



Coordinators AGM Report 15 January 2007 – 30 June 2007

This report would usually cover the period 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007 however I am reporting only for the period during which I've been employed (January – June 2007).

Significant Highlights for the period included:

1) Successful implementation of strategies to engage and support the broader community. The Molonglo Catchment Group (MCG) increased its involvement with a number of its member groups and previously unengaged community groups. For example:

* The MCG conducted a weed field day at Fernleigh Park, attracting previously uninvolved community members to the NRM scene. This also provided an opportunity to assess and refine engagement strategies with the local community and local government.

* Having secured funding for the Along the Molonglo Art Exhibition, to be held in Queanbeyan during July and in the ACT during September, this initiative is now beginning to bear fruit for community engagement by establishing links with non-NRM groups. MCG has been invited to make daily presentations on natural resource management to a much broader audience when the exhibition is taken to Floriade for four days.

* Sponsored Friends of Googong for an ACT Environment Grant application for native vegetation groundcover planting at Googong Dam.

* Supported a number of funding applications by environmental groups within the catchment for education, restoration and natural resource management projects including:

- Australian Network for Plant Conservation. Identifying plants of grassy ecosystems of the ACT region, ACT Environment Grant application.
- ANU Green Team. Weeds Wetlands and Wildlife, EnviroFund application.
- Curtin Primary School. Water harvesting to offset potable water use and increase water use efficiency, Community Water Grant application.

* Consulted a number of individuals or community groups to provide advice regarding project development and encourage funding applications including: the Queanbeyan Bowls Club; community members in the Weston/Lower Molonglo subcatchment for a project at Stromlo Park; and community members in the Lower Queanbeyan sub-catchment for weed control and biodiversity enhancement on private land.

2) Implementing the MCG Communications Strategy

The MCG Communication Strategy is being implemented and the group is actively engaging media outlets to promote its projects and NRM in the ACT region by maintaining a repository of display material and aids, including the Landcare educational display trailer which is now available for use by NRM groups in the ACT and surrounding regions. Additional funding was provided by the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Coordinating Committee, Southern ACT Catchment Group and ACT Rural Landholders Association. This has also enabled the Group to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities including:

* The group was able to showcase, at short notice, the NRM projects being conducted in the catchment at the Master Builders Association Green Living Open Day targeting a broad range of community members.

* The Lake Burley Griffin Willow Management Plan (LBG WMP) was released and has been well received by the stakeholders. Since its release, implementation has commenced. The launch of the LBG WMP featured on ABC 666 Radio and the ABC Rural website.

* The group was actively involved in the organisation of the National Willows Research Forum held on Feb 26th and 27th.

* The Australian Landcare Magazine article titled 'Border Patrol' highlighted the work of the MCG and the contribution of the ACT and Australian Governments to the coordinator position.

* Radio interviews on 'Radio Landcare' 2XX fm 98.3 on 20/3/07 and 21/5/07, promoted NRM, the Molonglo Catchment Weed Education Initiative and MCG and member group activities.

* Several projects within the catchment, including one on the Molonglo Catchment Group appear on the Mosaic project website at www.nrm.gov.au which was launched in June.

* An article in Bungendore Bulletin promoted the MCG sponsored NLP project.

3) Substantial progress with MCG projects enabling continued community engagement in the future. Specifically, the MCG gained commitments from multiple organisations responsible for weed management to support the Molonglo Catchment Weed Education Initiative (by contributing financial and educational resources and providing project support and guidance).

Impediments of difficulties:

The weed information pack has required significantly more time to compile, edit and print than previously expected due to:

* the large number of stakeholders involved in planning, contributing to and editing the package;

* the demand on the coordinator's time arising from unforeseen opportunities for wider community assistance with project planning, design, applications, support letters etc (following the coincidence of calls for applications under EnviroFund, ACT Environment Grants, Community Water Grants and NSW Environmental Trust programs and nominations for the 2007 ACT Landcare Awards);

* the need to compile and submit numerous funding applications, both for this project and future projects; and

* progressing NAP projects that had been awaiting finalisation of NAP funding.

Closing comments and the year ahead:

I am highly impressed with the role that the MCG plays in the local community and NRM network, which is thanks to the dedication of the committee members (and in particular, our President, Lynton Bond).

As a group, we have been able to respond to all the requests for assistance received this year from the various Landcare, Parkcare and community groups in our catchment. Our level of activity has been a reflection of the heightened awareness and focus within the community on all things 'green'.

To continue to meet the demand on our time, we will need to undertake a planning session focussing on the role we wish to play within the Molonglo catchment, our priorities as a catchment group, our priorities for the catchment itself and the future requirements of the community for assistance with NRM activities (as best as we can predict).

Although it is tempting to continue to answer every call for assistance, and be involved in every project, the group itself has been working at, or near, full capacity to respond to recent demands. It may become unsustainable to continue to respond to every request for assistance/opportunity for participation, and therefore we must identify our priorities, recognise and act within our capabilities and, at the same time, enlist strategies to ensure more active participation from our members and the succession of our committee members into the future.