

# Victorian Catchment Management Council

## Catchment Knowledge Exchange

### *Fact Sheet 1: Introduction to the project*

#### Background

The National Action Plan (NAP) for Salinity and Water Quality is funding a three year Knowledge Management Business Plan and Knowledge Broker Trial Project, known as the Catchment Knowledge Exchange.

The Victorian Catchment Management Council (VCMC) is managing the project on behalf of NAP. EWR have been engaged to undertake the project.

VCMC has a particular interest in knowledge management as a result of its duties under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, but also in working towards its vision for catchment management in Victoria. Knowledge generation, synthesis and exchange are fundamental aspects of managing the future sustainability of natural resources, particularly healthy ecosystems<sup>1</sup>.

#### Project objectives

The primary objectives of the project are to:

1. Build a business case for knowledge brokering services that is evidence based and supported by Victoria's Catchment Management Framework
2. Design, implement and test a Soil Knowledge Broker service that provides a generic model for other natural resource management themes
3. Provide a generic blue-print in order to facilitate the ongoing, effective and efficient use of catchment knowledge across Victoria

#### Project overview

A business case will be developed to support the strategic need for improved knowledge management, based on sound evidence. The business case will take knowledge management and brokering in the catchment framework beyond the life of this project.

Knowledge is essential for natural resource management decision making. Knowledge needs are met through a number of mechanisms such as R&D, monitoring and evaluation, extension, and the interpretation and analysis of existing information. The project will develop processes and mechanisms to provide timely and relevant information and knowledge to support those making natural resource management decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Catchment Management Council (2002) *The health of our catchments: a Victorian Report card 2002*. The State of Victoria.

Knowledge brokering is the human force behind knowledge exchange, transfer, synthesis, and the forming of collaborations, networks, and partnerships. This role provides a robust connection between policy, research, extension, and catchment management. During the project:

- learnings from situations where knowledge brokers have been used successfully and where similar current initiatives could be built on will be investigated;
- methods of testing the benefit of using knowledge brokers will be considered;
- strengths and limitations of the knowledge broker will be evaluated and documented;
- alternatives to the knowledge broker model in facilitation of knowledge flows will be considered; and
- a preferred generic NRM knowledge broker operational plan will be developed outlining brokering processes, including measures and indicators of outcomes.

The project focuses on soil health as a trial discipline area to test, evaluate and inform the knowledge brokering operational plan. A soil health reference group will be established to support this trial and to provide specialist input into a soil health theme report. An interactive web application including a searchable database for the soil health theme is planned. The generic operational plan will then be further refined through evaluation in the area of ecosystem services.

### **Who is involved?**

The primary audience of this project are members of the Catchment Management Framework, including DSE, DPI, VCMC and the CMAs.

A Project Management Group (PMG) has been appointed to work closely with the VCMC project manager and the consulting team. The PMG consists of members from VCMC, DSE, DPI, and CMAs. The Natural Resource Knowledge Management Committee will also provide a steering committee role to the project.

### **What are the intended outcomes?**

- A business case for the further development and implementation of knowledge brokers in the Victorian Catchment Framework.
- A thorough understanding of knowledge assets in NRM in Victoria, including people, information systems and key datasets, particularly in the soil health field.



- Knowledge brokers operating with measurable benefits to researchers, policy makers, catchment managers, and extension staff in Victorian natural resource management.

### Project stages

| Stages   | Outputs  |
|--|--|
| Business case development  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic business case for improved knowledge management in the catchment framework</li> </ul>                                     |
| Knowledge brokering in Victoria                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Operational plan for knowledge brokers</li> <li>▪ Supported and functional networks of existing knowledge brokers</li> </ul>        |
| Soil health knowledge broker service trial                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soil health reference group</li> <li>▪ Soil health theme report</li> <li>▪ Knowledge priorities in the soil health field</li> </ul> |
| Evaluation of the knowledge broker service and generic application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation report of the soil health knowledge broker service</li> <li>▪ Ecosystem services workshop and theme report</li> </ul>    |

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