

# Minutes



## Executive Meeting 5/03

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2003  
9.30am to 11.30am

**Meeting open:** 9.40am

**Attendees :** Duncan Malcolm (Gippsland Coastal Board, Acting Chair), John Mitchell (Gippsland Water), John Lovering (Gippsland Research Coordination Group), Geoff Hocking (WGCMA)(arr 10am), Graeme Dear (ECGMA)(arr 10am), Alan Freitag (DSE)(arr 11.30am), Neville Penrose (DPI), Carol Jeffs (GINRF)

**Apologies :** Barry Hart (Chair), Richard Hancock (GLGN), Mick Harding (Gippsland Cultural Heritage Unit), Tony Edgar (DSE)

**Guest:** Dr Gary Richards, Manager and Principle Scientist, Carbon Accounting Team, Australian Greenhouse Office.

### 1. Business arising from Executive meeting 4/03, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2003

#### 1.1 Creating Gippsland's future (discussed following item 3)

Alan Freitag reported that the summary document of Creating Gippsland's Future is to be distributed in hard copy/CD to Reference Group members, following distribution to the steering committee. The document is to be used as an information resource.

#### 1.2 GRCG/GINRF Relationship – ref item 2, page 1, Exec Officer's Report

John Lovering reported that a meeting of Gippsland Research Co-ordination Group on 1st July expressed strong support for merging the GRCG with GINRF, but also expressed concern that GINRF is not organisationally mature enough to absorb financial and governance structures already operating in GRCG.

Two phases of transition are suggested: Interim and Final/Long Term

Interim:

- Maintain current GRCG structure and funding arrangement, with GREEN Inc maintaining banker role and provide financial reports. (to seek funding for this role from Monash \$10000 contribution)
- Move the administration and executive support to GINRF
- GINRF to invoice GREEN Inc for 1 day per week exec support = \$15000 per year.

- Implement a research advisory panel to serve both the GINRF and the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce

Final/Long Term:

- GRCG becomes research advisory panel of GINRF (sub committee) (Gippsland Lakes Taskforce?)
- All support provided by GINRF including financial
- Member contributions come to GINRF as part of its long term funding strategy.

John Lovering reported that the Research Advisory Panel has been set up with a membership of John Lovering, Barry Hart, Roger Grayson, Chris Cocklin (Geographer/Economist Monash Environment Institute), Sam Adeloju (Head of School of Applied Sciences, Monash Gippsland), David Nash; the first meeting being held on Friday 15th August, to assess a set of research proposals from the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce.

The proposed role of the Research Advisory Panel is to scope, assess and advise on the feasibility of research, broker partnerships and foster collaboration between researchers. This group has also been asked by the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce to report back on gaps in current research and some priority for research that needs to be commissioned.

There was some concern expressed that there should be a transparent process in the case where research applicants also form part of the Panel. It is also requested that GRCG member organisations be made aware of the Research Advisory Panel

The GINRF Executive notes and accepts:

- GINRF and GRCG will continue to exchange information and work closely together in the interim period
- GRCG will focus more on research scoping, evaluation and assessment, than on stakeholder interaction
- A formal merger can take place at such time that the two groups are more organisationally aligned.

**Action: Duncan Malcolm to check with Chris Barry that the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce has communicated its expectations to the Research Advisory Panel, regarding both the processing of research proposals and the reporting back of research needs/gaps to the GLTF.**

### 1.3 Monitoring/Evaluation/Reporting Subcommittee

The last Executive meeting requested that a small group be set up to further develop the Report Card. Since then, the East Gippsland CMA, West Gippsland CMA and the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce/Coastal Board have identified an opportunity to broaden the brief of such a group to include MER needs/activities across the whole Gippsland region.

Under this proposal, a small committee will be formed to steer a project to develop an integrated MER Framework for the whole Gippsland region, including the development of the Report Card. The steering committee will be comprised of representatives from WGCMA, EGCMA, DSE, DPI, GCB. A project officer will be

appointed 2 days per week for a period of 12 months, with budget contributed from WGCMA, EGCMA and GLTF.

Some concern expressed about governance structures of the MER steering committee and the GINRF in general. General discussion in Item 5.

**Action: Graeme Dear, Geoff Hocking and Andrew Buckley/Chris Barry to determine details of the MER project brief and governance arrangements; report back at next Executive meeting.**

## **2. Executive Officer's Report**

No Discussion

## **3. Presentation: Pilot regional application of the National Carbon Accounting System, Dr Gary Richards**

Dr Gary Richards is Director and Principle Scientist, National Carbon Accounting System, at the Australian Greenhouse Office.

Dr Richards presented an overview of the National Carbon Accounting System model; an integration of mapping and real time measurements, incorporating all information management disciplines and data sources.

The model features fine resolution (sub-hectare level, 25 m grid scale) from 1972 – 2002 and continues to be updated. Developed primarily for carbon accounting purposes, the model is now able to be linked to other natural resource modelling, the challenge being to bring all forms of data to the same level of resolution.

The Carbon Accounting System was developed with \$12.5 million of Federal funds, highly leveraged off State Governments and the private sector. The system has emerged as a unique example of low cost, high access, data sharing arrangement. The NCAS continues to operate with data sharing agreements, in particular with the State Governments. The Victorian Government has access to the datasets developed by the NCAS, but Dr Richards is concerned that this information should find its way to the regions.

Dr Richards proposes that Gippsland be used as a pilot application of the NCAS as part of the agreement with the Victorian Government. In return for access to the dataset, the State Government (via the Gippsland community) would be asked to provide some services that would enhance/maintain the system. For example, some field verification and ground truthing of data.

If the Victorian Government agrees to a regional pilot in Gippsland, it would be incumbent upon a group such as GINRF to determine a regional application for NCAS, addressing natural resource management information needs.

**Motion: The GINRF Executive supports the pilot regional application of the National Carbon Accounting System in Gippsland and requests that Dr Gary Richards convey this sentiment to Prof. Lyndsay Neilson. The GINRF Executive offers to auspice a mechanism to support the regional application (project committee) and will formally indicate its willingness to participate to both Australian Greenhouse Office (Dr**

**Gary Richards) and Department of Sustainability and Environment  
(Prof. Lyndsay Neilson).**

**Moved: John Mitchell,  
Second: Geoff Hocking  
Carried unanimously**

**Action: Carol Jeffs to write to both Dr Richards and Prof Neilson, indicating GINRF willingness to participate in a pilot regional application of the National Carbon Accounting System in Gippsland, and offering to auspice an appropriate mechanism to do so.**

#### **4. GINRF Terms of Reference and role of Executive**

Limited time for discussion. Carol Jeffs is proposing a new format for the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding.

**Action: Carol Jeffs to circulate the proposed ToR and MoU for comment by the Executive prior to next meeting.**

#### **5. Structure and Governance of Forum administration**

Discussion carried over from Item 1.3.

Some concern was expressed that the governance surrounding the Forum's operation and executive support is too loose and does not provide adequate guidance or protection for Forum members. Some examples include details of how money is collected and dispersed, how the Forum employs and who employees report to, and the Forum's accountability and reporting lines to government.

There was also concern expressed about exposure to professional/public/personal liability for those members not employed by an agency/authority because the Forum is not incorporated.

Discussion in response to concerns included:

The Forum has been through an extensive and considered process to develop the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding. It was decided some time ago by the Forum members that incorporation was unnecessary and undesirable to meet the goals of the Forum and that an MoU was the appropriate governance mechanism.

The strong intention of the Forum was to resist the creation of another (possibly bureaucratic) organisation, thus allowing the Forum's aims to be carried out by individual agencies that have signed the MoU.

The concerns may reflect a maturing of the GINRF as an organisation and it may be timely to specify governance arrangements in more detail. Thought that such matters could be efficiently dealt with outside the meeting.

**Action: Graeme Dear to incorporate discussion about governance concerns with those of MER project brief (Item 1.3) and propose solutions at the next Executive meeting.**

## 6. Planning for Reference Group meetings for remainder of year

Carol would like to organise a reference group meeting during late October/early November to discuss a 20/30 year vision for NRM in Gippsland. Require the support of Executive members for the whole day.

**Action: Carol Jeffs to canvass Executive members for a reference group meeting date.**

## 7. Other Business

John Mitchell raised the issue of Forest Industry Reform, being one of the priorities for Department of Sustainability and Environment for 2003 - 2006, as outlined in the DSE Corporate Plan.

John Mitchell suggested that planning for the Report Card should begin now, with a possible launch event having more of community focus with school children etc at one of the natural asset locations.

Alan Freitag would like the Executive to note that the restructure of State Government departments to DSE and DPI has resulted in Alan being part of DSE. It is appropriate for Tony Edgar to be the DSE representative on the Executive and for Alan Freitag to be part of the Reference Group. The Executive group thanks Alan for his service.

## 8. Next meeting

September 23 Traralgon 12.00 noon – 2.00pm Traralgon DSE/DPI office

then

November 11 Traralgon 9.30 am – 11.30am Traralgon DSE/DPI office

**Meeting Closed 12.15pm**

**Summary of Actions: GINRF Executive Meeting 12-08-03**

1	Check with Chris Barry that the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce has communicated its expectations to the Research Advisory Panel, regarding both the processing of research proposals and the reporting back of research needs/gaps to the GLTF	Duncan Malcolm
2	Determine details of the MER project brief and governance arrangements; report back at next Executive meeting.	Graeme Dear, Geoff Hocking and Andrew Buckley/Chris Barry
3	Write to both Dr Richards and Prof Neilson, indicating GINRF willingness to participate in a pilot regional application of the National Carbon Accounting System in Gippsland, and offering to auspice an appropriate mechanism to do so.	Carol Jeffs
4	Circulate the proposed ToR and MoU for comment by the Executive prior to next meeting	Carol Jeffs
5	Incorporate discussion about governance concerns with those of MER project brief (Action 2) and propose solutions at the next Executive meeting.	Graeme Dear
6	Canvass Executive members for a reference group meeting date.	Carol Jeffs