

eFARMER – Web based Property and Catchment Planning Tool

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This paper provides an overview of the development and testing of eFARMER – a new Web-based Property and Catchment Planning Tool being used in Victoria. eFARMER is a collaborative project between Catchment Management Authorities (led by the North Central CMA), Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

A prototype eFARMER was developed by Spatial Vision (www.spatialvision.com.au) for the purposes of trialing with landholders, extension officers and catchment managers. The aims were to:

- Inform private land managers of Natural Resource Management (NRM) priorities within their CMA region
- Enable land managers to identify proposed and voluntarily implemented activities on their properties
- Allow reporting of voluntary activities that contribute to NRM outcomes
- Examine potential integration with catchment modelling and visualisation tools.

eFARMER allows the user (via the internet) to access a variety of spatial datasets, aerial photos and satellite imagery for their property and manipulate the data to illustrate property layout, natural assets, current and future management activities. Landholders can set targets and develop on-farm action plans. The impacts of various targets (at farm and catchment level) are presented spatially. There is also some provision for production record keeping.

During July to November 2006, eFARMER was tested and evaluated with groups of landholders in the North East, North Central, Goulburn-Broken and West Gippsland regions. The evaluation results were extremely positive, providing a strong basis for future eFARMER development and/or application. There are a number of development options, depending upon public and private drivers and interest.