

Workshop Abstract
National Waterwatch Conference 7-10 February 2005

Title

Community groups collaborating for better outcomes from catchment to coast.

Authors

Imogen Birley and Nicole Middleton
(AG NRM Facilitator– Rivercare & AG NRM Facilitator – Coastcare)

Theme

Communication, Networks & Partnerships

Summary

In all levels of government and in NRM regions, there's a lot of talk about 'integration' and 'silo busting' and 'integrated and multi-disciplinary approaches to natural resource management'.

But what does all the jargon mean for Waterwatch groups, and other 'care' networks like Coastcare and Landcare? What practical opportunities for working together does regional NRM offer? What are the benefits? What are the obstacles? What skills and abilities does Waterwatch have to share, and what can Waterwatch learn from other groups?

As two facilitators with backgrounds in dealing with issues that link from catchment to coast to ocean, this workshop will stimulate discussion on ways that Waterwatch and other groups can work together, from the top of a catchment out to three nautical miles. There will be a short presentation emphasising the ecological links between land, near-shore and marine ecosystems, and what the regional NRM context means in terms of opportunities and constraints for community 'care' groups.

The workshop will then focus on practical ideas and outcomes, such as:

- ◆ Holding 'catchment to ocean forums' for groups working in a catchment and its receiving waters, to promote common issues, tackle them from multiple angles, and share skills, experiences and resources.
- ◆ Sharing skills, identifying projects to collaborate on for better results and identifying opportunities for sharing training and resources.
- ◆ Promoting working partnerships between different 'care' groups to attract more regional credibility and resources, and to counteract competitiveness for limited funds.
- ◆ Using the work of other groups to inspire and revitalise your own work, and to help persuade others
- ◆ Learning about and appreciating the bigger 'back yard' that attaches to your own
- ◆ Ways to bring in the 'forgotten region' – the marine environment.

If the outcomes of the workshop are worthwhile, we will look to progress these ideas within the national Australian Government facilitator network.

Workshop Structure & Details

This workshop will be fun, relaxed, creative and designed to encourage participation. The focus will be on generating practical ideas and motivation around the theme, and most definitely not on committees, bureaucracy and jargon!

The results from the event will be recorded and circulated back to all the participants.

What participants can expect to get out of the workshop

- A forum in which to explore what elements Waterwatch has in common with other 'care' groups, and identify opportunities to work more closely together
- A clear mind map of how to go about linking with other 'care' groups in their area, and the practical benefits of doing so
- A greater understanding of the links between land and sea ecosystems, and an understanding of the idea of 'vertical forums' from catchment to coast.
- An opportunity to input to the Australian Government NRM Facilitator network ideas on how Waterwatch & Coastcare in particular can work more closely together, which can then be distributed and used at the regional level.

What participants need to bring

- A willingness to participate.
- Any experiences in working with other relevant community groups, and any ideas for practical ways in which Waterwatch could share skills, and work more effectively with groups in their area.

Workshop Structure Details

1. Opening Presentation

This will set the context for the workshop in terms of regional NRM, and provide an overview of the ecological links between land and sea, focussing on the fundamental role of water.

The emphasis will be on quickly ensuring participants are on the same page and encouraging attendees to fully participate.

2. Brainstorm Session

Using the flow workshop technique, all participants will have the opportunity to contribute their ideas around the broad theme of the workshop as presented in the introduction. Participants will then help group these ideas into topics for further workshopping in smaller groups

3. Small group topic discussions and summary session

Participants will be asked to work in small groups, self-selected around the topics from the brainstorm session that interested them the most. The technique for managing this part of the workshop will depend on the number of participants. Groups will then report back as a whole, and a summary of the outcomes will be given by the workshop convenors.