

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- At past meetings, Forum members received an update report on the work of the Natural Resource Management Working Group that has been established to consider options for promoting greater collaboration between Local Government and NRM Boards and to provide high level leadership in the planning and delivery of NRM.
- Forum members would be aware that opportunity exists for greater involvement by individual councils and Local Government generally in the planning and delivery of NRM given their existing statutory roles, direct links to their communities, local knowledge, local infrastructure and local management of important NRM assets.
- The working group comprises representatives from the Local Government Association of South Australia (chair), the NRM Council, Kangaroo Island NRM Board, the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC), and the Office for State/Local Government Relations (observer). The group meets at least 2 weeks prior to the Forum meeting.
- There remains some concern by councils and regional NRM Boards about the lack of connectivity in relation to their roles and responsibilities, particularly in the areas of community engagement on the NRM levy, the alignment of council and NRM board strategic regional investment priorities, and the influence of the regional NRM Boards on council Development Plans.
- The LGA has proposed to undertake a forum to explore ways in which the connectivity between regional NRM boards and councils can be clarified and strengthened. If this proceeds, NRM board and State and Local Government (council and LGA) representatives are to be invited.
- As a preliminary step, an initial focus group comprising the Presiding Members and General Managers of the regional NRM boards, and representative Mayors and Chief Executives of councils is proposed to be held to identify objectives and outcomes to be achieved from the forum.
- Other initiatives arising out of the working group to date have been:
 - Regional local government NRM forums hosted by the LGA to progress the formalisation of relationships between councils/regional Local Government Associations and NRM Boards through a partnership arrangement, and to seek support for the establishment of regional local government NRM standing reference groups.
 - Collaboration between the LGA and DWLBC on the development of a communication strategy to assist councils and regional NRM Boards in explaining the NRM levy to ratepayers and the public, defines their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the collection and communication of the NRM levy, and ensures that consistent information is provided.
 - The development of a draft Memorandum of Understanding by the LGA that outlines the protocols for engagement between councils and the NRM Boards to encourage the development of a meaningful relationship with each other.