

**Submission
No 20**

**INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN CENTRAL WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Central West Catchment Management Authority

Date received: 26/08/2011



Rachel Simpson
The Director,
Standing Committee on State Development
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

23 August 2011

Dear Ms Simpson,

Central West Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Submission to the “Inquiry into economic and social development in central western NSW”

The central western area of NSW is a large and important part of NSW in terms of social, economic and environmental components.

The Central West CMA covers the catchments of the Macquarie, Castlereagh and Bogan Rivers, and delivers a range of programs that improve the condition of the regional natural resources. All of its programs are voluntary and as such the Central West CMA has a focus on engaging the regional community in key natural resource management issues facing the catchment.

In the inquiry into the economic and social development in central western NSW, the Central West CMA would like to offer the following information for consideration.

1. Catchment Action Plans

Each CMA has a statutory requirement to develop a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) that sets a vision for the integrated management of natural resources by the community and local, state and Australian governments.

The Central West CMA has recently completed a review of its CAP. Though developed to address the management of natural resources within the Central West CMA area, it has become clear that attempting to single out just natural resources from the overall socio-economic system was neither useful nor even possible. Therefore, the CAP is based on an integrated and holistic approach was adopted that includes economic, social and environmental components.

The resulting Central West CAP provides a framework in which to consider the economic and social development of the area. Lower Murray-Darling and Western CMAs are currently preparing to revise their CAPs using this same integrated and holistic approach, with the remaining CMAs following over the coming 12-18 months.



The key strengths of the CAP are as follows:

- It is based on a new approach to planning natural resource management - “resilience thinking” - which provides a strategic approach across economic, social and environmental factors;
- The community was closely involved in the development of the CAP and therefore there is significant ownership of the Plan by the community; and
- All NSW agencies involved in NRM have been heavily involved in the development of the document and the NRM Senior Officers Group will endorse the Plan and ensure its use across their activities.

These strengths combine to form a strong platform for agencies, Local Government and the community to work together to achieve outcomes that could not be achieved by isolated individual actions. All parties should be encouraged to work together to carry forward and deliver the CAP.

The CAP also contains ways to link various plans and programs that share similar objectives through an “alignment logic” that again can take a balanced perspective looking at environmental, social and economic goals.

2. Links between CMAs and Regional Development Australia (RDA)

The Central West CMA has good links with the two RDAs that operate in our catchment through common membership of Boards and Committees, Memoranda of Understanding, joint projects, etc. We envisage that this relationship will continue to grow and develop and will further drive further triple bottom line growth opportunities.

3. Community and social data held by CMAs

The Central West CMA has surveyed the community through a number of avenues to determine levels of understanding about natural resource management and the factors impacting their attitudes and behaviour. The Central West CMA could provide this information if the Committee felt it could be useful in their inquiry.

The Central West CMA has undertaken a number of formal evaluations of its programs to determine their level of effectiveness in achieving the organisation’s outcomes. The results of these evaluations include economic and social components including what leads to innovation and behaviour change.

I would be pleased to provide further information if it would be of value to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Gavel
Chairman
Central West CMA