



Feb - April 2006

Establishing a Commercially Successful Oil Mallee Industry

A partnership between the Central and Midwest Oil Mallee Regions, Kalannie Distillers and YYCMG (Inc.) has been successful in obtaining funding from the National Action Plan for salinity and water quality. The National Action Plan is a 50/50 state and commonwealth government initiative and is administered by the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council's (NACC) as part of Investment Plan 1.

The project will develop incentives to revegetate by establishing a commercially successful oil mallee industry and will run over 3 years with \$232,500 secured for the first year.



Funding in the first year will subsidise 200,000 oil mallee seedlings, return older mallee plantings to harvestable plantations by cutting large trees to mulch, and modify existing harvesting and distilling machinery to improve efficiencies.

There has been much interest from growers in the region's 100km radius from Kalannie and Canna, with the 1st year seedling subsidy program being oversubscribed.

Mulching of existing oil mallee stands by a contractor is set to start after Easter. More growers are invited to consider this option on their existing mallees that are too large to harvest.

The first stage of modifications on the Kalannie Distillers' harvester is nearing completion with preliminary commissioning trials proving to be very promising. First distillation trials are due to commence after Easter, with full oil

production expecting to resume after seeding.

Look out in local press for field days to be held this year to demonstrate harvesting process and cutting to mulch of existing large plantings.



Growers are welcome to contact Project Coordinator Jo Ashworth, 9666 1033, to discuss subsidies for mulching of existing stands to bring back into oil production, seedling subsidies over the next 2 years, and existing plantings suitable for harvesting.

An Evaluation of Engineering Options for Salinity in the Yarra Yarra Catch-

GHD Pty Ltd, are conducting a Yarra Yarra Catchment Regional Drainage and Water Management Evaluation project managed by the Department of Water (DoW). The project is part of DoW's Wheatbelt Drainage Evaluation Program established through funding from the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality (jointly funded by State and Commonwealth Governments).

The objective of this study is to define and evaluate engineering options for salinity and surface water management in the Yarra Yarra Catchment.

The study will characterise the catchment to form a baseline against which to measure and compare outcomes of the engineering op-

tions evaluated. This will involve reviewing available information, site visits and simulated computer model scenarios (pre-European, existing conditions, maximum salinity and climate change).

The study will select water management engineering options for evaluation and analyse the suitability of those options for application within the Yarra Yarra Catchment.

On the 12th of April GHD held their first stakeholder consultation meeting at Dalwallinu to update landholders and community members on the project's progress and present options for preliminary analysis. The options selected for preliminary evaluation and analysis outlined at the meeting were:

- Main deep drainage
- Main shallow drainage/ Existing valley drainage
- Groundwater pumping, off site disposal
- Deep Drainage with near insitu disposal
- Alternative farming systems / vegetation
- Do Nothing

For more information please contact Robin Connolly, GHD Principal Hydrologist-6222 8222 or Ken McIntosh, Department of Water: 6364 6646. A second Stakeholder meeting will be held in Kalannie or Perenjori in late June or early July.

REPORT ON MEETINGS TO ESTABLISH AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CATCHMENT STAKE HOLDERS IN THE MAIN CATCHMENT BASINS OF THE WHEATBELT OF W.A. written by Max Hudson

In early October 2005 relevant landholders were contacted to assess the interest in developing an alliance between the major drainage regions of the Wheat belt. Namely – Mortlock, Lockhart, Yilgarn, Dumbleyung, Salt River and Yarra Yarra.

The Alliance would act as a strong lobby group to access funds to develop regional drainage plans for Wheat Belt Catchments. Public meetings were held to gain support for this initiative.

Background

In a joint funding initiative the State and Federal Governments have committed \$316,000,000 for projects designed to reduce salinity and protect water quality in Western Australia. A significant amount of this funding has already been allocated to various Land Care projects in NRM regions. However, no significant funds have been allocated to meaningful projects to address salinity in the wheatbelt.

Considering 80% of the total funds (\$316,000,000) were originally earmarked for large integrated catchment salinity projects (Statement by John Holly NRM secretariat boss AGWA 2003) we are concerned that a significant amount of the funding has been misdirected to small biodiversity based projects.

The Meetings

During October 2005 public meetings were held at Merredin, Corrigin and Dowerin to promote the forming of an Alliance between stake holders in Regional Catchments in the Wheat Belt. At each meeting a resolution was passed to form The Wheatbelt Catchment Alliance of W.A. (WCA) and two delegates were

elected to represent each of those Regions where the meetings were held. Other established groups i.e. Dumbleyung, Yarra Yarra and Salt River passed similar resolutions at their own general meetings.

An inaugural meeting of delegates held at Quairading on the 24th of October established a constitution, elected office bearers and passed some important pending resolutions.

Outcomes

As an immediate result of forming the Catchment Alliance representatives were invited to meet with the Joint State and Federal Steering Committee for NRM (JSC) to negotiate a better deal for regional catchment initiatives such as the one developed by the Yarra Yarra Group.

The outcome of these discussions was that the Yarra Yarra Group was invited by the Joint Chairs, Kelly Pearce (Federal representative) and David Hartley (State executive director of Natural Resources) to develop a proposal to access \$2,600,000 of Government funds over two years to develop the first stage of their regional drainage initiative.

Two representatives one from the State and one from the Commonwealth NRM bodies provided assistance for Yarra Yarra to develop their proposal.

During the compiling of the project it was revealed that NACC had included a substantial amount of this funding in an interim budget for Stage 2 of their Investment Plan.

To build on this strategy on a cross regional basis the other five Regional Catchments (Lockhart, Mortlock, Yilgarn, Dumbleyung and Salt River) will need to access funds to conduct an assessment of the landscape so that an acceptable plan can be developed to carry out the necessary on ground works for these

Regional Catchments

The Bottom line is that unless landholders take the initiative then nothing will be done

As a precursor to the Yarra Yarra project plan being funded exhaustive investigations had to be done to reassure Government agencies (who are protecting the public interest) that these plans would produce satisfactory outcomes with little risk to the environment.

At a meeting of Wheatbelt Catchment Alliance Committee on Monday 27th Feb 06, David Hartley Executive Director of Agricultural Resources pledged to provide funds for a consultant to prepare the necessary application to finance an investigation of the valley floors of the Lockhart, Yilgarn, Mortlock and Dumbleyung Catchments to determine what actions need to take place to address drainage problems in each of these Regional Catchments.

Until this investigatory work has been done Government Agencies have made it quite clear there is no way funds will be approved to do any earth works.

Once adequate funds have been assured then the Shire Councils in each Catchment Region will be approached to suggest the formation of Regional Councils of Local Government to oversee the development of these projects.

Yarra Yarra already have developed a working model that has been accepted by the system which could be applied in other catchments.

Are you planning of sowing lucerne this year?

Lucerne or alfalfa provides a multi beneficial opportunity for mixed farming enterprises in the northern agricultural region. Lucerne is a deep rooted perennial legume which compliments annual pasture production by using excess water in the soil profile for out of season pasture production. A lucerne pasture phase adds value to animal and crop production in the following ways:

The high water use of lucerne reduces rising watertable and associated waterlogging and salinity enabling farmers to reclaim and continue farming land. Deep rooted access to water enable the production of a more stable protein rich feed supply throughout the year for animal production. A lucerne phase also offers an alternative weed cleaning and herbicide resistant weed control rotation for frequent croppers with the added benefits of improved soil fertility and structure for subsequent crops.

Contact us if you are thinking of growing lucerne in 2006 and would like some on farm advice on paddock preparation and establishment.

Contact Soheila Mokhtari on 9821 3251



EXCITING OPPORTUNITY! ***YYCMG is advertising for a*** ***Natural Resource Management Officer***

Position involves working with landholders and local community groups to deliver land use management changes at property and sub-regional levels. Degree in Environmental Science, Natural Resource Management or similar an advantage, database and GIS skills preferable. Previous experience in a related field is desirable.

Full time position based in Perenjori. Applications close 5pm 5th May 2006.

For job description and selection criteria:
www.yarrayarracatchment.asn.au or email
yycmg_lisa@westnet.com.au

Enquiries: Chris King (Chairperson) ph 9973 4042 or
Lisa Pocock (Database Manager) 9666 2140

Do YOU Want Assistance with Investigating Management Options for Salty Land???

The Liebe Group in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture WA has been successful in obtaining funding from the National Landcare Program for a project entitled "Agronomic package and benchmarking for mildly or periodically saline land allowing for viable pasture and cropping options."

What a mouthful!!! - What it actually means is that it allows a development officer to be employed at Three Springs DAWA office to work with farmers in the Liebe Group, Morawa Farm Improvement Group and Yarra Yarra Catchment.

The project aims to work with farmers to investigate management or amelioration options for the moderately or periodically saline part of the landscape. This may include investigating annual and perennial pasture or crop varieties, soil structure amelioration (ie gypsum for sodic soils) and/or ice-plant control.



The project aims to work with 30 sites across the three involved groups. Each of the sites will be benchmarked so that initial soil conditions, especially salinity can be measured and kept on record. The main aim of the project is for farmers to be able to gain some production from land that may be fenced off due to salinity but may only be moderately affected.

Lorinda Hunt is the Project Officer at Three Springs and she can be contacted on 99543344 or 0428998624. Alternatively you can call Brianna Peake at the Liebe office on 96642030 or 0408958803. Please feel free to call either Lorinda or Brianna if you would like to be involved with this project.

YYCMG Calendar

YYCMG Meetings

Next meeting is on: 27th April

Perenjori Office: yycmg@westnet.com.au

PO Box 124

Perenjori WA 6620

Phone: (08) 9973 1425 Fax (08) 9973 1421

Kalannie Office:

yycmg_kalannie@westnet.com.au

PO Box 14

Kalannie WA 6468

Phone (08) 9666 2140 Fax (08) 9666 2130

Farm Water Grants

Grants up to \$15,000 are available to provide reliable farm water supply for in house use, homestead gardens, crop spray, livestock drinking and other on-farm requirements; optimise water resource utilisation on your farm; manage excess water that may lead to soil erosion, waterlogging, flooding and salinity.

www.wrc.wa.gov.au/owr

The Yarra Yarra Group is a professional incorporated Catchment Management Group formed in 1997 by community members who wished to enhance the economic environmental and social well being of the Yarra Yarra Catchment Basin. The Yarra Yarra Basin is one of four Natural Resource Management Sub-Regions in the Northern Agricultural Region.

Goodbye from Cindy:

Thankyou to everyone who has provided support and advice during my 2 years as a NRMO for YYCMG. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities and challenges the role presented and look forward to hearing about your successful environmental projects in the future.

NACC Committee Awarding in the Catchment

The NACC Committee recently toured the southern end of Yarra Yarra Catchment, to gain a better understanding of the landscape, watercourses and methods used to control surface water and salinity.

The tour, lead by Max Hudson, visited sites with varying degrees of salinity and completed and proposed drainage works. Throughout the tour Dene Solomon and Ian Fordyce provided information on previous projects and landscape characteristics.

Dinner presentations the previous night highlighted different drain designs and explained the proposed Governance system for the Yarra Yarra Catchment.

The information received by the NACC Committee will aid them in their future decision making processes in regard to drainage.

*Win a \$150 or \$150 Landmark
Voucher - Just by becoming
a NACC member*

LANDMARK
an AWB company

Membership is FREE and brings with it many benefits including:

- * As NACC is responsible for allocating funds to NRM projects throughout the region, **have your say on where funds are most needed**
- * Access to the **latest information on natural resource management** (NRM) including grant applications and the latest research results
- * Assistance from the NACC network of NRM professionals throughout the region including **practical advice and technical support for environmental projects**
- * Chance to **participate in strate-**

gic decision making about the management of the natural resources in the Northern Agricultural Region

- * Access to **funding and training opportunities**
- * Opportunity to **represent your community interests** on the NACC regional and sub-regional committees
- * Gain **assistance with Indigenous consultation**, a mandatory requirement of most NRM funding applications.

Membership is open to individuals who are residents, landowners, or interested in NRM, or individuals who are a member of groups, agen-

cies, or organisations within the Region with an interest in NRM and in promoting the objectives of NACC.

The NACC membership form which, should you wish to become a member, can be printed out and faxed or posted to NACC administration:
Reply Paid 95 PO Box 95
Perenjori WA 6620 Phone: 9973 1444 FAX: 9973 1464 **Alternatively**, you can complete the form online at <http://www.nacc.com.au/membership.asp>.

*Closing Date for
Voucher Competition:
30th of May 2006*