

## **Where did Community Based Auditing and Upper Catchment Issues come from?**

This question continues to be asked. The story begins back in 1998 when current TCRA Board member and Editor, Philip Tattersall was reflecting on ways to involve community directly in the resource planning process, not so much as sources of feedback and “doers” of various projects, but as actual project designers. In short, he was looking at new way to bring community, the ultimate “responsible persons”, directly into the environmental management and planning process. His own research and indeed much of the emerging literature on the subject of participation provided keys to a possible way forward. One of the strengths of community involvement lies in the knowledge held by the community. For too long community knowledge has been considered “anecdotal” and “unscientific”. The fact is that local knowledge (Harding 1998) and community science can play a vital and important role in resource planning and action. Over the past 5 years the subject of community participation in shared decision making has taken on a new prominence (Dakin 2003).

During 1999-2000 Philip had the opportunity to work on the Diddleum Plains project with Ann Gschwendtner (Gschwendtner, Eastman, Tattersall and Mills 2000). The project was an opportunity to test the ideas of community involvement out in the real world, so to speak. The project began with an examination of the forest practices plan, which in turn generated questions and thereby an ongoing process of enquiry involving many other players in the local community. The audit and enquiry teams were guided by the reality that it is the community who are the ultimate “responsible persons”. At the end of the enquiry the community were able to recommend better ways to manage the forest and water resources in question - Community Based Auditing was born...

## References

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