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ENVIRONMENT AND NRM SERVICES FULLY INTEGRATED BY 2012

Minister for Environment and Conservation Paul Caica today announced that State Government environment and natural resources management services will be fully integrated within two years following a comprehensive review of service delivery.

In July this year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was established, with the new department having responsibility for environment and NRM services across the state.

“The vision of the new department is to support a sustainable and prosperous South Australia where resources are used wisely and a healthy environment is the basis of a good quality of life for all South Australians,” Mr Caica said.

“Over recent months, DENR and NRM Board staff have undertaken a review of existing delivery arrangements and spoken to a wide range of stakeholders including the Farmers Federation, Local Government Association and the Conservation Council, to determine how to ensure the best possible future management of the State’s natural resources.”

Mr Caica said a plan has been developed to guide the process and ensure environment and NRM services will be fully integrated by July 2012.

“One of the most obvious changes will be that one Regional Manager will head up environment and NRM operations in each region, with a more streamlined community interface and, where possible, single points of contact for the community,” he said.

“DENR will work closely with the NRM Boards to align regional boundaries, redesign organisational structures, improve relationships with the community, clarify governance arrangements, integrate planning with investment strategies and streamline corporate and business services.

“There will also be more collaboration between DENR, NRM Boards and local government bodies regarding natural resources management issues and priorities.”

Mr Caica said NRM Boards will continue to play a central role in engaging communities and working with the State Government to decide priorities, develop regional plans, help resolve difficult challenges and monitor natural resources.

“DENR and the NRM Boards will continue to embrace community input, local expertise and knowledge, and work with the strong community networks already established,” he said.

Presiding Member of the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board Brian Foster said the integration of environment and NRM services would be a positive development for the region.

“We are looking forward to working more closely with the regional DENR staff and the opportunity to work across the whole of the landscape, on both private and public land,” he said.

“The co-location of offices for the two agencies will create scope for greater efficiencies and give people on Eyre Peninsula a ‘one-stop shop’ for environmental services.

“The new, integrated agency will have a richer depth of skills and knowledge, opening up new opportunities for natural resources work across the region and wider engagement with community and industry groups.”