

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, and extension of the Natural Heritage Trust funding distribution maps

The attached maps highlight the distribution of State and Commonwealth funds provided under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2). Specifically, they show the geographic allocation of funds throughout Western Australia's natural resource management (NRM) regions in resource assessment, on-ground action, capacity building and planning. They also show those areas where multiple actions have occurred during the life of programs, which appear most prominently in the State's Avon region.

The maps show that the State's southwest land division received a reasonably equitable spread of NRM investment and that the bulk of the funds were allocated for on-ground activity – in fact more than 80 per cent of funds were allocated to on-ground protection of land, water, biodiversity, and coastal and marine assets. Estimates suggest every dollar of public funding leverages on average two dollars of private funding. Therefore, the maps indicate a consistent level of support and resourcing throughout the State by community, industry and non-government stakeholders for NRM. The lower distribution of funding to the rangelands is likely the result of the region's size and isolation, and because other than the Ord River Irrigation Area, where salinity is a particular issue, the region only qualified for NHT2 funding. It is also worth noting that funding in the rangelands is restricted primarily to the 'pastoral' rangelands where pastoral and Aboriginal land managers live, and where the State has a significant conservation reserve – the central desert area is largely unpopulated and designated Unallocated Crown Land.

The maps also provide a tool for assessing future investment decisions in various geographical areas, and indicate key natural resource assets for which additional or lesser investment may be warranted. For example, the maps for the South Coast and South West regions show high levels of on-ground investment in biodiversity and water resource recovery catchments, which is consistent with the State's long terms commitment to address salinity in these areas. They also show the extent of past investment in current Government priority areas such as the Ord River Irrigation Area, Peel-Harvey, Collie River catchment and Fitzgerald River National Park. The maps also highlight areas where significant investment in resource assessment and planning has been made, particularly in the Perth NRM region and along the State's southern coastline, and therefore, where future on-ground investment is warranted to implement key findings resulting from this investment.

While the geographic spread of investment is fairly consistent, the maps do highlight funding gaps that may require assessment. These areas for example, may indicate low participation rates or a lack of community capacity to implement NRM actions. Where such a situation coincides with a priority State asset, investment in capacity building and additional planning may be required to facilitate community and industry action, and leverage private resources.