

Voices in ALMS

Number 7, July 2008

Your e-newsletter from the Australian Landcare Management System Group

Voices in ALMS
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2007-08 HIGHLIGHTS

The last twelve months have been busy ones for ALMS. We have consolidated a number of partnerships and enlisted new partners. Membership has increased substantially. Some of the highlights are listed below.

ALMS wins recognition from Japanese wool apparel group

The last week of June has capped off a highly rewarding year for the Australian Landcare Management (ALM) Group with the announcement of support from the Japanese wool apparel group Onward Kashiyama (more).

ALMS wins training award

Also, last week ALMS was awarded the SA FarmBis Merit Award for Natural Resource Management training (more).

Membership

We have more than tripled the number of ALMS Group landholder members, each with an externally audited environmental management system in place. Our partnership with the North East CMA in Victoria has been highly productive due in particular to the work of Chris Reid and Rosemary Reilly.

Industry partnerships

The outstandingly successful industry partnership for 2007/08 has been with Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Ltd, supported by Elders and Landcare Australia. This partnership has enabled wool grower groups in South Australia and New South Wales to adopt ALMS and for AWI to profile it with customers for Australia wool. And, we have been building a strategic position with Private Forestry Southern Queensland to help private land foresters to move towards meeting the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) requirements.

NRM partnerships

ALMS has developed a number of strong partnerships that all involved are benefiting from. The Victorian North East CMA and Queensland Murray-Darling Committee have both been long standing supporters of the ALMS system. We are also working with the NSW Hunter-Central Rivers CMA and with South West NRM in Queensland.

the gate of your property and show your community that you are managing your land in a responsible way.



FOR THE DIARY

ALMS Group Board meeting: Tuesday 8 July 2008

ALMS System Clinics:
Warwick 4 July,
Stanthorpe 10-11 July,
and Charleville, Taree
and Singleton in late
August/ September
2008

*New Directions for
Landcare presentation:*
Queensland Landcare
Conference Monto, 22
September 2008

ALMS BOARD

ALMS board members are:

John Drinan (Chair)
Jock Douglas
(Inaugural Chair)
Genevieve Carruthers
Drew English
Tony Gleeson (CEO)
Bruce Munday
Geoff Penton
Nelson Quinn

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

We convened a forum in Canberra in May to further strengthen and extend our relationships with natural resource management bodies and catchment management authorities. CMA/NRM representatives considered the use of EMS in general and the ALMS system in particular to improve environmental outcomes.

Sponsorship

Elders support through the Elders Landcare Farming Program has been most critical to our continued operation. Readers would be aware of the fragmentation and confusion that exists concerning the application of externally audited environmental management systems to land management in Australia. Against that background the support from Elders for a credible cost effective whole-of-farm national approach has been most insightful.

ALMS Group capacity

We have strengthened our capacity to promote the ALMS system and to help its implementation with land managers. We have concluded a major restructuring of the data in the software program, myEMS and redesigned the ALMS website. We have extended the reach and frequency of our newsletter, VOICES, which now circulates to about 700 recipients, and we now have more people involved in providing ALMS training and auditing.

LOOKING FORWARD

ALMS Group CEO, Tony Gleeson, looks forward and identifies the opportunities and challenges for ALMS.

Notwithstanding our progress we still have significant challenges, some of them common to any new organisation and some of them unique.

As with any new organisation it is hard to spread overheads and development costs across a growing yet small membership base. This is a particularly acute problem for the ALMS Group given that ALMS is designed to deliver both private and public benefits. Additionally, we need a critical mass of membership and of environmental outcomes to generate the recognition required for the positive feedback loop of action-outcome-reward-action to work.

ALMS is a particularly effective way for landholders to strengthen their positive impacts on the environment and to reduce their negative ones. It is a bottom-up approach guided by broader landscape considerations. The broader landscape considerations happen because members are required to consider catchment priorities and strategies and to commit to continuous improvement in support for biodiversity conservation.

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Inevitably there is some tension between our bottom-up approach and those approaches that rely more heavily on adoption of externally determined goals and targets and/or on the universal adoption of industry wide top-down best management approaches. Nevertheless we continue to seek the synergies that exist between these approaches and certainly the recent revamp of our software now makes that more achievable.

We are strengthening the role we will play in assisting land managers deal with climate change and in moderating their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. However, we need to guard against approaches that fragment ecosystems into component services. We need whole-of-system recognition and reward systems that reflect ecological complexities and interdependencies. Hence we need to be wary of policies and programs based on reductionist goals and targets and of fragmentation along industry/commodity lines.

Our priorities for 2008-09 are to strengthen servicing and recognition for existing members, to get a sounder footing for the organisation and to recruit new members. We have several evolving relationship/opportunities including with industry and CMA/NRM organisations, with the Indigenous Land Corporation and with a limited number of prominent agribusinesses and pastoral companies.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Our partnership program has progressed steadily and we now have or are well advanced in negotiating partnerships with:

Apple and Pear Growers Association SA Inc.
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Board
Australian Wool Innovation Ltd
Elders
Gipps Beef
New South Wales Hunter and Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority
Private Forestry Southern Queensland Ltd
Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc.
South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board
South East Queensland Catchments
South West NRM Ltd
Victorian North East Catchment Authority