



Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 26 July 2012

FIRST UPGRADES OF CATCHMENT ACTION PLANS

Two of the State's 13 regional Catchment Action Plans have been now been upgraded and approved, paving the way for better management of natural resources, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson announced today.

Ms Hodgkinson said the Central West and Namoi Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) were the first to upgrade and refine their Catchment Action Plans to take account of environmental, economic and social changes since they were introduced five years ago.

"The other CMAs will now follow suit to ensure their local plans properly reflect the latest information affecting rural and regional communities.

"These plans were originally developed to provide a useful guide to farmers, local government, and property owners so they could frame their land use practices to suit the local conditions, and minimise the impact on the environment.

"But times change and it's important these plans are adapted and updated so the information they provide is relevant to today's conditions."

The updated plans will include:

- more focus on areas which need to become more resilient;
- mapping priorities for investment and action to maintain and improve this resilience; and
- stronger collaboration with communities and relevant government agencies.

"The Namoi and Central West CMAs ensured their communities, local councils and other relevant stakeholders were thoroughly involved in the process," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"They were able to help identify natural assets and formulate the best plans to manage their regions.

Susan Madden from Macquarie River Food & Fibre said there was a lot of community and stakeholder involvement in the development of the Central West plan and we are looking forward to help implement it.

Chairman of Namoi Councils and Mayor of Tamworth Regional Council Col Murray said the solid science and credible evidence on which the Namoi Catchment Action Plan is based will play an important role for all local councils as our strategic plans evolve over the next 10 years.

Ms Hodgkinson said the other CMAs will make sure their local assets are also protected into the future and their reviews are expected to be completed early next year.

"The plans are leading-edge in regional planning with other States following a similar approach."