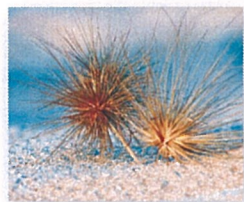




What does Rangelands NRM do?



- We are a non-government, not-for-profit organisation responsible for the natural resource management of the rangelands region of Western Australia.



- We facilitate the management of natural assets to support environmentally, socially, and economically enriched communities within the WA rangelands.



- We work closely with our partners in government agencies, non-government groups, private businesses, and the community.



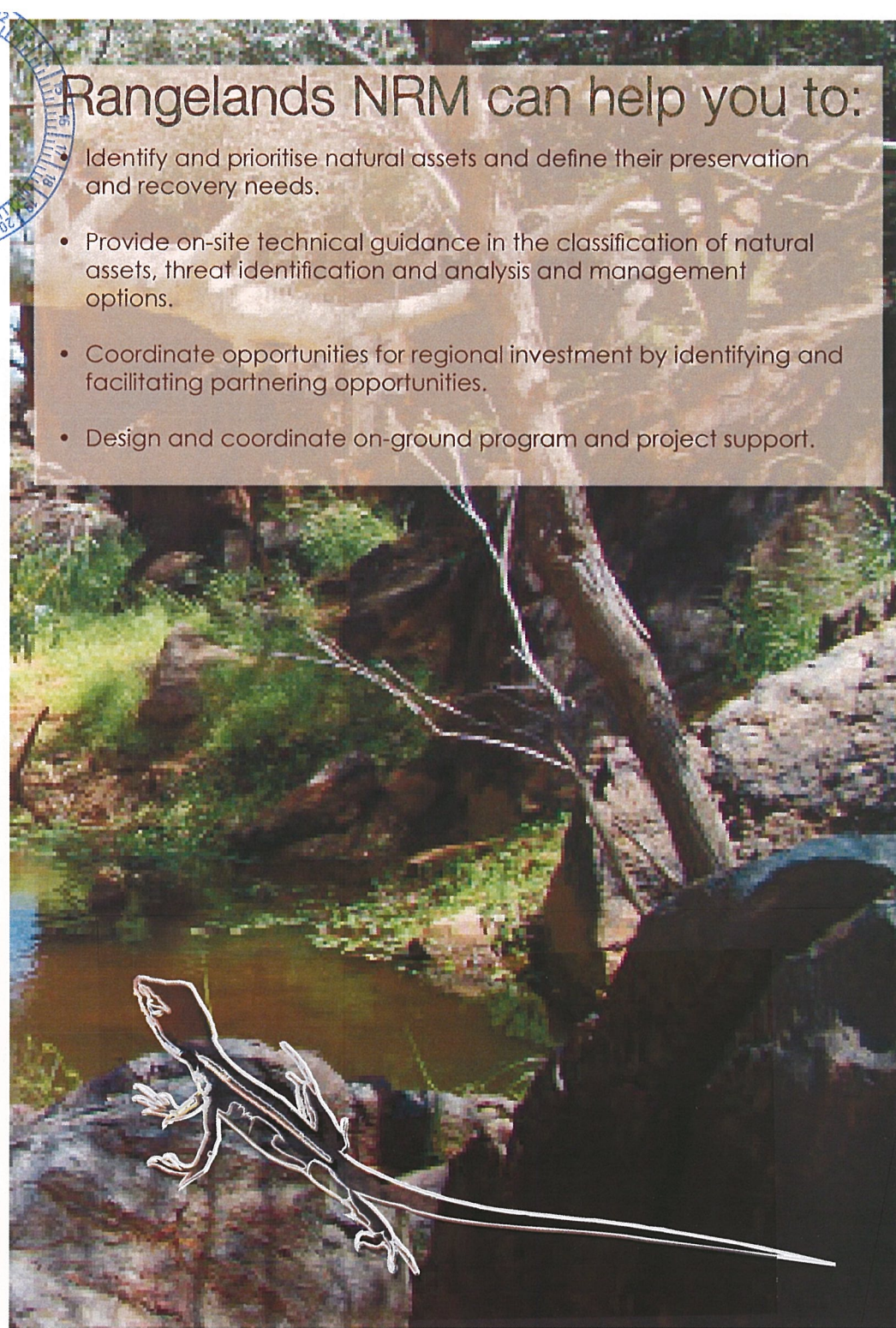
- We aim to promote collaboration and best practice in environmental outcomes through the sustainable use of land, plants and animals, fresh water and coastal marine environment whilst representing community needs, acknowledging cultural significance, and incorporating Aboriginal knowledge.



- With sound planning and management capabilities, we deliver real and observable results that lead to long-term sustainable outcomes.
- We are the "grout" between the "tiles" of land and coastal resource managers.

Rangelands NRM can help you to:

- Identify and prioritise natural assets and define their preservation and recovery needs.
- Provide on-site technical guidance in the classification of natural assets, threat identification and analysis and management options.
- Coordinate opportunities for regional investment by identifying and facilitating partnering opportunities.
- Design and coordinate on-ground program and project support.





The Region where we work

Rangelands NRM is the largest of the 54 NRM regions in Australia, covering around 85 per cent (2,266,000 sq km) of Western Australia's land mass, and 75 per cent of the coastline.

Due to the vast size of Rangelands, community engagement is undertaken through seven subregional areas: Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Murchison, Nullarbor, Goldfields, and Desert Rangelands. Our head office is in Como, Perth and we have staff located in Broome, Karratha, and Geraldton.

Rangelands NRM is responsible for the establishment, management, evaluation and communication of many natural resource management activities and projects in this region.

For more information contact Rangelands NRM WA at:

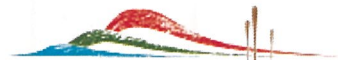
Head Office (Perth)
Suite 8, 125 Melville Parade
Como WA 6152
Ph: 08 9468 8250

info@rangelandswa.com.au
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Kimberley (Broome)
Unit 11 Lotteries House
20 Cable Beach Road East
Broome WA 6725
Ph: 08 9192 5507

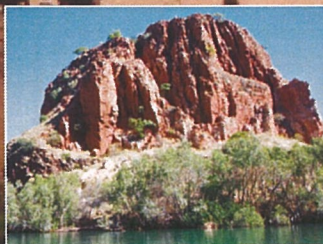
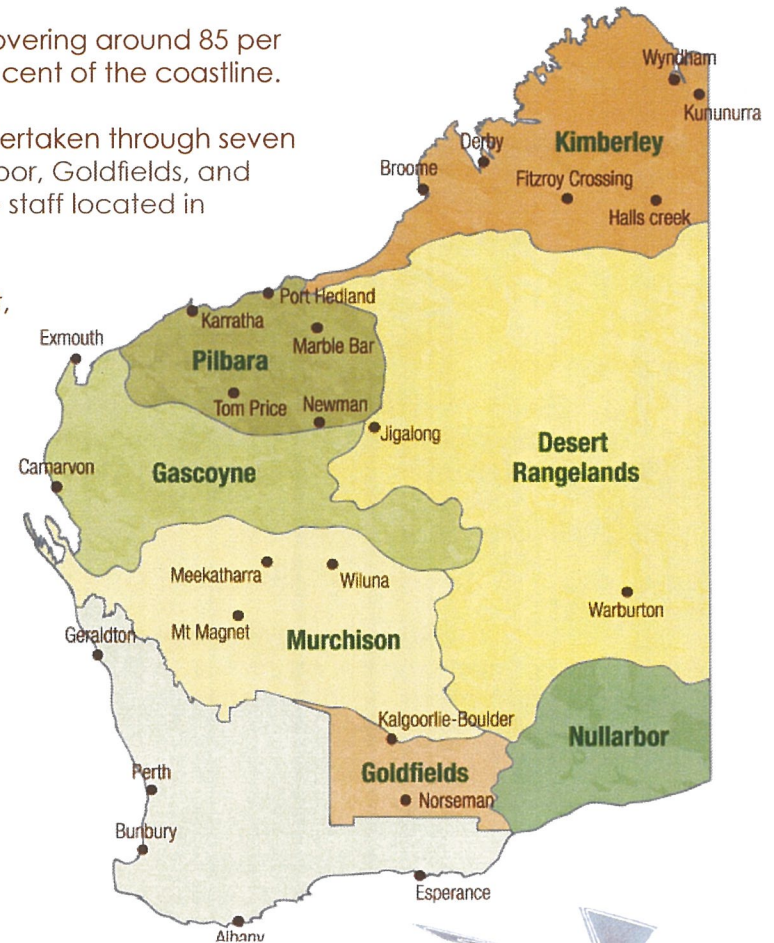
Pilbara (Karratha)
12 Hedland Place
Karratha WA 6714
Ph: 08 9144 2800

Southern Rangelands (Geraldton)
2B, 201 Foreshore Drive
Geraldton WA 6530
Ph: 08 9964 8239



Rangelands NRM
Western Australia

Our natural resources - water, soil, plants, and animals - are everywhere. They are in our bush, around our coast, along our rivers, on our farms, and in our cities. Natural resource management (NRM) is about striking a balance between caring for our environment and paying heed to the needs of those who make a living from these resources or use them for cultural pursuits, leisure, and recreation.



Specific Responses to Committee ToR

Inquiry into pastoral leases in Western Australia

The Committee is to inquire into and report on pastoral leases granted to the pastoral industry in Western Australia, in particular:

- a) *the management of the increase in the number of stock and environmental damage on pastoral land;*
- From the pasture condition data collected across many years of monitoring of permanent sites in the WA Rangelands Monitoring System (WARMS), it is clear that **land condition has changed in most parts of the WA rangelands**. Based on detailed quantitative data, the following observations are made:
 - **For the period 1994 to 2010, in the southern rangelands (shrublands)**, comprising 20 LCDs, most LCDs with the exception of Cue and Mt Magnet, show an overall decline in numbers of all perennial shrubs and numbers of palatable (also known as desirable or decreaser) shrubs. The most severe declines within a five year period are up to -37%. Only a few LCDs show relatively stable perennial plant numbers. Analysis of more recent WARMS data (to June 2012) for six LCDs show all but one (Cue) continuing the trend of declining numbers of all perennial shrubs (-15% for 2005 to 2012) and the palatable shrubs (-19% for 2005 to 2012).
 - **For the period 1994 to 2011, in the northern rangelands (grasslands)**, there has been reasonably stable desirable grass frequency values in the West Kimberley (+10%) and East Kimberley (+6%).
In the Pilbara, despite above average rainfall in recent years, there is a slight decline in values in the East (-9%) and moderate decline in the West Pilbara (-18%). Year-to-year changes in desirable grass frequency are more dynamic in the Pilbara compared to the Kimberley.
 - It is very important to be aware that **WARMS sites**, due to their location in the more stable, less erosion-prone parts of land systems, is in fact, a '**late warning system**' rather than an 'early warning system'. This means that the degree of degradation, say, loss of desirable plants, as indicated by WARMS sites, is likely to under estimate the degree of degradation occurring in the more active parts of land systems.
 - Increasing numbers of domestic stock are not the only issue; it is **total grazing pressure** that is the core reason for ongoing and widespread landscape degradation, and is a function of domestic livestock (sheep and cattle) management, and the high numbers of native animals (kangaroos, emus) and feral animals (goats, camels, cattle, horses, donkeys).
 - Key to managing the environmental risks are ensuring that the current policies for pastoral lease management are all integrated, that is, stocking rates not be allowed above recommended rates, that pastoralists' responsibilities to feral animal control are supported, and multiple land use, including carbon farming, is allowed and promoted.
- b) *the adequacy of security of land tenure;*
- Security of land tenure and flexibility of land use are critical for management for sustainable very long-term environmental and production outcomes.
 - We have been in discussions where the certainty around the proposed new tenure arrangements have been considered and not always well understood so my information is limited. But for pastoralists to undertake significant change to their management systems, the tenure must be for a minimum of 30-35 years and secure, to the extent that the lease holders can use to access finance, but more particularly so they know that work undertaken is likely to be valued for at least 20 years and more.
 - However, the key issue seems to be the flexibility within lease agreements for using the land for production activities other than purely pastoralism.
 - For example, there may be significant opportunities in future for using land for carbon farming, or for managing for biodiversity outcomes that meet EPA requirements for conservation/biodiversity offsets, and even for extended periods of destocking to allow land to regenerate and receiving stewardship payments for doing so; these opportunities need to be facilitated.

We have no comment on the ToR points 3 and 4.

- c) *procedures for granting or renewing pastoral leases;*
d) *the proposed pastoral lease 2015; and*
e) *other matters.*