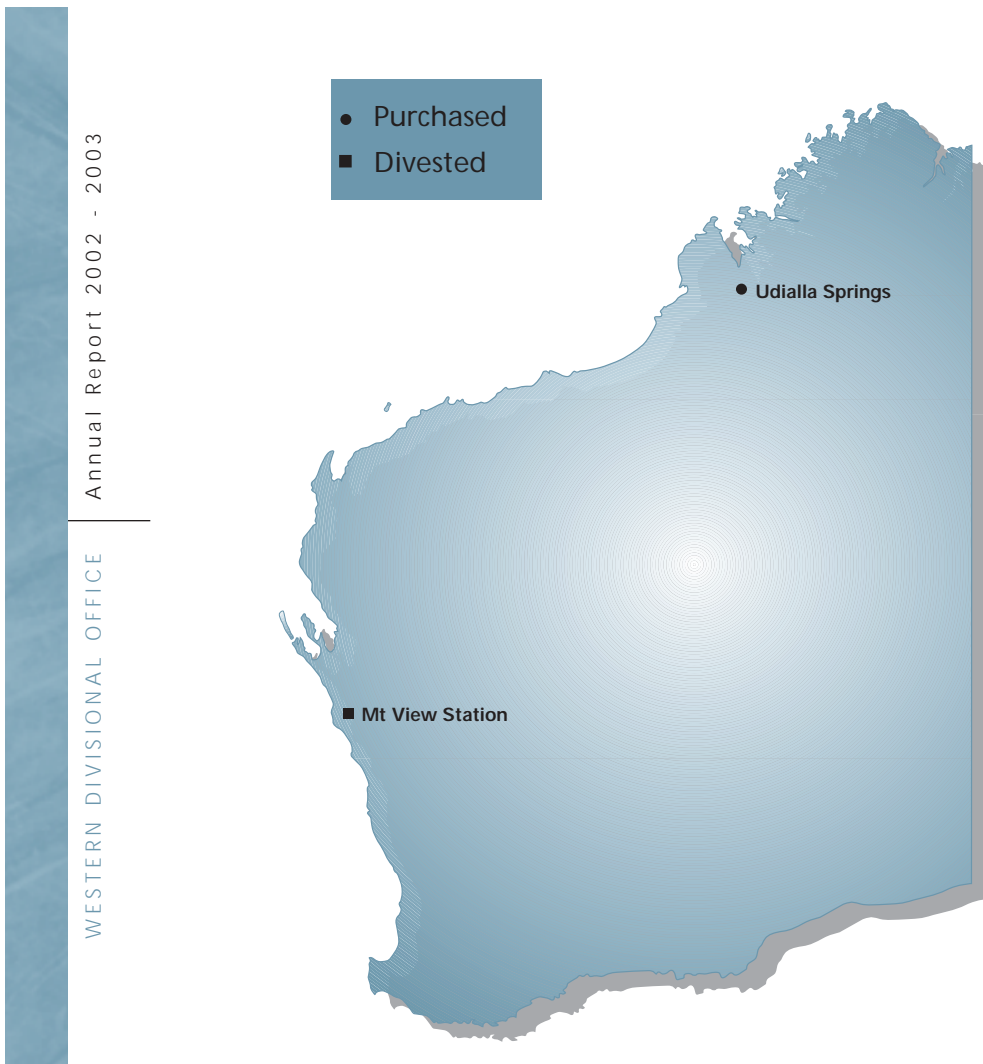


# WESTERN DIVISIONAL OFFICE

FIGURE 7: WDO LAND PURCHASED AND DIVESTED 2002-2003



## ASSISTANCE IN THE ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND

In January 2003, the WDO regionalised its operations. The Kimberley & Western Desert Region covers the ATSIC regions of Broome, Derby, Kununurra and Warburton. The Pilbara & Yamatji Region covers the ATSIC regions of South Hedland and Geraldton. The South West & Goldfields Region covers the ATSIC regions of Perth, Narrogin and Kalgoorlie.

Information sessions on the new programs were conducted throughout all WA regions in the first half of 2003, including presentations to ATSIC Regional Councils, Aboriginal communities, Regional Development Commissions and CDEP organisations. The new programs have sparked significant interest, especially in the Social and Economic Programs.

Implementation of the Property Remediation Program throughout Western Australia began. Major activity is expected in the coming year as people respond with a request for assistance under the Remediation Program for Property Management Plans (PMPs) and related infrastructure and training. Currently, 15 properties have been invited to participate. The PMP process will assist landholders to identify their needs, including infrastructure development, land use planning, upgrading of herds, capacity development (including corporate governance), development of business management skills, and other land and/or business management training.

The Sub-Regional Overview of Land Needs for the Pilbara region was finalised, thus completing the initial Land Needs Planning Process for Western Australia. The Regional Overviews have provided 'snapshots' of regions, identifying major issues regarding land acquisition and land management. Information provided in these documents has been instrumental in developing a sound knowledge among staff of regional economic, demographic and environmental issues.

One land acquisition proposal was reactivated in the Kimberley, having been previously approved by the ILC Board. The successful acquisition of Udialla Springs, a small parcel of freehold land and agricultural lease, secured culturally significant land for Nyikina Mangala people. A tourism scoping and pre-feasibility study was initiated with Nyaliga Aboriginal Corporation, which represents the Ngarinyin traditional owners of Durack River and

Karunjie Pastoral Leases, to examine options for commercial tourism within the area of the leases.

In August 2002, the Nyikina Mangala Pastoral Aboriginal Corporation (NMPAC), which represents traditional owners of Myroodah Pastoral Lease, submitted *Shoulder to Shoulder*, a comprehensive proposal for the future ownership of, and management arrangements for, Myroodah Station. The proposal was developed following a number of planning workshops which the ILC funded and helped facilitate.

Capital support was provided for the implementation of a long-term business plan for Millijiddee Station in the Kimberley, with ILC funds being matched on a dollar for dollar basis by self-generated funds from Millijiddee Station. Support is being directed towards water development, herd improvement and acquisition of plant and equipment.

A major initiative undertaken by WDO was the joint ILC-Department of Agriculture project, Pastoral Management Support Services, which provides services to Kimberley Aboriginal pastoralists. The objectives of the program include to increase the size, profitability and sustainability of the Kimberley Aboriginal pastoral industry and the capacity of individual management groups through the delivery of a focused management support service program. Two of the four delivery personnel will be Aboriginal officers employed by the Department of Agriculture.

In the Western Desert, the ILC continued to support the activities of the Ngaanyatjarra Council Land Management Unit, which aims to equip Ngaanyatjarra people with the capacity to invoke their power and influence in land management and land use decisions affecting their lands and livelihood.

Land acquisition activity in the South West (Perth and Narrogin ATSIC Regions) concentrated on addressing issues that have so far inhibited the successful divestment of two ILC-held properties, with significant progress being made toward resolution. Land acquisition activity in the Goldfields (Kalgoorlie ATSIC region) centred on the assessment of three applications as identified in the Goldfields Sub-Regional Strategy.

Since the December launch of the revised NILS, there have been six land acquisition applications from the South West and Goldfields, with most being returned to the applicants seeking further information on the applicant group's aspirations for the properties involved.

There are six land management packages being implemented in the South West & Goldfields Region. The packages are mainly focused on structural adjustment with the aim of establishing sustainable agricultural enterprises. Of special significance in the South West is the involvement of the Department of Justice and TAFE in working closely with the Title Holding Body to implement a training support package to assist in addressing juvenile offender issues.

The ILC developed a strong working relationship with the Indigenous Natural Resource Management Facilitator based at the Department of Agriculture, Albany, which significantly improved the delivery of ILC functions to Indigenous landowners in the South West.

Capacity development activities supported corporate governance training for one group in the South West and two training needs analysis workshops in the Goldfields (Kalgoorlie and Esperance). These three activities were co-funded by FarmBis. The Goldfields Land and Sea Council and the Centre for the Management of Arid Environments provided regional support for the training needs analysis to take place. Implementing the outcomes of the training needs analysis in 2003-2004 will be a cooperative effort between the ILC, Goldfields Land and Sea Council, Centre for the Management of Arid Environments and Department of Agriculture.

The ILC became a member of the Goldfields Native Title Liaison Council. This group is designed to improve the land-associated benefits that Indigenous people in the Goldfields can accrue through native title and other processes. Regional alliances of this kind can be expected to enhance the effectiveness of the delivery of ILC functions.

The ILC co-funded the Indigenous Start Up and Incentive Landcare Grants Program for Western Australia. ILC partners in this program are the Aboriginal Lands Trust and the Natural Heritage Trust, both providing funds,

and the Department of Indigenous Affairs providing in-kind administrative support. The program had two main objectives: to raise awareness and encourage Aboriginal organisations to become involved in landcare on their lands, and to leverage mainstream environmental funding into Indigenous land management projects.

WDO's active membership of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association provided benefits to both parties and their respective clients.

#### OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN MEETING OUTCOME 1

The WDO faced a number of challenges over the reporting period, perhaps the most significant being the transition from 'old' to 'new' program guidelines which were developed as a consequence of the revision of the National Indigenous Land Strategy. The transitional period involved extensive engagement by staff in development of the draft guidelines, informing clients, and promoting and installing the new practice into daily operations. Simultaneously, the Property Remediation Program, including development of Property Management Plans, required substantial effort. The integration of 'old' and 'new' will continue to be a major, benefits-focused, and positive operational challenge for staff and clients.

