



Final Report

**Jurisdiction Report -
Victoria**

**National Framework
for the
Management and
Monitoring of
Australia's Native
Vegetation**

**Prepared for
Environment Australia
November 2000**

URS

in association with

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21.02.01

1 Introduction

1.1 What is the National Vegetation Framework?

In June 1998, ANZECC agreed to the development and implementation of the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation (National Vegetation Framework). The intention of this policy initiative was to provide a unified, multilateral forum through which to pursue improvements to native vegetation management and monitoring.¹

In February 1999, ANZECC Standing Committee on Conservation (SCC) agreed that it would be appropriate to engage an independent consultant to conduct a preliminary assessment of the jurisdictions against the draft National Vegetation Framework. A report was subsequently produced - "Native Vegetation National Overview" - which documented the key challenges for vegetation management and monitoring within each jurisdiction.

For the purpose of the NVF, eight jurisdictions were identified in Australia comprising the 7 states and territories, and the Commonwealth. Following endorsement of the NVF and the jurisdiction interim Work Plans by ANZECC in December 1999, each jurisdiction continued preparation of an interim Work Plan that is considered to be the principal means of implementing the National Vegetation Framework. The Work Plans identified the vegetation management and monitoring activities, time frames for when each activity was to occur, responsibility for implementation of the activities and indicators for measurement of success.

The native vegetation outcomes being sought in the Framework are:²

- a reversal in the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation cover by:
 - conserving native vegetation, and substantially reducing land clearing;
 - conserving Australia's biodiversity; and
 - restoring, by means of substantially increased revegetation, the environmental values and productive capacity of Australia's degraded land and water;
- conservation and, where appropriate, restoration of native vegetation to maintain and enhance biodiversity, protect water quality and conserve soil resources, including on private managed land for agriculture, forestry and urban development;
- retention and enhancement of biodiversity and native vegetation at both regional and national levels; and
- an improvement in the condition of existing native vegetation.

The more specific vegetation outcomes being sought within the context of integrated natural resource management for the Victorian Work Plan are described in Section 3 below.

¹ Environment Australia, n.d , *Consultancy Brief*, Canberra.

² ANZECC, 1999, National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation, ACT.

At the ANZECC July 2000 meeting it was agreed to publicly release the Work Plans. At the commencement of the evaluation in October 2000, the Commonwealth and ACT had publicly released their final version of the Work Plan, with interim work plans available from other jurisdictions.

1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

At the December 1999 meeting, the ANZEC SCC noted that an independent evaluation of progress against the National Vegetation Framework and the fulfilment of Work Plan Commitments should commence mid 2000, with the report presented to the Council at the December 2000 meeting.

ANZECC identified the purpose of the evaluation was 'to assess progress against the National Framework for the Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation and fulfilment of the Work Plan commitments' (that were developed by each jurisdiction). Incorporated into the evaluation process was the additional focus of evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Work Plans for achieving long term sustainable vegetation management. The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation are provided below.

Terms of Reference

A. Assessment of Effectiveness of Work Plans and their Implementation

1. Assess current vegetation management and monitoring practices in jurisdictions against those set out in the respective Work Plans and against best practice.
2. Assess anticipated long term vegetation management and monitoring outcomes against the Work Plans.
3. Assess progress by jurisdictions in meeting the Work Plan success measures within the identified timeframes.

B. Propose Improvements

4. Propose improvements to Work Plan management mechanisms that are feasible, practical and relevant to jurisdictions and take into account best practice. Proposed improvements should be within the context of National Framework objectives.
5. Suggest a process for jurisdictions to review and refine Work Plans on a continuing basis, to provide, amongst other things, for improvements in understanding of how best to achieve best practice native vegetation management.

C. Propose suitable ongoing independent evaluation arrangements

Propose a mechanism and time frame for independent evaluation of Work Plans on an ongoing basis, noting that vegetation management and monitoring activities are to be evaluated against agreed native vegetation outcomes and identified best practice.

D. Assess progress against the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation

Evaluate how far actions in Work Plans enable each jurisdiction to achieve the vision and principles underpinning the National Framework especially the national goal to reverse the long-term decline of native vegetation in Australia.

The evaluation examined the performance of the jurisdiction Work Plans, from the release of NVF by ANZECC in December 1999, until September 2000. Our work examined the vegetation management and monitoring activities undertaken by the lead agencies in each jurisdiction that contribute to the progress of the Work Plan.

The review was implemented within a tight time frame to meet the reporting requirements of ANZECC. State agencies were the primary contributor to the jurisdiction Work Plan evaluation. Other non-government stakeholders' views were also sought to contribute to the evaluation, but the timetable contributed to a reduced level of interaction by some stakeholders. A list of participants involved in this jurisdiction review is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 : Review Workshop Participants

Name	Organisation
Michael Crowe	DNRE
Karen Barton	DNRE
David Parkes	DNRE
Dr Kim Lowe	DNRE
Bruce Howard and Jason Alexandra	Consultants – URS-Griffin nrm

2 Evaluation Approach & Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Approach

A central component of the evaluation was to devise an effective method that would allow evaluation of the eight jurisdictions Work Plans in a restricted time frame, while still allowing for jurisdiction input and discussion. The following provides a description of the approach employed for the evaluation, and method used to evaluate the jurisdiction Work Plans.

The approach to the evaluation consisted of the following :

- **Team meeting to confirm evaluation approach** – all members of the team that were leading the evaluation in the various jurisdictions met over a two day period, shortly after signing of the contract. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure an evaluation approach was devised that addressed the Terms of Reference and ensure that all members of the team had an opportunity to input and understand the agreed approach to ensure consistency in data-gathering and familiarity with process.
- **Contact with jurisdictions** – managers of each jurisdiction evaluation directly contacted agency stakeholders to inform them of the NVF evaluation process and invite participation. A time for a stakeholder meeting to be undertaken to discuss the Work Plan was confirmed.
- **Pre-meeting Preparation** – due to time limitations, a preliminary desk-top analysis was undertaken by the consultant team, reviewing the Victorian Work Plan against a number of criteria. This information was circulated to all participants prior to the Work Plan evaluation meeting to allow for stakeholder review.
- **Jurisdiction Meeting** – a jurisdiction meeting was conducted to discuss progress of Work Plan and identify opportunities for improvement. The process used during the meeting is described in Section 2.2.
- **Draft jurisdiction Report** - the manager for each jurisdiction evaluation prepared a draft report that documented the outcomes from the jurisdiction meeting and included points made during consultation with other stakeholders such as non-Government agencies and select interest groups external to the formal jurisdiction evaluation meeting.
- **Jurisdiction Review** – the draft Victorian report was then sent to all participants in the Victorian Work Plan evaluation meeting for comment.
- **Jurisdiction Final Report** - Comments were then incorporated into the Victorian jurisdiction report and presented to Environment Australia as the Final Jurisdiction Report.

2.2 Evaluation Method

A consistent approach was employed in each jurisdiction meeting to address the Terms of Reference. Each section is briefly described below.

Session A Review Work Plan against Key Challenges

Key Challenges were identified for each jurisdiction in the Dore report (Dore, J., Bunning, C., Hayes, A. (1999)). As these were developed prior to the Work Plans, they were presumed to be drivers for the Work Plan Actions. Therefore, to determine the effectiveness of the Work Plans, the Actions were reviewed to determine how well they address the challenges. A matrix was prepared that compared Victorian key challenges with Work Plan actions and level of influence. For each Management and Monitoring Mechanism (MMM), a rating was given for the level of influence each action could have in addressing the Key Challenge for that mechanism.

Following discussions with the primary Victorian Work Plan contact, the draft matrix was presented at the jurisdiction meeting and revised for its validity and for the individual and collective impact of the action(s) in addressing all the key challenges listed for the jurisdiction. Modifications to the list of Actions was made to increase the beneficial impact on the Key Challenges and applicability of the Key Challenges for their current relevance to the achievement of the outcomes listed in the NVF. Where Key Challenges have become less relevant – i.e. they have been addressed or the program has moved in a different direction; the need for contributing actions was reviewed. Where new challenges were identified these were incorporated into the Work Plan.

Session B Assessment of Work Plan Success Measures

In order to evaluate Work Plan progress, quantification of achievements was provided against the Success Measures (or Performance Indicators) for each Work Plan activity. For each listed Success Measure, quantified information on the achievement to date was provided by the jurisdiction and further discussed during the evaluation meeting. If no progress was made, this was also noted and discussed during the meeting (what was the reason for lack of progress, what needed to change etc.) Where performance indicators were deemed inappropriate, these were reviewed and amended during the evaluation meeting.

Session C Appropriateness of Work Plan Activities against the NVF Management and Monitoring Outcomes

Our initial reading of the NVF, the Dore report and the individual Work Plans suggested that the relationship between the management mechanisms in the Work Plans and the Key Challenges is generally straightforward. However the relationship with the Desired Outcomes in the NVF was less so. Our approach to assessing this relationship was to test how well the individual actions in the Work Plans contributed to the Desired Outcomes using another matrix.

Each action for each Management and Monitoring Mechanism (listed across the X-axis) was assessed in regards to contribution to the NVF Desired Outcome, listed on the Y-axis. The rating criteria used in Section A (High/Medium/Low Influence) was applied in Section C.

Recognising that a desk-top assessment was undertaken subjectively, and relying on limited information, the jurisdiction evaluation meeting was used to review the matrix for its validity and the implications for achievement of the NVF outcomes. The jurisdiction meeting was then used to modify the list of Actions to improve contribution to the achievement of the NVF Desired Outcomes where necessary.

Session D Best Management Practices

A key criteria of the Terms of Reference was to determine if and how Best Management Practices (BMP) are being applied when undertaking vegetation Management and Monitoring Mechanisms and Activities in each jurisdiction.

The National Vegetation Framework identifies a range of BMPs against the seven Management and Monitoring Mechanisms. Due to the time limitations associated with the evaluation, the URS/Griffin nrm team nominated one Management and Monitoring Mechanism per jurisdiction that will be investigated in depth from a Best Management Practice perspective during the jurisdiction meeting, rather than the entire set of MMM's. This process will, across the jurisdictions, address the range of BMP's identified in the ANZECC framework for the nominated mechanism, and be reported as a Case Study in the relevant jurisdiction report.

For Victoria, the BMP of Incentives was used as the Case Study example. The ANZECC framework BMP's were used as the main guide to discuss Incentives during the Victorian evaluation meeting. This information was then compiled into a 'snap shot' of BMP for inclusion into the jurisdiction report.

Session E Visioning - evaluation of overall progress and likely long term impact of the National Vegetation Framework

This session in the jurisdiction evaluation meeting looked collectively at the Visions in the Work Plans to assess how effectively the mechanisms being implemented now, will achieve those Visions in future. Plausible process methods were used for this assessment. In using plausible process, you work back from a major goal or vision to identify what would be needed now to achieve the goal or vision within anticipated timeframes.

For instance, if an overall goal is to better integrate management of native vegetation management, you might expect the work plans to include management and monitoring measures which will effectively support integrated management. If an overall goal is to attain a net gain in extent and quality of native vegetation, then the work plans ought to include measures which are likely to have the effect of controlling clearing and/or compensating with equivalent plantings within the anticipated timeframe of the Framework.

From this type of assessment, a number of key indicators of overall progress were identified and analysed to evaluate the likely long-term impact of the National Vegetation Framework.

3 Victoria Work Plan Output

3.1 Victoria Work Plan – Setting the Scene

At the time of the review Victoria had recently released their State Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework, and their 10 Regional Native Vegetation Plans for public comment. These plans adopt a “net gain” principle and propose a new native vegetation accounting system to improve the transparency and consistency of decision making for native vegetation. In this they aim for better than no net loss and are consistent with the National Framework with that objective.

Although Victoria has made significant progress in protecting their native vegetation they are still losing and estimated 2,500 hectares a year and the quality of the remaining vegetation continues to decline. The Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework recognises that there has been no comprehensive review of native vegetation retention controls since 1989 when the Native Vegetation Retention (NVR) controls were introduced, and that a closer look at how the NVR is implemented is required.

The Native Vegetation Management Framework, and their 10 Regional Native Vegetation Plans represent the next major step for native vegetation management in Victoria. The draft plans will be major drivers of native vegetation management in Victoria.

3.2 Linking the Work Plan with Key Challenges

The objective of this component of the review was to assess the alignment of Management and Monitoring Mechanism activities against the Key Challenges defined in the Dore report. Table 2 presents Victoria’s Revised Key Challenges and shows the alignment of Management and Monitoring Mechanism activities against the Key Challenges. The numbering of activities is based on the Work Plan presented in Section 3.3. The criteria for the influence rating score is:

- **High** influence – The Action has direct relationship to the Key Challenge and when implemented will have a high impact in addressing the Challenge;
- **Medium** influence – the Action has a moderate to high relationship to the Key Challenge and when implemented will have a moderate impact in addressing the Challenge; or only some relationship but with a high impact.
- **Low** influence – the Action has some relationship to the Key Challenge but when implemented will have only a low impact in addressing the Challenge; and
- **No** influence – the Action may have some relationship to the Key Challenge but when implemented it will have no effective impact in addressing the Challenge.

Note: The Victorian Workshop recognised that Activities align against Key Challenges across Management and Monitoring Mechanisms. The results show this cross referencing. It was suggested that this should occur where activities are components of integrated programs.

Table 2 : Actions Rated Against Key Challenges

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
	High	Medium	Low
Key Challenge: Planning and Assessment 4.2			
Completing the EVC inventory of the State at the refined 1:100,000 scale	2.2*		
Providing ready access – particularly for non-specialists – to EVC mapping and associated interpretative material	4.1	2.2, 2.3	
Using EVC maps for management. For example, in developing appropriate fire management regimes to ensure diversity of age classes across the landscape	2.3, 4.1	2.2, 4.3	
Extending the standards being achieved on public lands to the planning processes for remnants on private lands		2.3	2.1
Statutory processes requiring developers to undertake biodiversity status assessments	6.3, 1.2	2.2, 2.3	2.1
Enhancing the present, already excellent, biodiversity status assessments and completing the Action Statements required under the FFG Act to increase the survival prospects of threatened species and ecological communities	6.2	2.2	2.1, 2.3
Completing Regional Vegetation Plans in each CMA region	2.2, 2.3		2.1
Ensuring the RVPs are able to be aggregated at the State level	2.2	2.3	
Ensuring that Local government (the responsible authority) accept and work to deliver on the RVPs		1.2, 5.4, 6.3	2.1

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
	High	Medium	Low
Key Challenge: Formal Reserve System 4.3			
Finding ways to bring privately managed areas into the 'protected areas system', in recognition that the largest gains in ecosystem protection are now to be made on private lands	3.1		
Protecting greater areas of grasslands and grassy woodlands by facilitating their inclusion in public reserves or under covenant	3.1		
Involving the private sector in active ecosystem protection		3.1	
Preparing ecosystem management plans to guide burning and other vegetation treatment		3.1, 4.3	
Developing and implementing adequate monitoring frameworks		3.1	

* number corresponds to an activity allocated in the Victorian Work Plan.

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
Key Challenge: Communication & Capacity Building 4.4	High	Medium	Low
Developing a strategic approach to adult education		4.2	
Enhancing the understanding of what motivates landholders to improve management practices			5.1, 5.2, 5.4
Expanding current action learning approaches such as the Alpine Ecology and the Box-Ironbark courses to other areas, such as training trainers	4.2		
Showing appreciation to volunteers to retain their interest and involvement			
Linking landholders with researchers, to promote mutual understanding			
Ensuring extension efforts are complementary and coordinated	4.2		
Reviewing and focusing R&D efforts			4.3

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
Key Challenge: Incentives 4.5	High	Medium	Low
Group burnout due to groups being expected to deliver community benefit outcomes whilst taking on more and more of the previously government responsibility for reporting and accounting		5.2	
Devising realistic methods of monitoring the impact of grants programs . Everybody wants to claim success, but measuring it is problematic		2.3, 4.1	
Getting the best out of the grant-funded 'native vegetation' or NRM workforce and also ensuring the various funding sources minimise the conflict or unnecessary duplication in their performance reporting requirements	5.1	4.2	
Some of the most poorly represented ecosystems occur mainly on private land. There remains a need to develop effective market-based incentives which are efficient and complement other mechanisms on private land	5.2	5.1, 5.3	5.4

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
Key Challenge: Regulatory Mechanisms 4.6	High	Medium	Low
Provision of adequate resources to prepare and ensure implementation of Action Statements	6.2		
Developing more efficient ways of preparing Action Statements, perhaps by reducing the size and complexity of the plans or by considering multi-species or bioregional approaches	6.2		
Routinely building in a monitoring and evaluation component to assess the effectiveness of Action Statements and actions		6.3	
Developing cost effective, rapid monitoring procedures to measure land clearing activities at the EVC scale	6.3		
Reviewing the past and present effectiveness of NVR controls	6.3		
Retaining, regaining or obtaining widespread support for the NVR controls particularly by Local governments	5.4	1.2, 2.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3	
Building credibility of Codes of Practice with the community improving and compliance at the local level		6.1, 6.3	6.2
Ensuring 'minimum standard' Codes of Practice do not discourage pursuit of best practice by industries		2.3	

	Management and Monitoring Mechanism Alignment Rating		
	High	Medium	Low
Key Challenge: Monitoring and Evaluation 4.7			
Developing effective ways of measuring incremental losses and gains in native vegetation	7.2	6.3	
Developing effective ways of on-ground condition measurement and monitoring	7.2		
Developing effective ways, involving map annotations, of providing an indicative record of native vegetation condition, rather than just extent	7.2		
Resolving the issue of how changing condition may contribute to calculations of 'net loss/gain'	2.3		7.2
Resolving cross-border methodological differences which diminish the overall value which could be obtained from the M&E efforts of different jurisdictions		2.2	

3.3 Measuring Work Plan Success

For this section the agency vegetation managers were requested to evaluate the level of achievement of Actions against the Success Measures. The workshop also provided an opportunity to update and amend the Success Measures – in some cases they were revised. A summary of achievement assessments is provided in Table 3. A copy of Victoria's Draft Work Plan is presented as Annex 1.

Table 3 : Summary of Progress Against Success Measures

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
The institutional arrangements in Victoria are relatively simple. The key state level agency is the Department of Natural Resources and Environment which has responsibility for; catchment management and sustainable agriculture on non public lands, and on public lands National Parks, State Parks and reserves, forests and other crown lands. The 78 local governments are also key players through their administration of planning schemes.			
Conduct training workshops to facilitate implementation of RVPs with a focus on the roles of key players.	Ongoing	Local Planning Schemes enable achievement of Regional Catchment Strategy & RVP goals.	Workshops in progress 10 new NRE positions to facilitate implementation of RVP and training have been created - one located in each CMA
Continue improvement of Regional Management Planning process in which CMAs determine NRE regional resource allocation priorities for a variety of NRM service providers Clarify roles of CMA and CAS re implementing RYP	June 2000		NRE -CAS and CMA review process currently under way.
Prepare planning guidelines to facilitate incorporation of native vegetation information into the planning process and the local planning schemes.	June 2000	Guidelines prepared	In progress (part as earlier drafts of Biodiversity Planning Note)
Review the biodiversity content of Municipal Strategic Statements in each local planning scheme.	June 2000	Guidelines revised	The biodiversity content of MSSs has been reviewed (still awaiting final data from external sources). The need for the practice note reinforced by analysis of results
Undertake a state-wide audit of the consistency and coverage of sites of significance data set and improve guidelines as required	June 2000		No progress
Victoria has a strong record of vegetation monitoring and mapping, and has comprehensively monitored woody vegetation using remote sensing and GIS since 1972. Monitoring, in conjunction with extensive resource mapping, has provided the basis for native vegetation management planning at a range of scales.			
Prepare and deliver biodiversity materials for Farm\$mart (property management planning) training	June 2000	Biodiversity values increasingly integrated into property plans	Farm\$mart workshop series notes revised to include biodiversity. On farm training days held. Draft resource kit for facilitators in development. Conference presentations,
Develop guidelines for linking whole farm plans to landscape planning	June 2000		

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
<p>Prepare a Grassy Ecosystems Strategy</p> <p>Release BioSites System and identify further enhancements particularly with uncertainties and landscape scale processes</p> <p>Promote adoption of Biodiversity Strategy implementation by government agencies and businesses</p> <p>Improve the extent to which biodiversity aspects are included in Environmental Management Systems developed for rural industries.</p> <p>Prepare a Planning Practice Note to facilitate incorporation of biodiversity considerations into planning schemes</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p>	<p>Strategy prepared</p> <p>System released</p> <p>Biodiversity assessments increasingly incorporated in agency policies etc</p>	<p>bulletins and papers submitted for publication stimulating interest in social aspects of biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Biosites released, evaluation and enhancement underway. Particularly w.r.t input into planning schemes</p> <p>All sections within NRE have agreed on actions to improve biodiversity conservation. This is to be extended to all relevant agencies - eg Vic Roads have adopted net gain</p> <p>Draft discussion paper released in May 2000 and two invited conference papers delivered. Very strong interest generated from broad range of stakeholders. Informal discussions under way about running pilot programs of EMS on grains, dairy, beef and wine grape farms to test practicalities of this approach.</p> <p>Advanced draft currently with DOI for consideration.</p> <p>Draft regional biodiversity planning discussion paper 'A strategy for conserving biodiversity in the Goldfields bioregion, Victoria' completed. Further pilots under development.</p> <p>Guidebook 'How to include biodiversity in landscape planning and facilitator resources under development.</p>
<p>Extend coverage of Ecological Vegetation Class mapping at 1:100 000 scale to cover 85% of the State</p> <p>Enhance BioMap in response to focus group recommendations. Release of 1:25,000 version.</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p>	<p>Maps available</p> <p>Maps released</p> <p>Approach successfully trialed</p>	<p>1/100000 completed for State - more detail is required in Port Phillip, Mallee, Wimmera</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed 1:25000 maps support decisions re enhancement and restoration, will be used to</p>

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
Management and further enhancement of the Flora Information System.			support incentive and regulations
Develop an approach to remote sensing of extent and to modelling of indicative condition at 1:25 000 for a region	June 2000	EVC database derived from RFA	Approach developed for Remote sensing and modelling of indicative condition and habitat value using focal species approach.
Present the state-wide EVC typology	Dec 2000		Standard description being developed
Document priority grassland sites	June 2000		Priorities assessed and report in preparation
Participate in the National Native Vegetation Information System activities	June 2000		Victorian material contributed and drawn into NV 15 under NLW Audit
Develop an agreed approach to the application of the 'no net loss' concept at the local, regional and state levels	June 2000	Approach agreed by internal stakeholders	In preparation - approach outlined in Draft VVMF
Prepare a report on 'no net loss' principle and the 'Habitat Hectare' accounting system.	June 2000	Report accepted	Principles outlined in VVMF
Develop Regional Vegetation Plans that integrate agricultural production with biodiversity conservation for each Catchment Management Authority.	December 1999	Plans ready for Ministerial endorsement by Dec 1999	Plans endorsed by Minister 22.8.2000 Draft framework out for consultation until December - final expected by June 2001
At 30 June 1999, there were 109 areas managed under the provisions of the National Parks Act: 36 national parks, 3 wilderness parks, 31 State parks, 11 marine and/or coastal parks or reserves, and 28 other parks and reserves. The total area of some 3.078 million hectares represents 13.5% of Victoria and almost 35% of public land in the State. In addition, there were 19 wilderness zones and 21 remote and natural areas established under the Act within several national parks. Over 3,000 nature conservation and natural features reserves, plus other categories such as reference areas, natural catchment areas and heritage rivers also contribute to the State's Reserve system. Overall, 3.418 million hectares are considered to be 'protected areas' under IUCN categories, which represents some 15% of the State.			
Implement the National Reserve System grassland strategy (phase 1) for Riverina and Volcanic Plains	June 2000	Phase 1 actions completed	Completed - properties purchased in Riverina and volcanic under negotiation
Develop a management framework for nature conservation reserves	June 2000		Reached agreement with Parks Victoria on the requirements for development of a conservation

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
<p>Complete the investigation of the Box-Ironbark ecosystem recommendations on reserves and other mechanisms for protection</p> <p>Develop an Environmental Management System including a framework for monitoring reserve quality and threats</p> <p>Enter into cooperative management agreements with landholders and indigenous communities for off reserve protected areas</p>	<p>2000</p> <p>Feb 2000</p>	<p>Final report published</p> <p>Two major agreements</p>	<p>reserves framework to be developed in 2000/01.</p> <p>Draft recommendations report released. Final due in December 2000</p> <p>Final report published</p> <p>Dependent and funding</p>
<p>Many organisations, including Bushcare, Landcare, Trust for Nature, DNRE Catchment and Agricultural Services extension staff, Land for Wildlife, and Greening Australia , all have community education included in their charter. While schools are relatively well serviced (with native vegetation and biodiversity values embedded in the environmental education curricula), the general approach to educating adults needs further development. Landholders are also specifically targeted via the activities of Bushcare, Landcare, Trust for Nature, Land for Wildlife, Greening Australia, etc. Victorian Landcare has about 700 groups and an estimated membership of over 20,000. The Land for Wildlife program, was developed in the 1980s to “provide a voluntary vehicle for landholders to actively and openly protect, enhance and restore wildlife habitat on their properties. The scheme now has over 4800 members who manage over 120,000 hectares throughout the State.</p>			
<p>Review, publish and distribute fire management guidelines for private land</p> <p>Develop a data base that; collates regional native vegetation management activities, including NVR permit applications, at a state wide level and is available on the internet.</p> <p>Provide tree cover mapping and EVC mapping on the internet</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>1. June 2000 Pilot d'base</p> <p>2. 2001 d'base established</p> <p>June 2001</p>	<p>Guidelines distributed</p> <p>Pilot appropriate method</p> <p>Database established</p> <p>Mapping available on internet.</p>	<p>CFA and LFW are jointly developing guidelines for private lands - draft available methods in development, progress trials with LGA by December</p> <p>EVC mapping done for 70-80% of state but not on WWW yet</p>
<p>Plan and deliver the Box-Ironbark ecology course. Also Mallee, Alpine and Grasslands Ecology courses.</p>	<p>June 2000</p>	<p>Courses delivered</p>	<p>NRE delivered Box Ironbark (30 participants) & Alpine (48) works in partnership with GAV to deliver Grasslands Courses (25)</p> <p>Evaluation of Box Ironbark completed, feedback excellent. Paper (1) given on this</p>

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
<p>Preparation of education resource materials</p> <p>Co-ordinate extension programs and advice to landholders via Catchment Management Authorities</p> <p>Promote riparian native vegetation management in Waterwatch programs</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p>	<p>Materials released</p> <p>Extension efforts complementary & co-ordinated</p>	<p>course at 8th annual Symposium of International Society of Social & Resource Management, Washington, USA. Joint paper (2) published in Aust Journal of Env Educ.</p> <p>Victoria's Biodiversity Education Resource Books 1 & 2 2x 1000 copies published. Workshop sessions given at Teacher Subject Association Conferences (Geography, Science, Environmental Education).</p> <p>Bushcare facilitators role has emphasised coordination and coordinated extension</p>
<p>There is no R&D strategy and as yet, no clearly designated R&D budget. The State is well advanced with R&D associated with mapping and inventory aspects. As well as technical biophysical issues, there is a need for a greater understanding of the human dimension – for example, factors affecting uptake of incentives and works. Some work has commenced in grassland areas on these issues.</p>			
<p>Preparation of guidelines for the planning and conduct of ecological burning</p> <p>Develop a framework preparation of ecologically –based fire regimes for key vegetation types</p> <p>Investigation of biological control techniques for four major environmental weeds</p>	<p>Dec 1999</p> <p>June 2000</p> <p>June 2000</p>	<p>Guidelines prepared</p> <p>Pilot area trialed</p>	<p>Completed October</p> <p>Under way this year with detailed plans prepared 3 areas</p> <p>Bio control work funded at KTRI on four environmental weeds</p>
<p>There is a range of grants programs operating in Victoria, including Tree Victoria, 2020 Revegetate Victoria, Landcare, Bushcare and the Land Protection Incentive Scheme. Tree Victoria has operated since 1989 and provides ~\$500,000 per annum in grants to various community groups. 2020 Revegetate Victoria has an even more substantial grants element. Landcare and Bushcare provide funds for both staff positions and on-ground works. Landcare has remained a relatively strong movement throughout Victoria. Bushcare is providing funding for facilitators attached to each CMA and to technical support via Greening Australia. The Land Protection Incentive Scheme has also provided ~\$1 million mostly for vegetation protection and revegetation. A range of market-based incentives is being investigated including the use of ‘auction’ systems aimed at allocating scarce resources efficiently. At present these mechanisms are in the early stages of</p>			

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
development.			
Examination of innovative voluntary mechanisms and opportunities to improve coordination among existing programs	June 2000		Draft discussion papers prepared including 1. an overview of organisations, resources and mechanisms and 2. policy options for voluntary mechanisms. Major contributions toward completing draft ANZECC papers 'Fertile Ground – a framework for nature conservation on private land in Australia and New Zealand' and 'A model for best practice monitoring and evaluation of programs for nature conservation on private land'
Enter into management agreements to protect the Craigieburn grasslands	Dec 1999	Agreements signed	
Provide priority vegetation types and management actions in RVP to optimise funding allocation for NRM	June 2001	Funding allocated according to RVP priorities.	Conservation and habitat quality identified at 1:100000 - based on conservation significance
Examination of innovative market mechanisms for native vegetation management on private land, including auctions for management contracts	April 2000	Pilot program developed	Program development completed, pilot project due to commence November 2000
Continue the use of the revolving fund for the purchase and resale of covenanted land	ongoing		Trust for Nature has continued to operate the revolving fund. In 99/00, four properties totalling 234 ha were purchased through the fund.
Develop an active local government environment network that facilitates uptake of incentive mechanisms for local government	June 2001 June 2002	30% of local governments offer rate rebates for native vegetation management 50%	49 out of 78 LGA have some kind of incentive for biodiversity conservation - 14 are grants program. There are only a few rate rebates and the progress indicator needs to reflect the diversity of incentives being trialed - Indigo, Nilumbik and Wellington offer rate rebates
The <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act</i> (1988) (FFG) and the Native Vegetation Provisions in Victorian Planning Schemes are the key regulatory approaches to native vegetation management in Victoria. The FFG requires the assessment of the status of ecological communities and individual species and the preparation and implementation of Action Statements for those deemed 'threatened'. The native vegetation provisions require (with some exemptions) a planning permit for the removal, destruction or lopping of all native vegetation. These mechanisms are supplemented by the Code of Forest Practice for Timber Production.			

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
Audit compliance of Code of Forest Practice for Timber Production and recommend actions to improve compliance where necessary	June 2000	Audit results widely available and amelioration actions identified	Code audit conducted annually and published.
Promote retention and restoration of native vegetation on water frontages through licence conditions	2000		8 Crown Water Frontage (CWF) CMA regional reviews and State-wide summary review complete. Preparation of 2 detailed frontage management plans in progress. Commencement of process for CWF management transfer from NRE to CMAs is pending approval of the Minister. The transfer will enable appropriate changes to licence conditions to promote retention and restoration of native vegetation.
Revise the guidelines for the preparation of action statements	June 2000	Revised guidelines prepared	
Prepare priority action statements and recovery plans	June 2000	Plans approved	
Implement completed recovery plans	June 2000	Plans implemented	
Preparation and maintenance of state-wide threatened species lists	June 2000	Draft Plans completed	
Draft Threat Abatement Plans for environmental weeds, Cinnamon Fungus and native orchid collection	June 2000		
Improve monitoring, reporting and enforcement of the native vegetation provisions by local government through the development by NRE of a state-wide database of native vegetation losses and gains.	Ongoing		Regional data net will support this - functional June 2001
Provide improved tools for detecting illegal native vegetation clearance	December 2000	Tree cover maps readily available to local Government	Module for LGA Satellite images and data base of permits used
Provide improved decision making tools for permit application assessment and provide training in use of these tools	June 2000	Adoption of tools by Local Government where appropriate	Guidelines and RYPs The Habitat-hectares and the Net Gain approaches will improve decision -making for permit applications. A Statewide database for planning permit records are also planned.
Victoria needs to build on its substantial mapping and monitoring achievements to			

Action	Timeframe	Success Measure	Report
provide a picture of the quality of the existing native vegetation. Development of a method for on ground assessment of vegetation quality is well progressed. The big challenge is to extend vegetation quality assessment to the catchment scale.			
<p>Develop an approved framework for reporting key biodiversity assets (inc native vegetation) across Victoria</p> <p>Ensure biodiversity monitoring is complementary to national and other systems</p> <p>Prepare first bioregional reports</p> <p>Develop and implement a measuring and accounting method for losses and gains in extent and quality of native vegetation.</p> <p>Develop effective on ground quality measurement and monitoring</p>	<p>Dec 1999</p> <p>Development end 1999. Implementation 2001</p> <p>December 1999 December 2000</p>	<p>Framework accepted</p> <p>Reports completed</p> <p>Habitat Hectare method finalised</p> <p>Start recording Vegetation Quality on GIS layer of EVCs & Tree cover maps at 1:25,000 scale</p> <p>Vegetation Quality Assessment Method used in NVR and EIS assessments</p>	<p>Vic biodiversity strategy</p> <p>Biodiversity and vegetation monitoring is linked to Catchment monitoring etc</p> <p>All biodiversity planning is based on bioregions including IBRA and biodiversity provinces</p> <p>Data to support net gain principle feeds into bio regional planning and CMA plans.</p> <p>Conservation priorities are determined.</p> <p>Threatened species state wide audit identified that 90% of tasks not done - a risk framework for TS intervention now being used.</p> <p>Vegetation condition monitoring under way</p> <p>3 year project to validate habitat hectares for selected EVCs targeted to nature conservation significance and multiple benefits eg gold fields and NE Vic.</p> <p>State vegetation framework will cement this and amend Vic Planning Systems</p>

3.4 Linking Work Plan Outputs with National Vegetation Framework Desired Outcomes

Victoria acknowledges the multiple benefits of native vegetation management and conservation and is attempting to develop robust indices of benefit to support regional and local planning for:

- Catchment health;
- Threatened species management; and
- Biodiversity conservation.

Although native vegetation management in Victoria is seeking multiple outcomes (eg. biodiversity and land and water resource protection), the Work Plan focussed on addressing identified NVF challenges. Consequently the Victorian workshop participants saw little value in linking Work Plan outputs against non-biodiversity outcomes. This activity was not undertaken in the review workshop.

3.5 Best Management Practices – Incentives

The Victorian vegetation managers at the workshop selected Incentives for their case study, based on a comparative strength and recent development in best management practice in that area. The case study was developed during the workshop, the outcomes are summarised below.

In Victoria voluntary vegetation management programs have reached many land-owners. The members of the Land for Wildlife scheme (LFW) manage more than 140000 hectares of Victoria. The stricter Conservation Covenants cover a further 10,000 hectares.

In Victoria incentives have included advice to landholders on native vegetation management (including broader catchment management issues) and grants programs. The grants programs provide funds for the purchase of materials for native vegetation protection and revegetation as well as the treatment of weeds and pest animals. Landholders contribute in-kind labour to match the funding. This approach is complemented by voluntary management programs.

Given this history with voluntary vegetation management programs and Conservation Covenants, Victoria is now moving to enhance its incentives programs with the funding of management agreements. These agreements will have differing degrees of complexity and will be more or less prescriptive depending on the land and vegetation involved.

Victoria will be attempting an innovative auctioning system to establishing some of these agreements and to target the funding in the most cost-effective manner. The auctions will target priority EVCs where vegetation on private land is a high priority for conservation. Under the planned auction systems land-holders will nominate what they will do in terms of changing the use and management of vegetated land eg:

- Stop grazing.
- Stop firewood harvesting.

- Fencing.
- Controlling weeds and feral animals, etc.

The government may agree to "purchase" the changed management if the offer meets their priorities at an acceptable price. This year a trial will be under taken. It will target priority regions where there is good information and support in the community. The trial will be designed to learn about the process and develop protocols and methods for:

- Developing a biodiversity benefit index.
- Improving the auction system.
- Determining the necessary information disclosure requirements.

The auctions may focus on permanent and decadal (10 years) management agreements. Permanent covenants will score higher than shorter-term agreements. The State has a view as to its priorities for change - eg via maps of preferred locations and or data on species but may not necessarily disclose this prior to the auctions. The State will invite land-holders to 'bid' for incentive payments. Land-holders will offer parcels of land and management packages eg 50 hectares of bush type X maintained weed free, with no grazing or firewood harvesting.

The State will assess offers and look for the least-cost way to achieve an outcome. The State will try to estimate the value of the quality enhancement resulting from the offer. The compliance effort will be based on random inspection a bit like the ATO, and the "moral hazard" of non-compliance.

The trial will focus on developing the mechanisms for operating a management agreement program through the auction mechanism. It is assumed that the competitive element will drive the price of conserving private bush down. Unlike grants it is assumed that it will provide a greater capacity and certainty to account for results. It also offers an alternative to the acquisition of land for parks and a mechanism for protecting patches that are only parts of titles.

Finally, it is hoped that the creation of a market for conservation via the auctions will provide a powerful incentive for learning about bush. The farmers in the future may learn about conservation management like they have learnt about the details of managing pastures or futures markets.

3.6 Evaluating Against NVF Vision and Goals

The overall long-term impact of the Victorian Draft Work Plan was assessed against the long-term goals of the NVF using several process indicators. Progress against these indicators was discussed and recorded during the workshop. The outcomes against these indicators are summarised in Table 3.

Table 4 : Progress Against Long-Term NVF Goals

Outcome	Plausible process indicators	Comments on Progress
A reversal in the long term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation (by June 2001)	Planning undertaken.	Planning at the regional scale is well in hand. Draft Regional Plans for each CMA and CaLP region are currently out for public comment.
	Plans resourced and being implemented	Victoria is putting on 10 new specialist people to assist with implementation of the RVPs.
	People with knowledge and skills required	Still need to develop capacity in local government
	Monitoring and evaluation of all aspects leading to revision of plans	Not yet, have the general process in place but not specifically for these plans.

Outcome	Plausible process indicators	Comments on Progress
Conservation and where appropriate, restoration of native vegetation to maintain and enhance biodiversity, protect water quality and conserve soil resources, including on private land managed for agriculture, forestry and urban development	Native vegetation is protected by effective clearing controls on all land	It is in place but still have deficiencies – it is relatively effective in Australia. Plans are for a detailed review see Draft NVP
	Programs in place to restore, where appropriate, native vegetation to maintain/enhance biodiversity and protect land and water resources on private land	Have detailed planning to show options and priorities for action. Are developing the tools but the technology to do it still has gaps. Need to develop targeted manuals.
	Programs and measures in place to encourage development and adoption of best management practices for native vegetation management in agricultural, forest and urban enterprises	Not all in place. Recognise the need for better knowledge.
	Appropriate monitoring and assessment programs are in place to detect change in native vegetation quantity [and quality] and geographic extent	Well in hand see Draft NVP

Outcome	Plausible process indicators	Comments on Progress
Retention and enhancement of biodiversity and native vegetation at both regional and national levels	Appropriate environment protection policies and measures are in place to protect biodiversity at regional and national levels	Clearing controls, Victorian Biodiversity Strategy, Regional Vegetation Plans
	Biodiversity and native vegetation targets are set and measures are in place to achieve those targets at both regional and national levels	Victoria has a net gain target. Regional Plans set specific targets eg 15%
	Appropriate monitoring and assessment programs are in place to detect change in native vegetation biodiversity	Yes

Outcome	Plausible process indicators	Comments on Progress
An improvement in the condition of existing native vegetation	Policies and programs are in place to manage native vegetation to conserve condition as well as cover- through duty of care; native vegetation covenants, partnerships etc	Yes to all. Duty of care limited to the prevention of off-site effects through proper land management is within the CALP Act and vegetation clearing controls require landholders to obtain a permit to remove native vegetation and have generally stopped broadscale clearing. Have Land for Wildlife agreements and programs and the Vic Conservation Act sets up Trust for Nature covenants
	Policies and programs are in place to restore native vegetation quality where appropriate	Policies are in the Draft NVP
	Appropriate monitoring and assessment programs are in place to detect change in native vegetation quality	Yes

4 Evaluation of Progress against Work Plan Commitments and the National Framework

4.1 Assessment of the Victoria Work Plan and Implementation

Of the 38 Key Challenges (stated in the Dore report) only three did not score a rating of medium or higher. This indicates that the listed activities align well and have a direct relationship to the key challenges and will generally have a medium or high impact in addressing that Key Challenge. Twenty two of the 38 were scored as having Activities that will provide high influence on achieving the Key Challenge. The Key Challenges that are identified as not being well addressed by current activities are:

- Enhancing the understanding of what motivates landholders to improve management practices.
- Showing appreciation to volunteers to retain their interest and involvement.
- Reviewing and focusing R&D efforts.

Each of these Key Challenges relate to Communication and Capacity Building this may indicate a need for strengthening efforts in that area. Correspondingly seven of nine Planning and Assessment Key Challenges were indicated as having activities that provide high impact on addressing those challenges. This shows Victoria's strength in state-wide and regional planning and native vegetation assessment.

Major achievements include:

- The release of Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework and the 10 Regional Native Vegetation Plans.
- All sections within NRE have agreed on actions to improve biodiversity conservation. This is to be extended to all relevant agencies - eg Vic Roads have adopted net gain.
- Completed 1:25000 maps support decisions re enhancement and restoration, this will be used to support incentive and regulation monitoring.
- Developed an approach to remote sensing of extent and to modelling of indicative condition and habitat value at 1:25 000 for a region.
- Develop an agreed approach to the application of the 'no net loss' concept at the local, regional and state levels and prepared a report on 'no net loss' principle and the 'Habitat Hectare' accounting system.
- Investigating innovative market mechanisms for native vegetation management on private land, including auctions for management contracts, have a pilot project due to commence in November 2000.
- Prepared a report on Biodiversity conservation in Environmental Management Systems used in agriculture.
- Trust for Nature has continued to operate the revolving fund, in 99/00, four properties totalling 234 ha were purchased through the fund.
- Biodiversity and vegetation monitoring is linked to Catchment monitoring activities.
- All Biodiversity planning is based on bioregions including IBRA and biodiversity provinces.

- Data to support net gain principle feeds into bio regional planning and CMA plans.

Most activities were recorded as being on-target, completed or ongoing as per plan. However, no progress was noted on a state-wide audit of the consistency and coverage of sites of significance, and for the aim of providing tree cover mapping and EVC mapping on the internet, the EVC mapping is done for 70-80% of state but is not currently on the internet.

4.2 Improvements to Victoria Work Plan

At the time of the review Victoria had their State Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework, and their 10 Regional Native Vegetation Plans out for public comment. The state-wide document provides a guiding overview for native vegetation management within Victoria's regional approach to integrated catchment management. These plans adopt a "net gain" principle and propose a new native vegetation accounting system to improve the transparency and consistency of decision making for native vegetation. In this they aim for better than no net loss and are consistent with the National Framework with that objective.

These plans represent the next major step for native vegetation management in Victoria. These draft plans will be major drivers of native vegetation management in Victoria. As these plans were out for public comment at the time of the review it was seen by the workshop to be inappropriate to revise Victoria's National Framework Work Plan until after the Final Frameworks are agreed. The Standing Committee on Conservation has agreed the jurisdictions will report to the June 2001 meeting of ANZECC on changes to their workplans.

4.3 Jurisdiction Progress against the National Vegetation Framework

For addressing the reversal in the long term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation Victoria has a process to assess the extent and quality of native vegetation, and has planning processes at the regional scale to make use of this information. Draft Regional Vegetation Plans for each CMA and CALP region are currently out for public comment as is Victoria's Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework. NRE is to employ 10 new specialist people to assist with implementation of the RVPs. It is acknowledged that there is still a need to develop capacity in local government. Victoria has a general monitoring process in place but not specifically for these plans which will become a major driver for vegetation management in Victoria.

Although Victoria has made significant progress in protecting their native vegetation they are still losing and estimated 2,500 hectares a year and the quality of the remaining vegetation continues to decline. Of particular concern is the continuing decline of wide spaced remnants in agricultural areas and loss of vegetation due to urban expansion. Victoria's draft Vegetation Management Framework recognises that there has been no comprehensive review of native vegetation retention controls since 1989 when the Native Vegetation Retention controls were introduced, and that a closer look at how the NVR is implemented is required. This action is proposed.

As a result of new mapping and vegetation assessment capacity Victoria has a process for showing options and priorities for restoration and protection. There are still gaps in knowledge of restoration requirements and much of the local knowledge that has been learned from experience is not been captured and made widely available. The need for developing restoration guide manuals has been identified.

There are still gaps in programs and measures to encourage development and adoption of best management practices for native vegetation management in agricultural, forest and urban enterprises. Appropriate monitoring and assessment programs are well in hand and in place to detect change in native vegetation quantity and quality and geographic extent.

Native vegetation protection and management is backed by a comprehensive set of legislation, policies, strategies and regional plans. A duty of care relating to the prevention of off-site effects through proper land management is made explicit in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. Victoria has had Native Vegetation Retention controls since 1989, and released its Biodiversity Strategy in 1997. Victoria has a target of net gain and regional plans with specific representation targets. Biodiversity conservation is integrated in each of 10 Regional Catchment Strategies.

4.4 Ongoing Independent Evaluation Arrangements

If regular independent evaluations are undertaken across all jurisdictions it provides a consistent approach. However it is then unlikely to align with other monitoring cycles undertaken in each jurisdiction, for example State of the Environment reporting. It is suggested that once it is agreed that a jurisdiction has satisfactorily aligned their work-plans with the outcomes sought of the National Framework then it may be appropriate to undertake regular Work-plan evaluations on the same cycle as with other jurisdiction monitoring requirements. For example, in Victoria monitoring is undertaken by local government; CMA's and the Victorian Catchment Council; and state agencies in order to meet National environmental reporting requirements. It would be efficient if monitoring requirements could be combined by process and timing.

As the review cycle matures it is essential that the focus shifts from an evaluation of process onto an evaluation of biophysical outcomes. For that to happen it is essential that each jurisdiction develops and applies a capability to assess both the extent and quality of their native vegetation. A degree of uniformity in methods and a timetable for achieving minimum national standards in vegetation assessment is needed.

Agreement on a defined time-table for reaching a range of targets implied in the NVI will support future evaluations. An independent evaluation process would also benefit from having adequate lead times and resources. A process for sharing experience and knowledge across jurisdictions would support future evaluations and the achievement of the desired outcomes, such as adoption of BMP's.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

At the time of the review Victoria had recently released their State Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework, and their 10 Regional Native Vegetation Plans for public comment. These plans adopt a “net gain” principle and propose a new native vegetation accounting system to improve the transparency and consistency of decision making for native vegetation. In this they aim for better than no net loss and are consistent with the National Framework with that objective. As these plans were out for public comment at the time of the review it was seen by the workshop to be inappropriate to revise Victoria’s National Framework Work Plan until after the Final Frameworks are agreed.

Victoria is planning on meeting and exceeding its NVI commitments, as indicated with the release of their Draft Vegetation Management Framework. If the intent of the Victorian Framework persists into the final document, it is a positive example of how community support and political will can drive vegetation protection and restoration beyond the no net loss towards net gain.

The review indicated that the listed activities generally align well and have a direct relationship to Key Challenges and will generally have a medium or high impact in addressing those Key Challenge. Key Challenges that were identified as not being well addressed by current activities are:

- Enhancing the understanding of what motivates landholders to improve management practices.
- Showing appreciation to volunteers to retain their interest and involvement.
- Reviewing and focusing R&D efforts.

Each of these Key Challenges relate to Communication and Capacity Building, this indicates a need for strengthening efforts in that area. Correspondingly seven of nine Planning and Assessment Key Challenges were indicated as having activities that provide high impact on addressing those challenges. This shows Victorias strength in state-wide and regional planning and native vegetation assessment.

Most activities were recorded as being on-target, completed or ongoing as per plan.

Although Victoria has made significant progress in protecting their native vegetation they are still losing and estimated 2,500 hectares a year and the quality of the remaining vegetation continues to decline. Of particular concern is the continuing decline of wide spaced remnants in agricultural areas and loss of vegetation due to urban expansion. Victoria’s draft Vegetation Management Framework recognises that there has been no comprehensive review of native vegetation retention controls since 1989 when the Native Vegetation Retention controls (NVR) were introduced, and that a closer look at how the NVR is implemented is required. This action is proposed in the Victorian Draft Vegetation Management Framework.

As the Work Plan review process matures it is essential that the focus shifts from an evaluation of process onto an evaluation of biophysical outcomes. For that to happen it is essential that each jurisdiction develops and applies the capability to assess both the extent and quality of their native vegetation. A degree of uniformity in methods and a timetable for achieving minimum national standards in vegetation assessment is needed.

There must be adequate capacity to monitor vegetation quality and quantity in each state. It is essential that each jurisdiction develops and applies a capability to assess both the extent and quality of their native vegetation. A degree of uniformity in methods and a timetable for achieving minimum national standards in vegetation assessment is needed and should be formally agreed to by each State. Each state should also ensure that it has or is developing the capacity to assess no net loss by an agreed date.

Recommendation 1 : That each jurisdiction adopt Key Challenges and associated actions to provide capacity to monitor extent and quality of native vegetation.

Recommendation 2 : That by 2002 each State should have and be using this capability.

If the Commonwealth funds States that are slow in adopting the key actions necessary to achieve the NVI goals it is providing a powerful perverse incentive. It is rewarding the last movers and sending a message to the States that moved first and at their own expense that it pays to slow down. A way around this "*first mover disadvantage*" is to ensure that there is fair distribution of funds to first movers that can be used to target the advancement of innovative programs, for example the funding of restoration and incentives programs.

Recommendation 3 : Ensure that funding processes provide a fair distribution of funds to first movers that can be used to target the advancement of innovative programs.

The NVI could play an important role in ensuring the best of each jurisdiction is seen, understood and taken up by the others. To do this, review processes need to include a communication process between jurisdictions.

Recommendation 4 : That a bi-annual national conference or workshop on the NVI is scheduled to coincide and support future evaluations and the exchange of information on veg management

Glossary

Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
ANZECC	Australia New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council
BMP	Best Management Practice
CALP	Catchment and Land Protection
CMA	Catchment Management Authorities
DNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
EA	Environment Australia
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Classes
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia
LFW	Land for Wildlife
MMM	Management and Monitoring Mechanism
NVF	National Vegetation Framework
NVI	National Vegetation Inventory
NVR	Native Vegetation Retention
SCC	Standing Committee on Conservation
TOR	Terms of Reference
WP	Work Plan

