominated time period, or providing notice, in advance, of their inability to do so;
- providing input from their perspective on matters under discussion while identifying the need to seek further input from the organisation they represent.

Reporting

The Round Table will be supported by the Council's Planning Manager, who will provide regular reports to Council on behalf of ASART.

Method of Operation

ASART will meet at least three times a year.

Meetings will be held in the evenings between 7.30 and 10.00 pm at a mutually convenient location.

A schedule of meetings will be developed at the first meeting to enable people to make the necessary commitment to attend. Meeting dates will not be changed without the agreement of the majority of Round Table Members.

Membership

The following organisations and industry sectors will be invited to **nominate** one (1) representative and one (1) proxy to attend meetings when the representatives are unable to do so:

- SAFF;
- Fleurieu Beef Group;
- Dairy Farmers;
- Agricultural Bureau;
- Farm based tourism businesses;



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- Horticulture;
- Grapegrowing and wine making;
- Horse Industry;
- Fishing and Aquaculture;
- Forestry.

ASART will be chaired by the Mayor the The Alexandrina Council or his nominee. It will be supported by an Executive Officer, being a staff member of The Alexandrina Council.



APPENDIX C

Feedback Sheet

Please record any additional comments you feel are relevant to the preparation of the **insert title of project, strategy etc** that were not expressed/articulated at the workshop.

Please circle the answer that most accurately describes your experience of today's workshop.

Q1. Did you find this workshop relevant to your role in **insert where participants are from eg Local Government?**

Very Average Not Relevant

Comments _____

Q2. Was the material/information presented easy to understand and follow?

Yes No

Comments _____

Q3. Overall, the presentation style of the presenter was:

Excellent Good Average Poor

Comments _____

Your contact details

Name _____ Position _____

Council _____ Email _____

Telephone _____

Please return this feedback form to **insert contact name** before leaving the workshop or alternatively Fax it to **insert fax number** or post to **insert mailing address** or Email: **insert email address**