



Media Release

Friday 19 March 2010

The Southern Fund: Sharing with our community

Using banking profits for local environmental conservation work is one of many advantages of The Southern Fund, a new tax-deductible fund launched this week by South Coast NRM in partnership with Bendigo & Adelaide Bank Ltd, Community Sector Banking (CSB) and Albany, Mount Barker, Tambellup and Cranbrook **Community Bank®** branches

The Southern Fund is a unique initiative designed to facilitate and support regular donations, generated in part by select **Community Bank®** branch customers, with the purpose of underwriting community engagement with South Coast NRM's on-ground activities.

The Southern Fund Committee chairman Gary Schwab said the innovative fund was a first for South Coast NRM and its banking partners, and could set the benchmark for private partnerships in the natural resource management sector.

"It's very simple for individuals and not-for-profit groups to get behind The Southern Fund and help us grow it for the benefit of the entire community, and our environment," he said.

Not-for-Profit groups can simply bank with CSB via one of four **Community Bank®** branches - Albany, Mount Barker, Tambellup and Cranbrook - and indicate to a staff member that they want to support The Southern Fund.

A proportion of the banking profits generated by these supporter bank accounts (deposit and loan accounts) will be contributed to The Southern Fund. There is no cost to not-for-profit groups.

South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins said he was very pleased to launch the fund and looked forward to seeing it evolve and benefit the entire South Coast region.

"The Southern Fund is an opportunity for individuals and businesses to make a tax deductible donation to help South Coast NRM protect and enhance the South Coast environment. This means that money donated in the region will stay in the region," he said.

CSB senior manager of community sector enterprise Pat Cavanagh said the establishment of the Southern Fund was the result of a collaborative working relationship between CSB and South Coast NRM.

"CSB is always looking to give back to the community and by also involving local **Community Bank®** branches in this unique partnership, we can now explore and develop initiatives to achieve sustainable outcomes for the environment across the region," Mr Cavanagh explained.

The Southern Fund Committee, comprising members of the community and The Southern Fund partners, will administer the fund and determine its investment policy. Membership of the Committee is reviewed annually by the Board of Management of South Coast NRM.

For more information visit www.southcoastnrm.com.au or contact your local **Community Bank®** branch.

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About Community Sector Banking

Community Sector Banking (CSB) is the first banking service in Australia dedicated to not-for-profit and community sector organisations. CSB is the result of an innovative joint venture between 20 leading not-for-profit organisations and Bendigo & Adelaide Bank Ltd (BBL).

CSB brings together private and community sector participants to provide innovative financial solutions to meet the needs and enhance the overall capacity and effectiveness of the community sector. CSB is underpinned by the philosophy that it is owned and driven by the community it serves.

The Albany, Mt Barker, Cranbrook and Tambellup **Community Bank®** branches of Bendigo Bank are part of the Australia-wide **Community Bank®** network, which involves more than 250 communities in the ownership and administration of their local bank branch. The community in turn receives a share of the revenue generated by their local banking activity in order to benefit local community initiatives.

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South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management on the South Coast of Western Australia. As an independent non-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.