

VOICES

in ALMS

Number 5, February 2008

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Voices in ALMS

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The last few months have been busy ones for the ALMS Group.

We have moved from a largely product testing phase to marketing ALMS to landholders and partner organisations. We have gained considerable traction across a broad front thanks largely to continuing support from Elders and an increasing number of partner organisations.

The widespread adoption of ALMS will significantly improve environmental outcomes, the capacity of Australian farmers to differentiate their products, and the delivery of NRM programs. There is great potential for improvement in each of these areas.

HIGHLIGHTS

We are significantly increasing membership.

We have partnerships with an increasing number of regional NRM/CMA organisations and industry groups and continue to attract more partners.

We have concluded a major revision of the Australian EMS Manual, now available from [Peter Crawford](#).

We have completed a major restructuring of the information in the internet based software program, *myEMS*.

We have our training courses registered under the FarmBis program in SA and Queensland.

We have dramatically expanded the number of accredited ALMS trainers and auditors so we can offer training to land managers across Australia.

We have streamlined our certification and compliance audit processes.

There is a desperate need for recognition of landholders improving environmental outcomes. We have the right product



GATE SIGN

The ALMS gate sign has proved a real hit with ALMS members. Become an ALMS Member and fix it to the gate of your property and show your community that you are managing your land in a responsible way.

CLIFTON GROUP achieves ALMS certification

In December last year, the Clifton group landholders in Queensland were presented with their ALMS gate signs in recognition of having achieved ALMS certification.

“We are an active group of farmers strongly committed to good environmental practice. But we get little or no recognition. That is why we have joined ALMS, as a way to get recognition and to further improve our management,” said Clive Strong, one of the Clifton famers. [\(more\)](#)

Rethink needed on allocation of environmental funds

Taxpayers and landholders are not getting value from

and the tools to enable it to be used by practical landholders.

NEW WEBSITE

Want to find out more about ALMS? Find publications to do with ALMS? Become an ALMS member?

It's all there on the new ALMS website. We've completely overhauled the site to make it your one-stop-shop for ALMS. There's information there for members, land managers, policy makers, industry groups and catchment management and natural resource management organisations.

Check it out at www.alms.org.au

We would love to hear what you think and how it could be improved. Send you feedback to Anne Currey, email anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au

IMPROVING RECOGNITION FOR ALMS MEMBERS

This is the hardest part of the ALMS Group charter because it is a 'chicken and egg' situation. We need adoption to get recognition and recognition to get adoption. However, this is also the strength of ALMS because its generation of improvement leads to more recognition, and this leads to more improvement.

The problem lies in the transition phase, and there is a lack of supportive policies and programs. However, we are making progress.

- The 'Green Dollar' Forum in Canberra in May 2007 continues to receive favourable comment.
- We are maintaining our links with the global Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) both directly and through the fact that Elders is a foundation member of the Australian chapter of the SAI.
- More CMAs/NRM boards either already do or are considering giving access to funding programs to landholders who have certified land management plans.
- The work we are doing with our forestry and wool partners is fundamentally important to the development of the use of ALMS as a platform for certifying that landholders are meeting environmental and/or ethical production standards.

environmental funding, according to the ALMS Group. In the wake of a damning Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report on the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and National Action Plan for Salinity (NAPS), Tony Gleeson, CEO of ALMS has called for a fundamental rethink on how taxpayer and landholder funders are being spent. [More](#)

ALMS BOARD

ALMS board members are:

- John Drinan (Chair)
- Jock Douglas (Inaugural Chair)
- Genevieve Carruthers
- Drew English
- Tony Gleeson (CEO)
- Bruce Munday
- Geoff Penton
- Nelson Quinn

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- With the Carbon Coalition and with Carbon Smart we are looking for ways to enable ALMS to be used as a certification platform for carbon sequestration.

Partnership program

Our partnership program has progressed steadily and we now have or are well advanced in negotiating partnerships with:

- Apple and Pear Growers Association SA Inc.
- Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Board
- Australian Wool Innovation Ltd
- Elders
- New South Wales Hunter and Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority
- Private Forestry Southern Queensland Ltd
- Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc.
- South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board
- South East Queensland Catchments
- Victorian North East Catchment Authority

AROUND THE TRAPS

A round up of developments with ALMS around Australia.

Victoria. Our aim is to at least double the strong ALMS contingent in North East CMA, an ALMS partner. [A](#)

Queensland. We are working with Queensland Murray Darling Committee, Private Forestry Southern Queensland and Southern Catchments to implement ALMS with land managers.

New South Wales. [A](#) In 2008 a major eco-ethical wool project across NSW, partnered by Elders, AWI, Landcare Australia and the ALMS Group, as well as related work on carbon certification will examine the use of ALMS as a platform for industry-based recognition schemes. We are also working with Hunter-Central Rivers CMA to implement ALMS.

South Australia. Work on the eco-ethical wool project (see NSW) extends into SA. We are also working with the Apple & Pear Growers Association SA Inc. to find synergies between the Mt Lofty Ranges EMS work and ALMS, with Montague Fresh Pty Ltd with horticultural farms in Victoria and SA and with the Upper Torrens Land Management Project.

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THE BIG PICTURE

ALMS Group CEO, Tony Gleeson, looks at the big picture to do with environmental policy and its implications for ALMS as we head into 2008.

We are about to enter a new NHT phase and it seems that the same old largely failed ideas and approaches will apply. We have supposedly autonomous catchment bodies largely governed by externally determined outcomes, indicators and targets.

We have agencies with short-term funding trying to meet long term objectives. We have planning and accountability processes that kill efficiency, creativity and innovation. We have unbelievably high transaction costs.

And worst of all we have public and private sector interference in review processes so that landholders and taxpayers are fed sanitised versions of realities.

We need new approaches and new tools for the delivery of NRM programs.

We need an effective and cost efficient way of recognising improving land management and we need better alignment between private investment and public interventions, whether they are regulatory or financial. ALMS is designed to achieve both these goals.

There is increasing talk of a demand driven boom in 'soft commodities'. However, studies show that Australian farmers will find it increasingly difficult to compete in undifferentiated markets. They need to be able to access higher priced/higher profit differentiated markets. Australia has the environment, knowledge, skills and systems like ALMS to enable product differentiation on environmental grounds but, at the organisational level, it now lacks the vision and leadership to do it.

We need new approaches and new tools for the delivery of NRM programs. That is what the ALMS Group is working toward through using opportunities to influence policy, and by providing a practical and robust system for recognising improving land management irrespective of the type of land use/industry.