



## **2003-04 Project Expo**

**9am Friday 24 September 2004**

**Room 7 ABC, Bay 8, Australian Technology Park, Redfern**

### **SPEECH NOTES FOR PETER COSIER**

- We are here to share the 2003-2004 successes of the CANRI program. These projects have been achieved by extending the work completed in the first three years of the program.
- What we are seeing today is a quick glimpse of the entire CANRI program achievements, and the CANRI program has achieved much in just four short years.
- It is testimony to what can be achieved through goodwill, cooperation, enthusiasm and sustained effort, when many agencies work together towards a common goal.
- The CANRI Program vision is “to fully realise the strategic value of natural resource information to support overall Government objectives to achieve sustainable management of NSW natural resources”.
- Together, you have developed a framework of policies and technology for information sharing that is fully operational, involving all the natural resource agencies.
- The CANRI framework adopts international and national standards for data sharing and is a world leader in this area.
- To populate the framework, each agency has overcome technical and organisational barriers to put their data onto the Internet.
- CANRI has taken a significant step, in integrating the valuable data held within the natural resource management agencies to give people a holistic view of their catchment.
- We'll be seeing a lot today of the NSW Natural Resource Atlas, the new whole-of-government portal to the products of the CANRI Program. The Natural Resource Atlas gives the public a single way in to a broad range of maps and data arranged by Catchment Management Authority region. It's a great way to guide people through the array of information that's been made available through

CANRI, and I commend you all for your role in developing and populating it with data from all agencies.

- Together with the BioNet facility for sharing species data that we'll also see today, it's a huge step forward in giving decision-makers in the community the tools they need to plan and manage this State sustainably.
- In the new departmental structure, responsibility for the Natural Resource Atlas will fall to my area - the Office of Knowledge, Science and Information. My office will maintain and develop the Natural Resource Atlas front-end and its catalog of online data services.
- But CANRI's legacy is its shared framework, with data provided by all natural resource agencies and presented by them in websites tailored to the needs of particular audiences. It will be up to all agencies to maintain and build on this rich legacy of information to make the most of the CANRI data sharing framework.
- The work you've done in CANRI is vital to an informed and active community. Sharing government information is essential if we are to address complex and difficult sustainability issues together.
- There are innumerable opportunities to incorporate these data from various sources to address a wide range of business needs.
- The urgency to deliver native vegetation management reforms in which I have been directly involved, and other such reforms, like the establishment of Catchment Management Authorities and the process of Property Vegetation Plans, will now drive the provision of data to the Internet. CANRI is crucial to helping us meet these needs, and will be supported and utilised through these programs.
- I congratulate all of you here today, on the work you have done over the past four years to get more valuable Government data out into the public arena, and onto the desktops of "natural resource managers" across the whole community.
- Now that the CANRI Program is complete, our task is to build on this wonderful use of science, and use it to create a more informed and better-armed community in NSW to manage the challenges that face us today and into the future.

- We are entering a different era, where our political institutions are demanding evidence-based policy advice. Developments in native vegetation, water and climate change prove that the government is not interested in just broad principles, but in how to fix the problem and the outcomes achieved.
- Now, more than ever, science is in the spotlight.
- New technology is allowing us to build science and information into effective decision making. An example of this is the PVP Developer trials.
- Both farmers and environmental interests welcomed this initiative.
- “Mal Peters, President NSW Farmers Association said “PVP trials demonstrated a clear, measurable and scientific approach to what has been a thorn in the side of farmers for the last 10 years”.
- Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre, said “The prospects are encouraging. The new tools immediately engage the landowner in planning a proposed clearing activity to maintain or improve environmental outcomes and where clearing is not possible, in discussion about incentives to improve native vegetation protection”.
- The next big agenda item will be combining science, computing power and high-resolution satellite imagery. For example, amendments to the Threatened Species Conservation Act will allow for regional biodiversity assessment and the development of biodiversity certificates. In such instances, a combination of science and computer technology will provide threatened species modelling for the future.
- We will make the results of such modelling public through the Natural Resource Atlas. We'll also explore how to make the models themselves available to land managers to help them use world-class science in their own property management decisions.
- The NSW Government will soon acquire state-wide high-resolution satellite imagery to share with any agency that needs it. This is 2.5m pixel imagery - a fantastically useful product for farmers and other land managers. We will use it as the base for Property Vegetation Plans to control vegetation clearing and other issues.

- But the public will also have access. Subject to commercial negotiations with the supplier, we intend to publish a photographic view of the imagery on the Natural Resource Atlas.
- One issue we still have is the digital divide. Internet access is still very slow from many parts of country NSW.
- But this is improving. For example, 75 NSW country towns are now connected to high-speed, cost-effective Internet access for public and not-for-profit community institutions, thanks to the Rural Link project funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments.<sup>1</sup>
- The system involves a satellite link to one building with wireless connections from there. Town organisations include libraries, councils, schools and community technology centres.
- In May 1999, Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that there were 1.1 million households accessing the Internet in Australia. In March this year, this had quadrupled, to just under 4.5 million.
- And in terms of broadband, in March there were 834,000 broadband subscribers across Australia, an increase of 27% in just six months.<sup>2</sup>
- So the trends are very positive. And what's been achieved under CANRI, that you've all contributed to, is a huge step forward. But it's just the beginning.
- I'm sure we'll look back in 10 or 20 years time and laugh gently at what we're so proud of today. In time, environmental data will become as common as weather or financial information is now. Policy makers and land managers will routinely access data and run models, built in seamlessly to their work tools, so their decisions will stand up to scientific scrutiny. And people will insist on that.
- CANRI has certainly raised the bar, and there's no turning back! Congratulations on your hard work, and enjoy the rest of the show.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nswnet.net/rurallink>

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<sup>2</sup> ABS July 2004

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/6445f12663006b83ca256a150079564d?OpenDocument>