

# *SEGRA Conference Presentation*

## Facing the Economic Imperative: Preparing a Regional Business for the Future

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# *South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is ....*

a not-for-profit organisation which is recognised as the peak regional NRM group in the south coast of Western Australia, working with the community to improve the environment by:

- preserving and protecting unique plants and animals,
- managing land and waterways sustainably and economically, and
- sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.

# *Factors driving change.....*

1. South Coast NRM is solely reliant on government funding for its activities ....
  - Late 2007 a new Australian government was elected, bringing a change in NRM policy priorities and change in NRM funding arrangements.
  - In early 2008 it became clear that funding arrangements were about to change, with the added expectation that future government funds in the area of Natural Resource Management would be increasingly competitively based.

# *Factors driving change....*

2. Rapid growth of the organisation between 2004-2008 resulted in an outstripping of existing infrastructure and an increasing level of dysfunction and frustration across the organisation.

## *The driving factors indicated a need to..*

- restructure the organisation at both governance and operational levels to ensure it had the infrastructure capacity for anticipated future growth and change, and
- review the organisation's business strategy in anticipation of reducing reliance on government funding in the future.

# *In May 2008 ....*

- The substantial task of planning and implementing a total restructure of the organisation and its governance arrangements was commenced, with the aim of maintaining its core business whilst also creating flexibility to explore new business opportunities.
- Soon after, entrepreneurial business development activities were commenced to explore scope for generating income streams independent of government funding.

*As a not-for-profit organisation,*

whose stated mission is to 'advance the protection and preservation of natural assets in the South Coast Region' (South

Coast NRM Corporate Plan 2009-2010, p.1), it was determined that a social enterprise approach was the most appropriate model to use in taking a new business direction for the organisation whilst at the same time maintaining its stated mission.

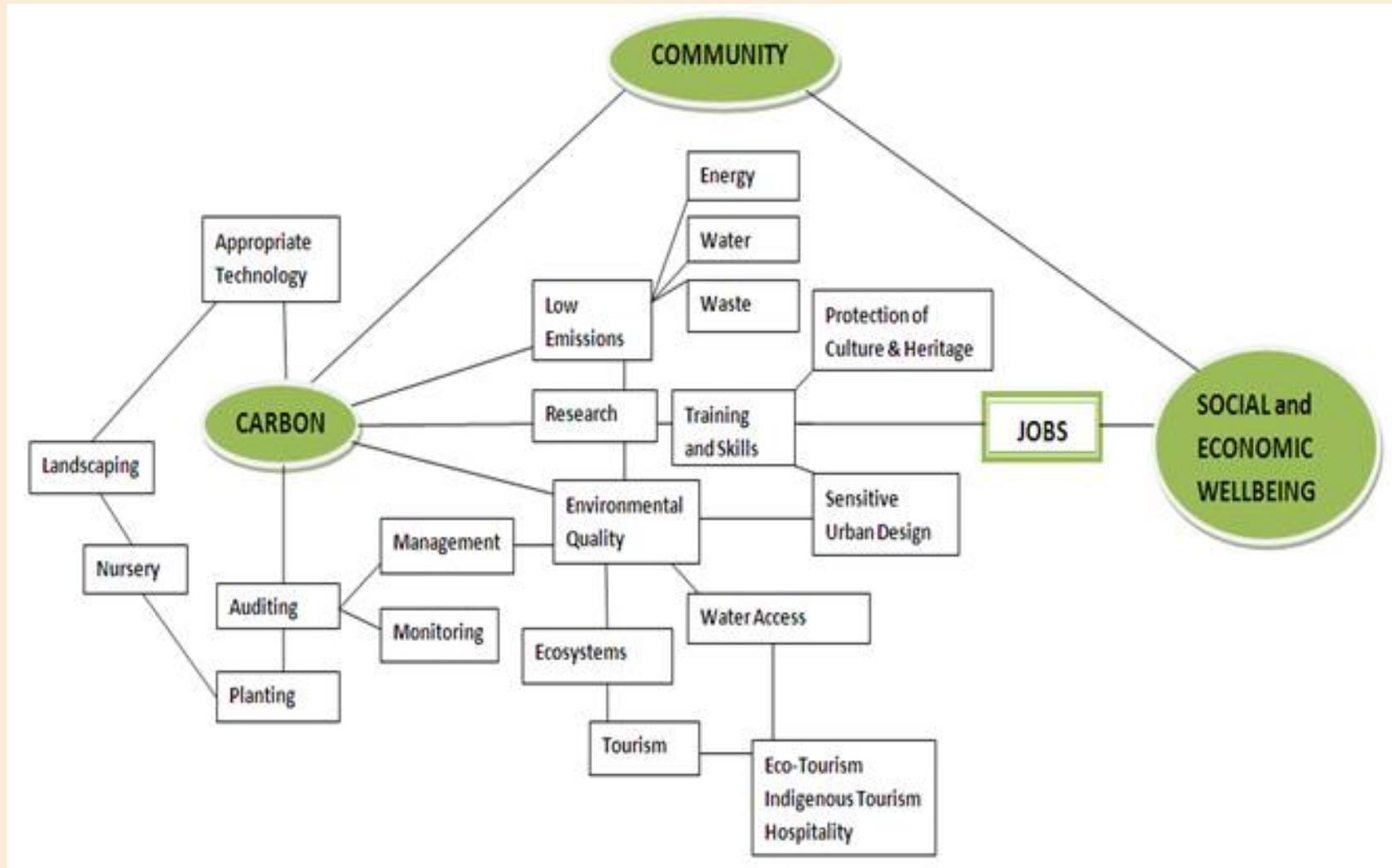
# *A social enterprise approach is ...*

- a means by which people come together and use market based ventures to achieve agreed social ends. It is characterised by entrepreneurship and creativity, with a focus on community rather than individual profit (Adelaide Central Mission 2002).
- It was agreed that the organisation's current core business of NRM Project and Contract Management would form the basis of the South Coast NRM *Social Enterprise*.

# *New directions and a new mix*

- To assist in providing a holistic view, a business opportunities concept map was developed drawing on current core activities and connecting them to potential new income generating opportunities.

# Business Opportunities Concept Map



# *Through the concept map ...*

- It became evident that many potential new business opportunities were already embedded in current business activities, but required some rearranging or reorganising to become income generating.
- The South Coast NRM Social Enterprise Wheel was then developed to specify potential income generating business areas, with scope to value-add by linking various activities across the various 'new' business areas. Any income generated would then be returned to core business activities.

# South Coast NRM Social Enterprise Model



# *Some examples....*

- Field based teams currently undertaking NRM revegetation and restoration work could be engaged for maintenance work in large tree holdings for anticipated carbon offset activities
- Events organising on a larger scale
- Provision of NRM skills as basis of agreements with local government eg: weed management, storm water management, input to urban design
- Working with local CCI to provide NRM tourism and cultural tourism activities and value-add by connecting to other local businesses eg: local food and wine, existing tour operations.

# *Early days ... but promising*

- Even though the shift in business emphasis at South Coast NRM is still in its initial stages, early indications and responses have been extremely positive and often fast moving.
- It is recognised that long term viability of the organisation is contingent on its capacity to go beyond the 'tried and true' business practices of the past and to take the lead to create and/or respond to new opportunities in a timely and responsible manner.