

SEGRA Conference October 2009.

Paper Title: Facing the Economic Imperative: Preparing a Regional Business for the Future.

Even in current difficult financial times, opportunities and prospects for regional Australia, in particular Western Australia, remain strong. South Coast NRM Inc. is a not-for-profit natural resource management organisation based in Albany and operating across the South Coast Region of Western Australia. In the face of diminishing funds, this organisation has had to review its business strategy with the aim of creating new income streams through value adding to core business. This has required a substantial restructure of the organisation and its governance. It also included developing a concept map reflecting a range of products and services that could lead to improved business and employment opportunities whilst protecting, enhancing and promoting the unique natural resource qualities of the South Coast Region. These proposed activities include exploring business opportunities through a social enterprise approach as well as initiatives in the proposed carbon market, Indigenous and environmental tourism, and sustainability auditing.

This business initiative required a mix of thinking to commence a shift in the way we do business in natural resource management, and also exploring new business opportunities for the long term sustainability of the organisation. In moving these ideas to actions, this shift included recognition of the need to form strategic partnerships based on mutual benefits for all stakeholders, whilst at the same time maintaining the organisation's core values.

Although still in its early stages, this shift in business focus and associated early effort show promise in sourcing new funding streams for the organisation.

Presenters:

- Dr Dell Dennis, Strategic Development Advisor
- Mr Rob Edkins, CEO

South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.
39 Mercer Rd Albany Western Australia

Biographies

Dr. Dell Dennis completed her doctorate through the University of Newcastle NSW where she investigated issues relating to effective workplace change in large organisations, with particular emphasis on the human side of change. She has worked as a consultant in the field of Human Resource Management with primary focus on Organisational and Human Resource Development in a range of urban, rural, and remote government and industry settings across Australia. She has also worked in management and specialist HR and OD roles in Papua New Guinea and Cambodia. In addition, Dr Dennis has lectured in Business studies at the University of Western Australia and the University of Notre Dame-Australia. More recently she has worked in the not-for-profit sector and in her current role with South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. she has advised on a restructure for the organisation and is now involved in implementing the organisation's business development strategy.

Rob Edkins comes from a farming background in Arthur River, Western Australia where he and his parents ran a sheep farm. They were conducting 'landcare activities' for as long as he can remember. After leaving school Rob went to live in England where he managed several farming operations and also went to agricultural college. On returning to Western Australia he made the

decision to go to university where he completed a Bachelor of Science degree (Multidisciplinary - biology and geography) and completed his Honours. Rob was first employed in the natural resource management industry in 1995 under the Swan Avon Integrated Catchment Management Program working for the Department of Agriculture in Northam. In 1998 he was seconded to manage the Avon Catchment Council, and for 18 months he was directly involved in the development of the Avon Regional NRM Strategy. In 2004 Rob joined South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team as CEO (now South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc). He started with a staff of five and now manages a program with over 40 employees and an annual budget of over 15 million dollars across the South Coast Region, covering the wide spectrum of natural resource management issues.