



Natural Resource Management Reform

Catchment Management Authorities – their role in delivering the reform program

Natural resource management in New South Wales will undergo historic change following the recommendations of the Native Vegetation Reform Implementation Group chaired by Ian Sinclair. The group was appointed by the Premier, Bob Carr to ensure a solid foundation for better management of our native vegetation and protection of our natural resources while minimising restrictions to farming activities.

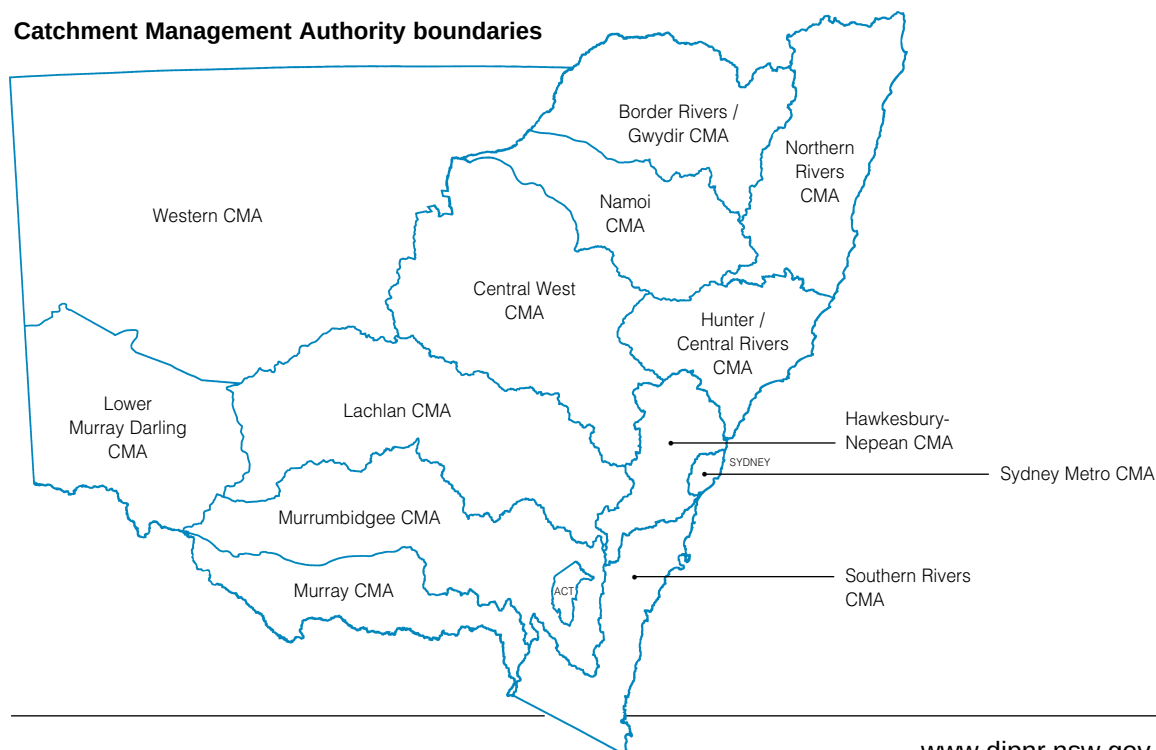
A key component of the reform program is the establishment of **Catchment Management Authorities** (CMAs). From January 2004, CMAs will be formally constituted as statutory authorities with a responsible and accountable board. CMA boards will report directly to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Natural Resources.

How many CMAS are there?

Thirteen CMAs will be established:

- Border Rivers/Gwydir CMA
- Central West CMA
- Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA
- Hunter/Central Rivers CMA
- Lachlan CMA
- Lower Murray Darling CMA
- Murray CMA
- Western CMA
- Murrumbidgee CMA
- Namoi CMA
- Northern Rivers CMA
- Southern Rivers CMA
- Sydney Metro CMA.

Catchment Management Authority boundaries



What will the CMAs do?

The CMAs will engage regional communities in the key natural resource management issues facing their catchment. Specific functions will include:

- preparing catchment action plans and associated investment strategies, in consultation with local government and the catchment's communities;
- ensuring these catchment action plans integrate and build on the current catchment blueprints and regional vegetation management plans;
- recommending and managing incentive programs to implement catchment action plans and maximise environmental outcomes;
- providing landholders, including indigenous landholders, with access to data needed to prepare Property Vegetation Plans (PVPs) and implement catchment action plans;
- allocating funds to support development of PVPs and for PVP-based incentive programs;
- certifying or facilitating certification of PVPs;
- monitoring performance against catchment action plans and certified PVPs;
- providing education and training on natural resource management, especially vegetation management;
- developing transparent procedures for the CMA to consider and resolve local disputes related to implementing the catchment action plans; and
- any other responsibilities delegated by the Minister.

Following a review and streamlining of existing regulatory processes, the powers to assess clearing applications and make consent decisions for on-farm activities, will be devolved to CMAs in 2005.

How will the CMAs be established?

Responsibilities will be allocated to CMAs in stages to allow sufficient time for them to build capacity. A State Establishment Team has been formed to develop the structure and guidelines for CMAs to function and to oversee the work of the Local Establishment Teams (LETs) in preparing Catchment Action Plans.

The CMA board, consisting of an independent chair and board members, will be selected through an open and public recruitment process and appointed by the Minister.

Staffing for the CMAs will be drawn from a pool of existing Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) employees. DIPNR will provide corporate support services under service level agreements to the CMAs.

What will happen to existing management committees?

The LETs will consult with Regional Vegetation Committees and Catchment Management Boards to integrate the existing regional vegetation management plans and catchment blueprints into the catchment action plans.

Water Management Committees will continue until mid 2004, and in consultation with the CMAs, will undertake any amendments to the Water Sharing Plans needed to give effect to the Water Reforms. The committees will stop operating in July 2004.

What funding will be available?

Over \$406.3 million will be allocated directly to the CMAs from the reformed National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust grant processes. The Government will also ensure that the \$120 million committed to native vegetation reforms over the next four years will be distributed through CMAs and targeted to on-farm incentives, removing the bureaucracy and red tape associated with the funding process to date.

For more information

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