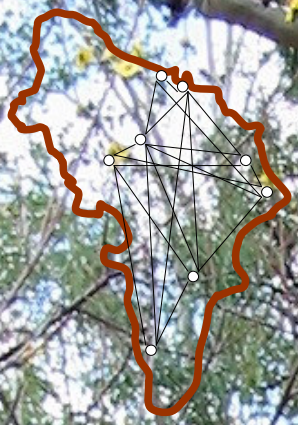

Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional
Local Government Network (NRM)

action
Salinity & Water
AUSTRALIA

Burdekin Dry Tropics Local Government Biodiversity Management Framework

July 2005

Acknowledgements

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1. Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Planning

1.1 Background

The Burdekin Dry Tropics (BDT) natural resource management (NRM) region is a large area (approximately 133,400 square kilometres) with a wide range of vegetation types and habitats. A map of the BDT region showing the local government areas is provided as Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 Burdekin Dry Tropics Local Government areas

2. Local Government and Biodiversity

2.1 Legislative Requirements

As with other landholders and land managers local government is accountable for the land it manages under a variety of legislation. Local government has additional responsibilities as a result of legislation that makes local government the regulatory body for activities that impact biodiversity and native vegetation. A list of relevant legislation is provided in Table 2-1 with a summary discussion of the legislation included in Appendix B.

Table 2-1 Biodiversity Related Legislation

Legislation	Administrative Agency
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act or EPBCA)	Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975	Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage
Marine Parks Act 1982	Environmental Protection Agency
State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971	Dept of State Development and Innovation
Integrated Planning Act 1997	Dept of Local Government and Planning
Local Government Act 1993	Dept of Local Government and Planning
Environmental Protection Act 1994	Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997	Environmental Protection Agency
Fisheries Act 1994	Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries
Water Act 2000	Dept of Natural Resources and Mines
Nature Conservation Act 1992	Environmental Protection Agency
Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002	Dept of Natural Resources and Mines
Vegetation Management Act 1999	Dept of Natural Resources and Mines

NRM activities local government is involved in have been recorded in the NRM Activities and Skills Inventory Report also compiled for the CB07 project. Many of the NRM activities local government is involved in contribute either directly or indirectly to biodiversity outcomes. For more information on current (2005) local government activities please refer to that report.

2.2 Current Initiatives in the Burdekin Dry Tropics

A number of initiatives are currently underway in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region aimed at improving biodiversity outcomes. Some of the main initiatives involving, or potentially involving, local government are discussed below.

2.2.1 Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife (LFW) is a voluntary, non-binding program that encourages and supports landholders to provide habitat for native plants and animals on their property. LFW is coordinated on a State level in Queensland by Greening Australia, and on a local and/or regional level by a number of Extension Officers located throughout the State. Local governments or local Landcare groups often employ these Extension Officers. There are many LFW registered properties currently in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region.

The program is designed to encourage, support and provide recognition for landholders who contribute to nature conservation in Queensland. LFW is designed for any landholder who has natural areas of vegetation like rangelands, vegetation along watercourses, or shelterbelts. All types of small and large properties are eligible for LFW status, such as farms, bush blocks, parks, school grounds – even golf courses and cemeteries. Land can be government owned, individuals, organisations, or community groups.

The program offers landholders a variety of benefits, which include:

- Free advice and assistance on managing wildlife habitat with other land uses;
- Recognition and support for their contribution to nature conservation in Queensland; and
- Opportunities to share ideas and experiences through the LFW network and publications.

Landholders can also get together with a group of neighbours and join LFW to conserve habitat for a particular species of native animal, or to manage natural vegetation across properties or catchments.

LFW is a free, voluntary program. The status of LFW registration is not binding on the title of the land and landholders can leave the program at any time.

Local governments are encouraged to pick up and run the program where possible (handle enquiries from landholders, conduct property inspections and provide support and assistance to registered landholders) and if resources allow, provide an officer to handle these duties. Where this is not possible, LFW can still be run in all local government areas through the support of the State Coordinator and existing Extension Officers.

Extension officers within the Burdekin Dry Tropics are located at Cardwell, Herberton, Townsville and Whitsunday. More info is available from the Land for Wildlife State Coordinator Lesley Hale, at Greening Australia on phone: 07 4921 4820.

2.2.2 Community Environment Fund

The $1 million Community Environment Fund is a three-year project funded by a $500,000 community grant from Powerlink Queensland and $500,000 from project partners the Townsville City Council and Thuringowa City Council. The Community Environment Fund is only available in Townsville/Thuringowa.

The Fund aims to form partnerships and undertake projects that enhance the environmental properties of the Townsville and Thuringowa region, and to minimise the visual impact on the community of the electricity infrastructure owned, operated and maintained by Powerlink Queensland.
The Community Environment Fund aims to provide environmental outcomes on:

- Restoration of dry tropics native ecosystems and wildlife corridors;
- Efficient use of water resources in the dry tropics;
- Weed management; and
- Community education and awareness on environmental issues.

There are three funding rounds, one per year from 2004 – 2006. Community groups seeking funding for environmental projects in the Townsville-Thuringowa region are eligible to apply. Round Two funding applications must be submitted by 17 October 2005. More information is available from the Project Officer on phone 07 4773 8457 or e-mail libbyg@thuringowa.qld.gov.au.

2.2.3 Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Inc.

Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Inc. (CDTLI) is the 'new' Landcare group in the Townsville-Thuringowa area. CDTLI is an amalgamation of the previous Townsville-Thuringowa Landcare Association and Tropical Urban Production and Landcare Group (TUPULG). The focus of CDTLI is community based natural resource management through on-ground works, community revegetation and awareness schemes, and the production of local plant and propagation reference material. Sub-groups such as Bluewater and Oak Valley are also now able to receive funding through CDTLI as a result of its incorporation.

CDTLI aims to foster coordination and cooperation between all members of the community including individuals, landholders, traditional landowners, business, government and non-government organisations in the sustainable management of local natural resources.

Some specific examples of CDTLI activities include:

- Revegetation and weed eradication at several Townsville-Thuringowa sites;
- Seed collecting and propagation;
- Publication of "Rare & threatened plants of the Townsville - Thuringowa region" and "Seeds to Success";
- Employment of a community revegetation coordinator;
- Coordination of the Strategic Weed Eradication & Education Program (SWEEP);
- Production of regular public newsletter "Kapok"; and
- Management and maintenance of the Ross River Bush Garden and nursery.

More information is available from the Landcare Centre on phone: 4721 4322.

2.2.4 Revitalisation of Landcare in the Coastal Region of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Project.

The Revitalisation of Landcare in the Coastal Region of the Burdekin Dry Tropics (BDT) is a project funded under the National Landcare Program, through the auspices of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board. The project runs throughout the coastal region of the BDT, encompassing the shires of Thuringowa, Townsville, Burdekin and Bowen.

The aim is to improve the sustainability and profitability of primary industry in the region through the provision of devolved grants to landholders to carry out approved projects in three key areas:

- Primary Production: Best Management Practices;
- Nature conservation & Habitat Restoration; and
- Capacity Building.

This is being carried out through the employment of a full time project officer \ Landcare coordinator. The project is administered by a management committee made up of local Landcare groups under the auspices of the Townsville City Council. Thuringowa, Bowen and Burdekin Councils have also directly supported the project with funds.

For information on the project, applying for funds, or activities already underway, please contact:- *Landcare Coordinator Ph: 07 47 83 6415*

2.3 Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional NRM Plan

Natural resource management (NRM) regions are defined by the Commonwealth and State government for the purposes of delivering NRM support and funding under various programs and especially the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). Each region has a recognised (by the Commonwealth and State governments) NRM group. Regional NRM groups are responsible for the development of an accredited Regional NRM Plan and Investment Strategy to secure Commonwealth and State funding to carry out NRM activities under the NAP and NHT programs.

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Board is the recognised regional body in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region and has recently developed the Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional NRM Plan and Investment Strategy. The Plan will be implemented over the next two years and provides significant opportunities for involvement in activities to improve water quality and biodiversity outcomes in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region.

The Plan provides the strategic framework for significant improvement in the condition and trend of the region's natural resources, and sets the foundation for future investment in the region.

The Structure of the NRM Plan

Part A: Provides a brief introduction to the region explaining the location and the need for the regional NRM plan. This section also outlines the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board organisation, key community messages, describing the benefits of integrated NRM and highlights the implications of taking no further action.

Part B: Provides an introduction to the region through a summary regional overview of the bio-physical, social and economic landscapes of the Burdekin Dry Tropics. In addition, chapter 10 indicates the ways in which the Burdekin Dry Tropics regional NRM plan will integrate with other existing strategies and plans in order to sustainably manage the region's natural resources.

Part C: Provides an explanation of the unique planning process carried out in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region highlighting the key elements of the stakeholder engagement process.

Part D: Sets out the integrated, strategic response to the region's assets and threats. It contains the five asset based packages, targets and actions that form the basis of the investment needed to protect, manage and rehabilitate the region's assets. These actions also reflect the vision for the Burdekin Dry Tropics.

Management action sections for implementation purposes from Part D of the Plan are listed in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 BDT NRM Plan Management Action Sections

Section	Examples
Land, Soils & Agriculture	Erosion control; grazing land management; land and soil health assessment, benchmarking and monitoring; implementing property planning and sustainable land practices; and dryland salinity
Surface Water & Groundwater	
Surface Water and Wetlands	Water quality; water resource planning, environmental flows and efficiency; and wetland and riparian management
Groundwater	Assessment, monitoring and planning; and groundwater quality and quantity
Biodiversity	Maintaining and rehabilitating priority habitat areas; managing threatened species and ecosystems; integrating biodiversity with land management; and pest and weed management
Coast & Marine	Assessment and management of coast and marine resources; and re-establishing connectivity in coastal habitats
Atmosphere	Atmosphere i.e. greenhouse gas emissions; urban development
Capacity Building	Engagement and knowledge

2.3.1 Biodiversity Actions

While there is a specific biodiversity section in the BDT NRM Plan it should be recognised that there is significant overlap between the other sections of the Plan and the biodiversity section (Table 2-2). As such biodiversity outcomes will also be achieved by implementing actions from other sections of the Plan. Management Action Targets and Management Actions from the Biodiversity section of the BDT NRM Plan are summarised in Appendix A.

The Biodiversity section of the BDT NRM Plan includes pest management activities and this, along with parts of the Coast and Marine and Surface Water and Wetlands sections, is probably of most interest for local government to advance collaborative action to promote biodiversity outcomes.

2.4 Other Avenues

A variety of other programs and organisations operate throughout Queensland and Australia to support the maintenance of biodiversity values. Some of these are listed below with a brief overview. For more information please contact the relevant organisation.

2.4.1 Bush Conservation Funds

Bush conservation funds are a non-government initiative designed to raise money to purchase ecologically significant parcels of land.

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy is a public charitable organisation that acquires land to establish wildlife sanctuaries for the conservation of threatened species and ecosystems. AWC owns 13 sanctuaries covering 655,000 hectares throughout Australia. One of these is the Mt Zero-Taravale sanctuary southwest of Paluma, in the BDT region. The AWC implements an on-ground management program at the Mt Zero-Taravale Sanctuary.

Conservation priorities for AWC sanctuaries include:

- Fire management;
- Revegetation, rehabilitation and weed control;
- Biodiversity research, surveys, mapping and monitoring;
- Staged removal of cattle;
- Establishment and maintenance of infrastructure for Sanctuary management;
- Conservation of priority species;
- Development of visitor programs; and
- Threatened species re-introductions.

The AWC aims to ensure that its sanctuaries act as 'catalysts' for broader landscape scale conservation efforts. Accordingly, AWC works closely with its neighbours to also promote conservation beyond the borders of each AWC sanctuary.

Bush Heritage is a national, independent, non-profit organisation committed to preserving Australia's biodiversity by protecting the bush. It is Australia's most widely supported organisation dedicated to protecting species and habitats through the creation of reserves on private land.

Australia has one of the most biologically diverse landscapes in the world. Many important areas of native vegetation and wildlife habitat are on private land and are under threat from land clearing and degradation. This is endangering the survival of Australia's unique native species.

Australia has one of the world's highest rates of land clearing - UN figures show it to be comparable to the worst Asian, African, and South American deforestation rates.

Bush Heritage reserves are protected forever, and are actively managed for conservation.

Since 1990 Bush Heritage has been raising money from the community to create a network of reserves across Australia. This has been achieved by buying land of high conservation value and then ensuring its long-term protection. Bush Heritage reserves are protecting areas of outstanding conservation significance from the tropical rainforests of the majestic Daintree River area of north Queensland through Australia's arid heart to the diverse woodlands and sand plains of south-west Western Australia.
(Source: http://www1.bushheritage.asn.au/)

2.4.2 Community Nature Conservation

There are many people within the community who are interested in working to help protect the native flora and fauna within their own property, but don't know where to start. People seeking expert advice on the vegetation and wildlife on their land can seek help from specialised extension offerers from the Environmental Protection Agency. These officers travel throughout the state providing information on property management & planning, regional strategies, and conservation arrangements. They also provide training for landholders and offer valuable resources & information through facts sheets and field days.

2.4.3 Nature Refuges

A nature refuge is a voluntary conservation agreement between a landholder and the Queensland Government that leads to the establishment of a nature refuge. A nature refuge is a category of protected area under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. Each agreement is tailored to suit the management needs of the particular area and the needs of the landholder. In most cases, the agreement allows for the ecologically sustainable use of natural resources to continue. A nature refuge can cover part or all of a property protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat and emphasising the conservation of biodiversity as an important part of property management.

More than 95 landholders across Queensland manage nature refuges on their properties, protecting rare and threatened ecosystems, plants and animals, while maintaining and enhancing property enterprises as diverse as grazing, cropping, horticulture and ecotourism. If you think your property has outstanding value for native plants and animals, you might consider negotiating a conservation agreement to create a nature refuge and further contribute to the conservation and protection of Queensland's biodiversity.
(Source: http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/nature_conservation/nature_refuges/)

2.4.4 Green Corps

Green Corps is a national program for 17 to 20 year olds that provides practical skills and paid work experience focused around environmental outcomes. The dual drivers of youth development coupled with environmental management have made this project highly successful for many years. Young people are given the opportunity to gain improved career and employment prospects, while learning about, and actively participating in, nature conservation. Projects with high value biodiversity outcomes occur often, many with threatened species as their major focus.

Projects are carried out in partnership between the delivery agency for that region, and a partner agency, which are often local government or community groups.

2.4.5 Improving water quality in the Bowen-Broken catchment

Greening Australia has been carrying out an NAP funded project to help mitigate some of the impacts on the Great Barrier Reef caused by this catchment area. The most common land use in the area is grazing, so much of the project is focused on improving Grazing Land Management practices, particularly those related to soil erosion and sediment control. Projects funded include the installation of riparian fencing to reduce stream bank erosion, Workshops on erosion friendly heavy machinery use, and investigations into grazing practices that limit erosion potential.

Extensive water quality monitoring has also been carried out as part of the project to assess the current water health, and to monitor any improvements resulting from the project activities.

2.4.6 Greening Australia River Recovery

Greening Australia's River Recovery is an opportunity to improve the health & management of our river ways by putting into action some of the many innovative tools and techniques recently developed here in Australia. It is initially being funded through 2.9 million dollars from the Natural Heritage Trust. The project aims to bring together land managers, community-based organisations, business leaders, scientists, and government agencies to apply the best knowledge and tools in the restoration, protection and management of our rivers.

The Burdekin River has been selected as one of nine rivers of national focus through this program. Two sub-catchments have been identified for early action:

- Bowen River; and
- Plantation Creek.

For more information please contact Steve McDermott: smcdermott@qld.greeningaustralia.org.au.

2.4.7 Conservation Volunteers Australia

For over 20 years CVA has involved thousands of Australians in the care and preservation of their local environment. Conservation Volunteers Australia works in partnership with Regional Bodies, Local Councils, National Parks and community groups across Australia to increase community involvement in practical NRM activities.

In addition to providing teams of managed volunteers, CVA is now able to offer project partners training and support in volunteer risk management.

CVA can work in partnership to assist environment projects in five major ways:

- Teams of managed volunteers;
- In Safe Hands Toolkit;
- Workshops in Volunteer Risk Management;
- Course in Conservation Volunteer Management; and
- Certificate 1 in Active Volunteering.

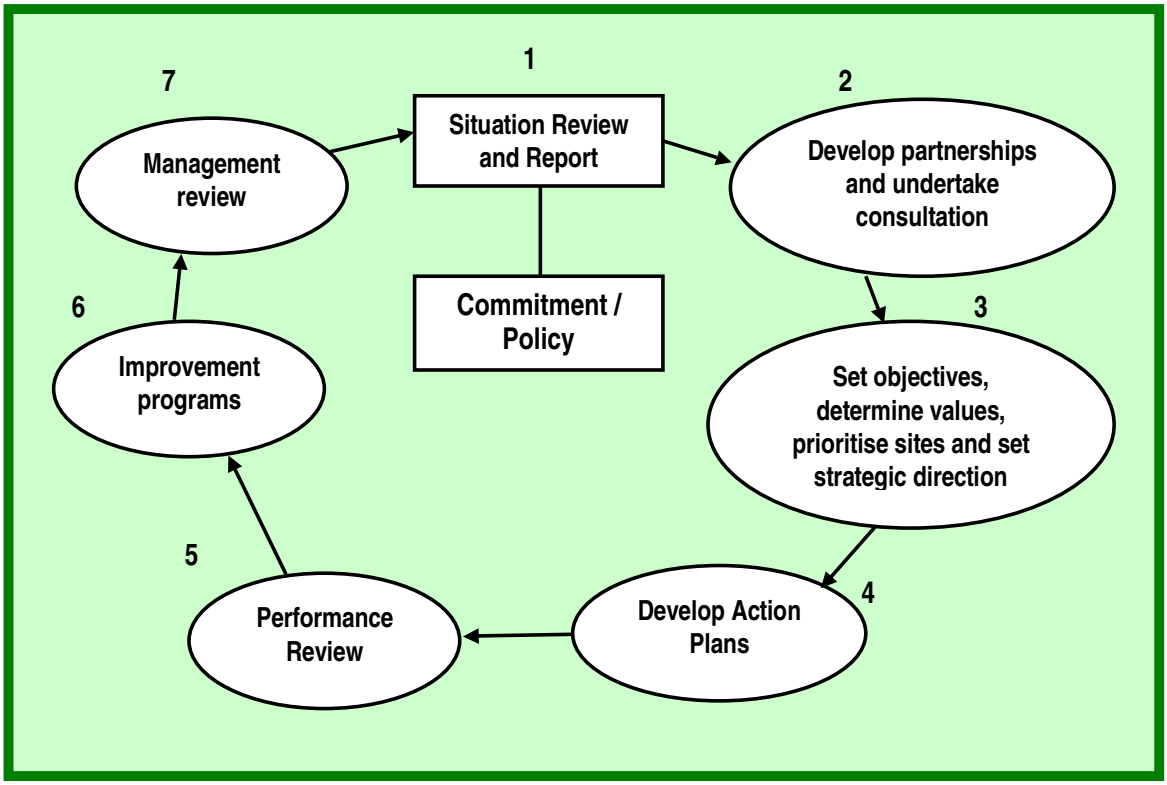
(Source: http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/capacity-building/index.htm)

3. Biodiversity Management Framework

3.1 The Framework

A suggested framework for local government participation in biodiversity management is illustrated in Figure 3-1. The most important single element of the framework is the commitment to the concept of biodiversity management by individual Councils. Without a commitment there will be no policy to drive the process and the framework will be ineffectual. The post-commitment steps are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 3-1 Biodiversity Management Framework



3.2 Step 1 Situation Analysis

The first step is to gain an understanding of the current situation, which includes determining what Council is doing with respect to biodiversity management. This may not be immediately obvious as activities that contribute to biodiversity management outcomes may be 'hidden' as part of a core Council activity rather than being included in a 'biodiversity management' program. The classic example is pest management. Management of pest species has a direct impact on biodiversity management.

The situation analysis also needs to include:

- A review of 'natural' areas managed by Council;
- Identification of local and regional biodiversity related activities, programs and organisations;
- Identification of funding programs and available resources; and
- Documentation and review of available reports, studies etc relevant to biodiversity management.

3.3 Step 2 Consultation and Partnerships

Step 1 will identify individuals, organisations and groups to consult as well as potential partners in biodiversity activities. Partnership building and consultation are related and ongoing processes and will not be confined to a particular 'step'.

Consultation and partnership building are integral and ongoing elements of natural resource management activities including for biodiversity management. Step 2 is more the commencement of this activity as a significant ongoing process than an isolated part of the framework.

Partnerships and consultation will be required for all subsequent steps in the framework.

3.4 Step 3 Objectives and Strategic Direction

While not absolutely necessary the development of a Biodiversity Management Strategy is a useful exercise to consolidate the direction Council is taking with respect to biodiversity management. The strategy can also serve to link the different activities Council is involved in with external elements that could contribute to biodiversity outcomes.

Whether a Biodiversity Management Strategy is developed as part of Step 3 or not it is important to define a number of elements associated with Council's involvement in biodiversity management. These include:

- Objectives;
- Principles and Values;
- Priority Areas and Actions; and
- Strategic Direction.

These can be:

- Included in a Biodiversity Management Strategy;
- The basis for a Biodiversity Management Policy;
- A component of a Sustainability or NRM Policy, Strategy or Plan;
- Part of a State of the Environment Report;
- Components in a Guideline on Sustainability, NRM or Biodiversity Management;
- Incorporated into Corporate, Business or Strategic Plans; or
- Integrated with other innovative products.

3.5 Step 4 Action Plans - Managing Natural Assets

With the strategic direction set Step 4 commences the detailed planning for specific sites and programs. Step 4 should also consolidate existing action plans for natural areas that already being managed by Council, or in partnership with other organisations and groups.

Separate management (action) plans may need to be developed for the various natural assets under Council control. The Biodiversity Management Strategy, or other process adopted for Step 3, can be used to identify the requirements and prioritise the areas requiring the most immediate attention. Step 3 can also be used to identify areas with similar characteristics that have the potential to be treated as a group for the purpose of developing a 'generic' management/action plan.

Action plans can take a variety of forms including:

- Individual management plans for properties, or groups of properties;
- Extension and awareness programs;
- Rehabilitation and restoration programs; and
- Significant environmental site acquisition schemes.

Depending on the number and type of properties managed by Council it may be expedient to combine Steps 1 to 4

3.6 Step 5 Performance Review

The performance review is about measuring the effectiveness of the action plans and implementation components of the Biodiversity Management Strategy or program.

As part of the review some of the following tasks need to be undertaken:

- Survey progress for individual action plans and compare achievements with objectives;
- Review comments and feedback from partners, community and other interested parties;
- Review overall performance noting areas for improvement;
- Review the Biodiversity Management Strategy and its effectiveness in relation to individual plans and programs; and
- Assess results of review for improvement program.

3.7 Step 6 Improvement Programs

Once the individual plans and Biodiversity Management Strategy review is completed, Council should be able to determine any weaknesses within the strategy and action plans and programs. Improvement programs can then be developed to modify the strategy, plans, programs and initiatives.

3.8 Step 7 Management Review

Management review is the last phase of developing and implementing a Biodiversity Management Policy and associated programs before the process loop begins again. At this stage, management review replaces the need for the original situation review. A comprehensive review of the development and implementation measures for the Biodiversity Management Policy and Strategy and its performance is imperative to ensure continual improvement and ongoing success in achieving biodiversity outcomes. Findings of the management review are translated to the governance components impacting the delivery of the biodiversity management programs including the Corporate Plan and Policy documents.

3.9 Innovation and Flexibility

The framework is intended as a guide for Councils and is deliberately devoid of detail to enable individual Councils to tailor the framework to suit their own needs. For the framework to be effective the key is to maintain flexibility in delivery and allow innovative ideas to be incorporated in the strategy and implementation elements.

Biodiversity management is not something that is done in isolation and it will be vital to success for Councils to form strong partnerships with individuals and organisations involved in biodiversity management as part of their mainstream activities. A guide to some of the programs and organisations is provided in section 2 and again this is not a comprehensive list but rather an indication of the potential assistance available to Councils.

Last words:

- Start with the situation review (Step 1);
- Embrace innovation and be open to options;
- Remain flexible; and
- Seek assistance and advice.

Appendix A

BDT NRM Plan Biodiversity Targets and Actions

Management Action Targets and Management Actions from the Biodiversity section of the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Plan (BDTB May 2005)

BVH 1.1.1 By the end of 2005, review and map the extent of pre-clearing and current remnant vegetation (at 1:100,000 scale), including threatened regional ecosystems i. Continuing review of remnant vegetation mapping (at 1:100,000 scale), including threatened regional ecosystems ii. Assess the condition of remnant vegetation
BVH1.1.2 – By the end of 2007, ensure connectivity and functionality at landscape and regional scales via effective planning i. Prioritise areas to retain connectivity and functionality at landscape and regional scales with strategic wildlife corridors and communicate the areas of value to land managers. ii. Provide financial incentives & extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation & management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes. iii. Active participation of Traditional Owners in the sustainable management of National Parks and State Forests.
BVH2.1.1 – By 2010, implement all existing threatened species recovery plans, develop recovery plans for remaining species in the recovery program i. Identify and prioritise threatened species, ecosystems and habitats for future management/protection. ii. Support implementation of whole of community approach for existing threatened species recovery plans (e.g. Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat) iii. Provide financial incentives and extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation and management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes.
BVH2.1.2 – By 2010 develop management plans for all regionally/state threatened species not currently covered by the recovery program i. Establish threatened species management plans for species not currently part of recovery programs
BVH2.2.1 – By 2010, identify the relationship between land condition (ABCD Framework) (vegetation, soils, water) and biodiversity condition within the region, and identify appropriate integrated biodiversity and land i. Establish and maintain a regional monitoring system applicable at a range of intensities and scales (farm-catchment-region). ii. Establish benchmarks for biodiversity. iii. Monitor long term changes in biodiversity - including woodland structure and diversity, RE reference sites, impacts of fire etc. iv. Develop a reliable and credible method for assessing biodiversity condition of native vegetation including grasslands.
BVH2.2.2 – By 2010, ensure 65% of land managers understand and are managing areas of high conservation value/rare and threatened species within their properties and across their sub-catchment for conservation purposes i. Provide financial incentives & extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation & management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes.
BVH2.3.1 – By 2007, establish a rehabilitation program to rehabilitate identified priorities for critical fragmented, riparian and threatened remnant native vegetation i. Identify and prioritise threatened species, ecosystems and habitats for future management/protection ii. Prioritise areas to retain connectivity and functionality at landscape and regional scales with strategic wildlife corridors and communicate the areas of value to land managers. iii. Provide financial incentives & extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation & management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes. iv. Support the development of revegetation nurseries, including seed collection and plant propagation to provide endemic plant stock.

BVH2.3.2 – By 2010, ensure 40% of land managers including local, state and federal governments are utilizing land management techniques that improve land and biodiversity condition i. Provide financial incentives & extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation & management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes. ii. Responsible management agencies undertake regular patrol/surveillance and enforcement activities. iii. Public land managers (local, state and federal) identify and implement management practices that improve land and biodiversity condition.
BVH2.3.3 – By 2010, develop and implement Traditional Owner country-based management plans. i. Support the development and implementation of cultural resource management plans for country to manage and protect places of cultural significance relevant to Traditional Owners. ii. Development of Traditional Owner cultural heritage walks and interpretative materials (signage, brochure etc.) by Traditional Owners to improve the community's knowledge and awareness of the importance of the region's natural and cultural resources .iii. Traditional Owners develop books, videos and other education material on bush tucker and bush medicine that is appropriate for the general community to promote the conservation of bush tucker species.
BVH2.3.4 – By 2010, have in place a biodiversity monitoring method that ensures the community has a good understanding of biodiversity condition from both a site and landscape/regional perspective. i. Establish and maintain a regional monitoring system applicable at a range of intensities and scales (farm-catchment-region). ii. Establish baselines for biodiversity. iii. Monitor long term changes in biodiversity - including woodland structure and diversity, RE reference sites, impacts of fire etc. iv. Develop and implement appropriate management regimes that will restore biodiversity condition to areas where vegetation thickening has had a net biodiversity impact.
BVH2.3.5 – By 2010 Identify and implement appropriate fire regimes for regional ecosystems. i. Determine appropriate fire regimes for regional ecosystems. Monitor usage and review effectiveness and limitations. ii. Support the ongoing development of the Firenorth website as a community access tool for planning and managing rangeland fires. iii. Develop mechanisms and guidelines to ensure the protection of cultural places in fire management plans and on-ground actions
BVH3.1.1 – By 2010 1,000,000ha of land is managed for nature conservation purposes under voluntary management agreements i. Using the regional ecosystem mapping and native flora and fauna distribution data, identify and prioritise appropriate areas of leasehold and private land to be voluntarily managed for nature conservation and engage landholders in negotiations to develop voluntary agreements. ii. Provide financial incentives & extension services to support landholder protection, rehabilitation & management of identified priority native vegetation/habitat for biodiversity purposes.
BVH3.1.2 – By 2010, In the Lower Burdekin, Bowen, Townsville and Thuringowa area there will be a 3% increase in the park reserve system with 70% of regional ecosystem types are represented i. Using the regional ecosystem mapping and native flora and fauna distribution data, identify and prioritise appropriate areas of leasehold and private land to be voluntarily managed for nature conservation and engage landholders in negotiations to develop voluntary agreements ii. Identify and develop options for new park acquisitions for state and federal agencies to fund.
PPA1.1.1 – By 2007, establish the location and extent of all priority pest plant and animal species i. Map priority and declared pest & aquatic & terrestrial weed infestations in government, freehold and leasehold lands. Collate mapping & report at sub-regional and regional level. ii. Develop regional list of potential pest species. Distribute a list of potential weed species to nursery industry. iii. Determine feral animal populations (e.g. cat, fox and deer). Recommend control options, based on existing information.

PPA1.1.2 – By 2010, have a coordinated approach to pest management i. Investigation of need for a Regional Pest Management Plan, which is collaborative between all Local Government Authorities in the region. ii. Facilitate cooperative approaches between Local Governments, Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy, Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Rail, SunWater and other key stakeholders cooperating to tackle pest management issues on their land iii. Assess the feasibility that local authorities are advised through the DPI weigh bill system of stock moving from outside the shire onto properties within the shire, to track high risk weed seed spread.
PPA1.1.3 – By 2009 complete Local government pest management plans and property pest management plans for all leasehold and freehold landholders i. Complete Local Government Area Pest Management Plans, with community/stakeholder input. ii. Support the completion of Property Pest Management Plans for all landholders with properties above 5 hectares iii. Support Indigenous involvement in the development and regular review of government, regional and sub-regional Pest Management Plans.
PPA1.1.4 – By 2008, support research programs where none exists for priority pest plants and animals i. Initiate research programs into high priority pests with identified gaps in knowledge of biology and management methods. PPA1.1.5 – By 2007 implement control strategies/methods for all priority pest species. i. Support active management and control of all priority, environmental and declared pests from local and state government pest management plans. ii. Identify, establish, maintain and promote (including to transport agencies) wash down sites in strategic locations (e.g. movement of vehicles from infested to clean area) iii. Encourage control of feral cats from the town area, through desexing, trapping and education. iv. Ensure the integration of pest control programs with the rehabilitation and revegetation programs by coordination between agencies and organisations.
PPA1.1.6 – By 2010, state and local governments have been lobbied to make changes in acts and by-laws that will allow the improved management of pest plants and animals i. Propose high priority local pests for declaration under state and local legislation. ii. Lobby for legislation for domestic animal species with pest potential (e.g. domestic cats, aquarium species) to be listed as pests.
PPA 1.2.1 – By 2007, implement pest eradication programs in priority environmentally or culturally significant areas and protected ecosystems i. Prioritise areas within the region that have been impacted by pest plants or animals ii. Support active management and control of all priority, environmental and declared pests from local and state government pest management plans iii. Investigate the role of grazing in managing aquatic and riparian weeds. Implement findings through PMPs. iv. Develop regional list of potential pest species. Distribute a list of potential weed species to nursery industry v. Ensure the integration of pest control programs with the rehabilitation and revegetation programs by coordination between agencies and organisations.
PPA1.2.2 – By 2010, complete state agency pest management planning i. Complete State Agency Pest Management Plans, including those for individual state managed properties. ii. Support Indigenous involvement in the development and regular review of government, regional and sub-regional Pest Management Plans.

PPA1.2.3 – Prevent the introduction of potential pests through raising the community's awareness about the impact of pests, mechanisms for dispersal and control/management techniques i. Develop & implement on-going strategic communications and community education campaign about existing and new weeds and pests and feral animals ii. Support and increase pest extension staff (catchment approach to pest management, advice, training, practical assistance on control, weed seed spread, funding opportunities); school programs; field days, demonstration sites Weedbuster Days), including working with local communities to identify problem/environmental weeds. Service to include collaboration/cooperation with Herbarium/specialists for weed identification. iii. Develop methodology to quantitatively assess species with the potential to become pests in region (e.g. weed risk assessment system used by Biosecurity Australia).
PPA2.1.1 – By 2007 Aboriginal people (especially Traditional Owners) will be involved in the management/eradication of feral pigs from culturally significant sites i. Involvement of Aboriginal people in research projects on feral animals (pigs, cane toads, rabbits etc) ii. Support Indigenous involvement in the development and regular review of government, regional and sub-regional Pest Management Plans.
PPA3.1.1 – Identify and map major infestations of aquatic weeds by 2006 i. Map the current distribution of all aquatic weeds including Hymenachne and Typha and identify the most likely pathways for their spread and potential sites for new infestations
PPA3.1.2 – Implement control programs for terrestrial and aquatic weeds that are spread via waterways or threaten riparian habitats i. Investigate the role of grazing in managing aquatic and riparian weeds. Implement findings through PMPs. ii. Adopt successful management methods for weed management, including cost sharing and public benefit. iii. Ensure the integration of pest control programs with the rehabilitation and revegetation programs by coordination between agencies and organisations.

Appendix B

General Legislation Overview

Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
The EPBC Act establishes a Commonwealth environmental assessment and approval system that operates in addition to State systems. Approval is required under the Act for matters that will have or are likely to have a significant impact on environmental matters of national significance.

Under the Commonwealth's EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision C, prior approval is required for any actions that are likely to result in a significant impact on;

A - World Heritage [areas]
B - Wetlands of international importance
C - A listed threatened species or community
D - Listed migratory species
E - Protection of the environment from nuclear actions
F - Marine environment
G - Additional matters of national environmental significance

Approval is not required if a bilateral agreement is in operation with respect to the proposed action (as described in Part 4, Division 1) or the proposed action is covered by a Ministerial declaration (as described in Part 4, Division 2).

If the project proponent considers that an action may have a significant impact on any of the environmental features listed above the proposal must be referred to the Minister for a decision to be made as to whether approval of the action is required (part 7, Division 1).

If the Minister decides, on the information provided, that the proposed action is a 'controlled action' then the method of assessing the proposal must be decided (Part 8, Division 3, Subdivision B). The impacts of a proposed controlled action may be in the form of:

an accredited assessment process
an assessment on preliminary documentation
a public environment report
an environmental impact statement
a public inquiry

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975
The marine waters in the vicinity of Nelly Bay are within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The jurisdiction ends at the mouth of waterways and does not extend into the waterway regardless of the extent of the inflow of tidal water.

Marine Parks Act 1982
The area and waters between high water and low water were within the jurisdiction of the Townsville-Whitsunday (State) Marine Park up until recent changes associated with rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971
"An Act to provide for State planning and development through a coordinated system of public works organization, for environmental coordination, and for related purposes" (p.9). The Act has relatively far reaching powers as the Coordinator-General may "undertake and commission such investigations, prepare such plans, devise such ways and means, give such directions, and take such steps and measures….to secure the proper planning, preparation, execution, coordination, control and enforcement of a program of works, planned developments, and environmental coordination for the State and for areas over which the State claims jurisdiction" (s 10 (2)).

In the absence of other legislation doing so or in conjunction with other legislation and processes "the Coordinator-General may declare a project to be a significant project for which a EIS [Environmental Impact Statement] is required" (s 26 (1)). A draft Terms of Reference (TOR) is made available to the project proponent and their comments are to be taken into consideration when finalising the TOR. The EIS is to be made available for public viewing and any properly made submissions are to be considered in the report prepared by the Coordinator-General about the EIS. The report about the EIS is publicly notified also.

Where development approval is required under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 the development assessment process is modified to incorporate the role of the Coordinator-General as the 'concurrence agency' (s 37).

Integrated Planning Act 1997

The Integrated Planning Act (IPA) 1997 is the legislation responsible for determining the parameters of local government Planning Schemes which set the scene for strategic development direction and define the development assessment process. The IPA therefore is instrumental in determining what type of development happens and where it happens.

For most types of development the IPA's Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) is the coordinating process for development approval. If advice or approvals are required from other agencies the assessment manager (local government) coordinates the responses from the various agencies involved. Development applications need to be consistent with the Planning Scheme for the local government area where the proposed development is located. There are situations where the IPA is overridden by other legislation including road and other infrastructure development.

The assessment statuses of some forms of development are defined in the IPA in Schedule 8. Where the assessment status is not defined in Schedule 8 it is a function of the planning scheme to identify self-assessable and assessable development. All other development not defined as self-assessable or assessable is considered exempt development. Exempt development under IPA is roughly equivalent to development not requiring Council consent under the previous legislation.

Codes are required to assess certain forms of development against. These Codes can be 'adopted' from another form of legislation or process e.g. the State Policy on Clearing on Freehold Land under the Vegetation Management Act.

In general the strategic intent of a Planning Scheme under IPA is a driving influence on development for a given local government area while the provisions of the Planning Scheme and the IDAS are the mechanisms for delivery.

IPA also defines requirements for the making of State Planning Policies.

Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act provides a legal framework and guidelines for the operation of local government in Queensland as autonomous bodies independent of State and Commonwealth agencies. The Act enables local government, amongst other things, to make local laws (formerly referred to as By Laws).

Section 26 (1) states "A local government's jurisdiction of local government includes jurisdiction to make local laws with respect to any matter-

Required or permitted to be prescribed under this or another Act; or
Necessary or convenient to be prescribed or exercised for the carrying out or giving effect to its local laws".

Where a State and local law are inconsistent "the State law prevails over the local law to the extent of the inconsistency" (s 31 (1)).

The Act establishes the role of local government in setting policy and managing its assets including through the use of local laws. This is particularly relevant as a mechanism for ensuring the safe and equitable use of open space and parklands.

Environmental Protection Act 1994 and Regulations
The act asserts that all persons have a general environmental duty not to cause environmental harm, and to report any harm that does occur.

The Act defines environmentally relevant activities (ERAs) and provides for the issue of licences to carry out various works as well as the nature of Environmental Impact Statements that may be required for ERAs. The provisions for contaminated land are also included in this Act.

The Act also enables subordinate legislation such including Environmental Protection Policies.

Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997
The policy applies to all Queensland waters. The 'environmental values' of waters are to be protected and/or enhanced under the policy. Indicators of environmental values of water can be defined by 'site specific documents', 'documents published by a recognised entity', or the Australian Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Fresh Waters (ANZECC). Water quality objectives are not defined in the policy however water quality objectives are considered to be "the set of water quality guidelines for indicators that will protect all environmental values for the water" (s 11 (2)).

"The chief executive [of the Environmental Protection Agency] may develop a plan to decide priorities for identifying environmental values and water quality objectives" if this has not already taken place (s 12 (1)). The process is carried out in conjunction with the chief executives of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Primary Industries, and in consultation with the community.

Another function of the chief executives is to promote a coordinated approach to educate and inform the community about water quality management issues. The policy is the driver for water quality protection and at the same time provides mechanisms for the achievement of its own objectives.

Under the policy local governments are required to develop environmental plans for a variety of applications including for urban stormwater systems. It is this policy, as subordinate legislation under the Environmental Protection Act that drives the development of Urban Stormwater Quality Management (environmental) Plans (USQMP). A USQMP must improve "the quality of stormwater in a way that is consistent with the water quality objectives for waters affected by the system" (s 42 (1)).

Fisheries Act 1994
The Act regulates "the management, use, development and protection of fisheries resources and fish habitats, and the management of aquaculture activities" (p.11).

Approval is required for various activities associated with fisheries resources and fish habitats including removing, damaging or destroying marine plants such as mangroves and sea grass beds.

Water Act 2000
The Water Act 2000 replaces the Water Resources Act 1989. The Water Act has assumed most of the functions of the Water Resources Act with some of these functions now integrated with the IPA.

One of the main objectives of the Act was to provide a legislative base for water resource plans. Water resource plans have been prepared for some parts of Queensland in an attempt to ensure the sustainable use of the state's water resources. These plans specify allowable water allocations in a designated area, and can include conditions relating to harvesting overland flow water.

While the Act allows for taking and interfering with overland flow water a planning scheme may require Council approval to be obtained for any 'operational works' where there will be a substantial alteration of the natural surface of the land. This may include dams, contour banks, drainage ditches and other earthworks associated with water harvesting and storage, and drainage operations.

With some exceptions approval is required for taking water, or interfering with water flows. Approvals come in the form of water licenses (s 206) and water permits (s 237). If a water resource plan is in place then decisions on the grant of a license or permit must be in accord with the plan. The most significant difference between the license and permit is that a water license is 'attached' to a parcel of land while a water permit is granted for a specified activity not necessarily associated with a particular property e.g. water for road construction works. Water licenses and permits are obtained from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.
Other approvals required under the act include; riverine protection permits, which can be issued for destroying vegetation, excavating, or placing, fill in a watercourse, lake or spring (s 266), and allocation of quarry material (s 280). Riverine protection permits can be obtained directly from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines while extracting quarry material from waterways requires development approval under IPA.
The relationship of the Water Act to the IPA is defined in sections 966 to 971. This generally relates to development applications under IPA, which require assessment under the Water Act including for;

operational work for taking or interfering with water
removal of quarry material and;
operational work that is construction and maintenance of referable dams (generally >8 metre high walls)

In general, existing applications, licences and permits applied for, or granted, under the Water Resources Act will be honoured under the Water Act (s 1048) and may not require separate development approval.

Nature Conservation Act 1992
Under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld) wildlife species (plant and animal) are prescribed and listed in a number of conservation categories i.e. presumed extinct, endangered, vulnerable, rare, common, international or prohibited. 'Protected wildlife' is a plant or animal in all conservation categories except 'international' and 'prohibited'.

The act provides for the management of 'protected areas', 'protected animals' and 'protected plants'. Protected animals are the property of the State and cannot be taken, used or kept without a permit or under the application of a conservation plan. Protected plants are the property of the State unless they occur on 'private land' i.e. freehold or leasehold.

The Act also provides guidelines for managing National Parks.

Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002
This is the primary act for the control of plant and animal pest species in Queensland. It defines the type of plants and animals that are considered pest species and the level of control required to be undertaken by landholders in relation to each declared pest. The Act also defines the major role local government has in controlling pests and administering sections of the Act.

Vegetation Management Act 1999
The purpose of the act is aimed at achieving sustainability. The act, in the simplest sense, defines what native vegetation can and cannot be cleared. The act is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through the Queensland Herbarium, has determined the extent of regional ecosystems and their conservation status. The EPA has prepared regional ecosystem maps and these are used as the principle tool in determining the conservation status of regional ecosystems for the purposes of assessment. The maps are at the 1:100,000 scale and as such they may not delineate small patches, and narrow strips of remnant vegetation. There will also be errors in ecosystem classification as the majority of the work has been carried out using remote sensing. Regional Ecosystem maps can be altered upon application to DNRM and confirmation of the discrepancies. The maps however are the best available data and are defined by the act as the principle reference.

New vegetation management legislation was introduced to the Queensland Parliament on 18 March 2004 and was passed, with minor amendments on 22 April 2004. This was an election commitment of the Beattie government to phase out broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation in Queensland by December 2006. Along with the phasing out of broadscale clearing other amendments to the Act include:

Bringing the tree clearing provisions of the Land Act and the Vegetation Management Act under the one piece of legislation;
Applications for clearing associated with on going activities will be assessed against new regional vegetation management codes (formerly Regional Vegetation Management Plans);
Provision for preparation of Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) to define remnant vegetation and previously cleared areas to allow for the management of regrowth;
An interim code for forest practices put in place until the Queensland Forest Practice System code is finalised;
Changes to the definition of 'urban' for vegetation management purposes. Urban areas will be defined by local governments under a Priority Infrastructure Plan. The provisions will have the effect of removing rural residential zones from the current urban area definition and will prevent the high clearing rates associated with the conversion of land from rural to rural residential;

The Act applies to all clearing of vegetation other than vegetation on:

A forest reserve, or protected area (s. 28) under the Nature Conservation Act 1992;
A state forest or timber reserve under the Forestry Act 1959; or
A forest entitlement area under the Land Act 1994.

The purpose is mainly achieved by providing for codes for the Integrated Planning Act (IPA) that are applicable for the assessment of vegetation clearing under the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS). The IPA defines the clearing of most native vegetation as 'assessable development' requiring development approval. Exceptions, not requiring development approval, are listed at item 3A, in Schedule 8 of the IPA.