

**Burdekin Dry Tropics
Regional Local Government
Network (NRM)**



Burdekin Dry Tropics Local Government NRM Issues and Needs Report

July 2005



action
Salinity & Water
AUSTRALIA

Acknowledgements

Funding for this project has been provided by State Investment Plant (SIP) CB07 through the auspices of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board. The SIP is part of the joint Commonwealth and Queensland Governments commitment to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full title
BBIFMAC	Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee
BDT	Burdekin Dry Tropics
BDTB	Burdekin Dry Tropics Board
BMNRM	Burnett Mary NRM region
BRIG	Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group
BSIG	Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group
Cape York	Cape York Peninsula NRM region
CEO	Chief Executive Organisation
Condamine	Condamine NRM region
DLGPSR	Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation
DNR & M	Department of Natural Resources and Mines
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
EMS	Environmental Management Services
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FNQNRM	Far North Queensland NRM region (Wet Tropics)
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HESROC	Health and Environmental Services Regional Organisation of Councils – North Queensland
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
LAWMAC	Local Authority Waste Management Advisory Committee
LG	Local Government
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NaREF	Natural Resources and Environment Forum for the Townsville and Thuringowa Coastal Plains
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NRM	Natural Resource Management
RIS	Regional Investment Strategy
RIT	River Improvement Trust
ROC	Regional Organisation of Councils
RPAC	Regional Planning Advisory Committee
SEQ	South East Queensland NRM region
STP	Sewage Treatment Plant
WHaMBROC	Whitsunday Hinterland and Mackay Bowen Regional Organisation of Councils

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Document Control						
						Document ID:
Rev No	Date	Revision Details	Typist	Author	Verifier	Approver
1	August 2005		JG	JG	GB	GS

1. **BDT Regional Local Government Network (NRM)**

1.1 **Background**

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) is a relatively new network consisting of the local governments in the Burdekin Dry Tropics (BDT) natural resource management (NRM) region. The 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). A map of the BDT region showing the local government areas is provided as Figure 1-1.

The Network is an alliance of Councils with administration support and contractual auspicing provided by the Health and Environmental Services Regional Organisation of Councils – North Queensland (HESROC) and Townsville City Council (TCC). The HESROC Councils and the non HESROC Councils in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region are listed in Table 1-1 (see Appendix A for BDT Local Government statistical information).

Table 1-1 Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Region Local Governments

HESROC Councils	Non HESROC Councils in the BDT Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burdekin Shire• Charters Towers City• Dalrymple Shire• City of Thuringowa• Townsville City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belyando Shire• Bowen Shire• Jericho Shire• Nebo Shire• Mirani Shire

Note: Hinchinbrook Shire is a HESROC Council but is not included in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region

While being a HESROC Council Hinchinbrook Shire is almost wholly within the Wet Tropics NRM region and as such does not have direct involvement in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) initiative. All material produced is forwarded to Hinchinbrook for their information and needs and issues identified by Hinchinbrook Shire Council are included in this report.

1.2 **Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Region**

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 Regional Investment Strategy (RIS). The Plan will be implemented over the next two years and provides significant opportunities for involvement in NRM activities to improve water quality and biodiversity outcomes in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region.

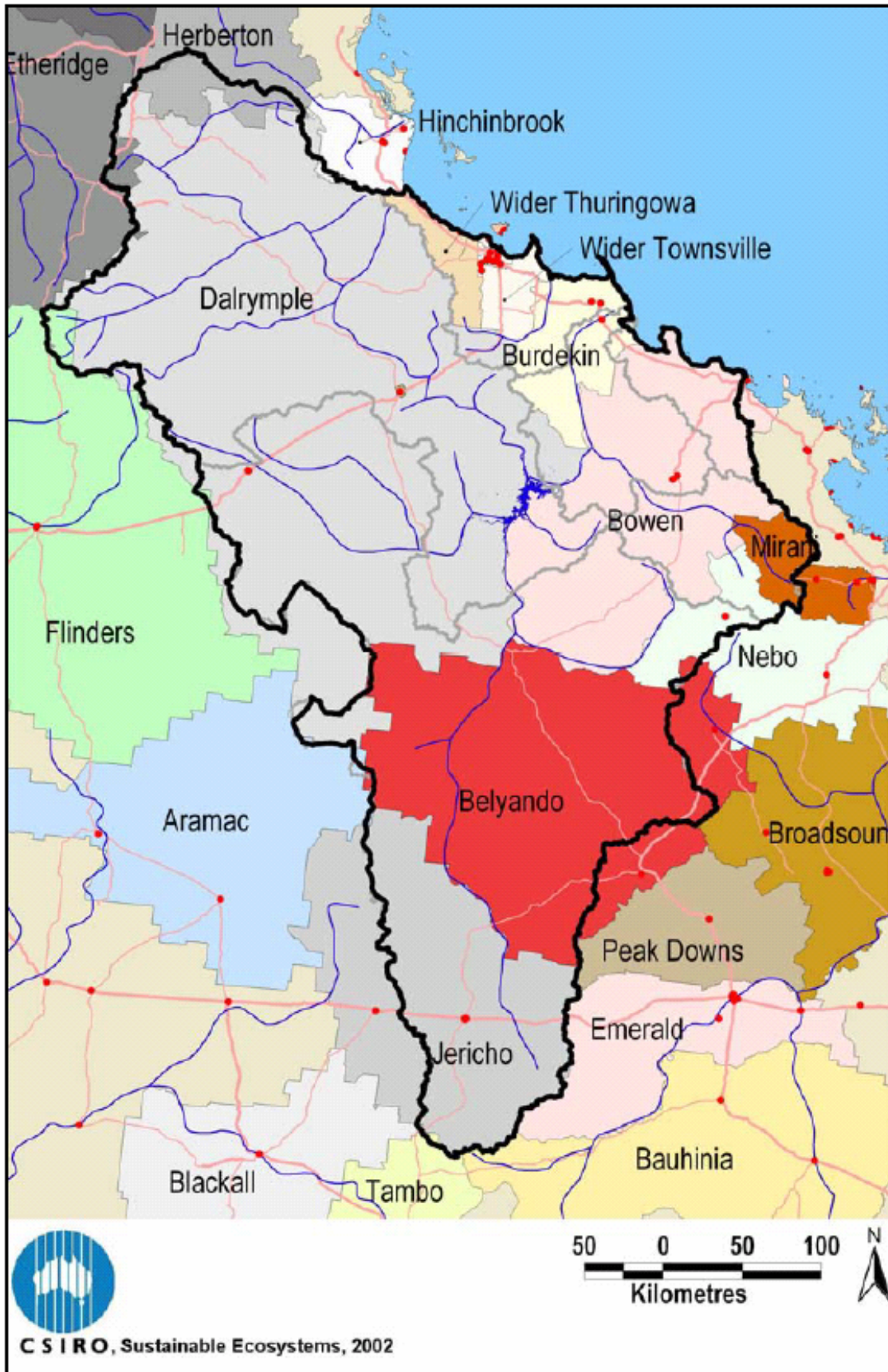
The Burdekin Dry Tropics is a large region (approximately 133,400 square kilometres) and it was deemed necessary to adopt a sub-regional consultative approach to develop the NRM Plan to ensure wide community participation and input. Sub-regional groups were already in existence from the previous NRM Strategy development process under NHT (Stage 1) and these groups were subsequently recruited to provide the sub-regional input.

The emphasis placed on the sub-regional approach, along with a substantial Indigenous engagement program, reduced the potential support for engaging local government in the planning process. Local government was expected to engage of its own accord, through one of four of the BDT sub-regional groups, with limited capacity and little understanding of the processes, objectives and potential opportunities.

1.3 **Need for Action**

The low level of engagement of local government in the NRM planning process was recognised by HESROC and action was taken to address the situation. This report documents the issues and needs associated with local government involvement in regional NRM under the NAP and NHT as identified through HESROC activities and subsequent partnership projects with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (2003 to 2005).

Figure 1-1 Burdekin Dry Tropics Local Government areas



2. HESROC NRM Review

2.1 Needs Confirmed

The Health and Environmental Services Regional Organisation of Councils - North Queensland (HESROC) and the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB) separately recognised the need for greater involvement of local government in the regional NRM planning process. In August 2003 HESROC instigated a review of local government NRM partnerships and projects to gather relevant information and garner support from constituent Councils. The initial review involved HESROC Councils (i.e. Burdekin Shire, Charters Towers City, Dalrymple Shire, Hinchinbrook Shire, Thuringowa City and Townsville City) with results forming the basis for further actions.

2.2 Review Results

The review confirmed the need for Local Government to be supported to be involved in regional NRM planning and implementation processes (see Appendix B for the body of the report). Summary information based on the review and report is provided below.

2.2.1 Local Government Context

In essence local government as a whole needs to be considered as a sectoral interest with its own 'culture' and a 'constrained' ability to contribute to broader NRM initiatives in the realm of community based NRM.

Additionally each local government in the BDT is an individual entity with individual characteristics, needs and resources. Therefore the context for involvement of local government in NRM needs to be considered on both an individual and a collective basis to ensure the substantial contribution made to NRM by local government is applied effectively at both the local and regional levels.

The main issue areas associated with local government that influence participation in regional NRM include:

- Local government is key part of the 'community';
- Local government is a local 'authority' and regulatory body;
- Local government is a 'business' entity and service provider;
- The policy makers (Councillors) are elected from the constituency of the local government area;
- Administrators and policy implementers are employees of the organisation (Council);
- Local government is 'driven' by statutory requirements as well as personalities and politics;
- Councils do not operate in the same way, have the same departments or division of responsibilities;
- Community expects local government to deal with all local situations as a matter of course;
- Local government often generates the majority of its income from 'external' sources;
- NRM is often seen as another external, competitive funding source;
- Regional planning may appear to be outside local government's service role to local constituents.

2.2.2 HESROC and Local Government 'Networks'

HESROC was formed to promote regional coordination of Council focused environmental activities which are usually driven by legislation. The primary focus of the groups such as HESROC will therefore be service provision associated with legislative responsibilities e.g. vector control and waste management. As such NRM is a relatively minor component of Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) unless there is a consensus within the ROC that NRM should be given a higher profile. If there is no priority attached to NRM then the processes needed to interact effectively in regional NRM are not developed.

The main issues associated with HESROC involvement in regional NRM arrangements were:

- The lack of official recognition of HESROC by the BDTB;
- HESROC did not have a designated regional NRM coordinator / facilitator;

- The lack of understanding amongst member Councils about the new regional NRM arrangements; and
- Rejection of HESROC funding applications to facilitate capacity building and support for local government.

2.2.3 Regional Planning Issues

In general a good relationship seemed to exist between the BDTB and HESROC. However, HESROC had no formal role and there were no recognisable structures or processes for interaction. As with other regional NRM groups in Queensland the capacity of the BDTB to operate in the new NRM environment was not well developed. It was extremely difficult for the BDTB to develop the required capacity while embroiled in day-to-day actions, which were often controlled by State and Commonwealth government directives (real or implied).

Issues impacting the regional planning process and engagement of partners in regional NRM included:

- Multiple pressures to operate as a fully functional Regional NRM Group under the new funding regime;
- No practical experience, precedents or 'guidelines';
- Part-time (voluntary) Board Directors guiding often inexperienced staff;
- Slow development and roll out of guidelines by State and Commonwealth government;
- Development of policy and operational processes on an ad hoc, priority needs basis;
- Actions often undertaken without accompanying policy and processes;
- No culturally appropriate mechanism to involve local government and other sectors;
- Disjunct communication processes;
- Uncertainty of funding and continual requirements to 'apply' for funding;
- Competitive nature of funding during pre-plan development and plan development phases;
- Delays in provision of funding from NAP and NHT (State and Commonwealth governments);
- State and Commonwealth governments issues impacting regional NRM arrangements;
- Input expected through sub-regional NRM groups;
- Sub-regional groups reliant on unformed BDTB processes;
- Sub-regional groups reliant on BDTB funding.

2.2.4 Local Government Identified Issues

The author in the process of undertaking the review identified the issues mentioned so far. Additional issues specifically identified by local government during the review are listed in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Issues Identified by Local Government

Local Government Internal
Communication and feedback on NRM within local government (LG) is inadequate;
Culture of LG and internal processes can stifle NRM initiatives
Fear of LG being left with the responsibility of NRM
Interest and priority of LG for involvement in NRM varies
Personality and political differences retard LG NRM cohesion
Resources to be involved in community NRM
State and Commonwealth government intervention on NRM issues deters LG involvement
Timelines for LG involvement in NRM are restrictive i.e. too short for meeting cycles and gaining consensus
Understanding of NRM issues by Councillors / Council
Understanding of NRM responsibilities by Councillors / Council
Understanding of the NRM 'scene' by Councillors / Council
Understanding of their roles by Council representatives on NRM groups
Volume of information on NRM is daunting for LG
Regional NRM Process Related
Lack of integration of State agencies in community NRM
Lack of LG representation on NRM group Executive Committees
Lack of structure, protocol and processes for interaction between LG and NRM groups

Ongoing changes to NRM regimes reducing confidence for involvement
Poor definition of roles of stakeholders in NRM
Ratio of planning compared to on-ground works
State and Commonwealth politics impacting local / regional NRM e.g. water and vegetation management
Community Local Government Interaction Related
Community NRM group expectations of LG contribution to NRM
Community understanding of NRM issues and solutions;
Differences between LG and NRM group issues and priorities;
Planning for LG involvement without LG involvement in planning;
Poor community perception of LG through past experiences
Recognition of the legitimacy of LG contribution to NRM through Council programs and community support
Separation between LG and the 'community'
Understanding of LG role by community

2.2.5 Implications of the Issues

Of the issues identified during the review some were specific to a sector or entity while others related to the processes and interactions between entities and sectors. Whatever the issue it was obvious that all parties were struggling to come to terms with the new regional NRM arrangements. Various parties also had expectations of others, which altered their objectivity and provided obstacles to the development of functional partnerships.

The previous competitive nature of NHT funding was also carried over to the new arrangements and continued to divide 'community'. In reality community consists of all stakeholders i.e. individuals, NGOs, community-based groups, all levels of government, industry, Traditional Owners, educational and research bodies. Broadly this includes everyone in the catchment and those influenced by and influencing the catchment.

2.2.6 Needs

The main needs identified in the review related to;

- Improving understanding and awareness;
- Defining roles and relationships;
- Developing protocols and processes, and
- Building and maintaining trust, partnerships and networks.

Specific needs identified by local government included:

- Capacity building at both local and regional levels;
- Greater consideration of social and economic issues in NRM;
- Definition of the benefits of community NRM.

2.3 Partnership Project

Following the submission of the review results in December 2003, HESROC unanimously supported an initiative to increase the capacity of local government to be involved in NRM. As an interim measure HESROC approved a proposal to approach the BDTB for financial support to improve engagement of local government in the NRM planning process in the BDT region. HESROC and Townsville City Council both committed funds to the initiative.

At a BDTB meeting, 4 February 2004, the HESROC proposal to facilitate local government involvement in regional NRM planning was presented to the Board. The outcome was a commitment by the Board to support the project.

The project was a sub-component of the broader capacity building initiative for local government in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region which included the establishment of the **Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)** (the Network).

The concept was to build relationships with all the Councils in the region and develop processes for effective engagement and involvement of Councils in NRM, principally at the regional and sub-regional levels. This involved the establishment of an 'informal' network based on the existing HESROC network and subsequently incorporating the non-HESROC Councils within the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region.

3. ***NRM Plan Input Project***

3.1 **Network Facilitation**

The HESROC – BDTB joint venture was titled ***Local Government Involvement in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Accredited Regional Natural Resource Management Plan Project*** and officially commenced in late February 2004. At that stage the majority of sub-regional planning activity had already taken place. It was also the lead up period to the local government elections held in March 2004. From a local government perspective the focus of attention was in a completely different direction with regional NRM planning low on the radar.

The focus for the Project Manager, John Gunn, included attendance at the two remaining sub-regional group forums/workshops followed by the Regional Forum on 5 and 6 April 2004. The regional forum was held to consolidate sub-regional inputs to form the basis for the regional NRM plan. Feedback from the regional forum was delivered to Councils in the BDT region through the formative Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM). Preliminary Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) development workshops followed and again the Project Manager attended and provided comment on local government matters and provided feedback to Councils on the workshops through the Network.

The project did what was possible using a fledgling Network and encouraged local government to be actively involved at a period when capacity to be involved in such a process was probably at its lowest point i.e. during and immediately following local government elections. The main task of the project during the first few months was to attend relevant NRM planning activities on behalf of local government and provide appropriate input to the planning process. Information associated with the planning process was distilled so that only relevant and necessary information was relayed back to local government via the Network.

Through meetings and various forms of consultation local government comments and perspectives on the draft plan were documented and feedback provided to the BDTB. Feedback was in the form of written submissions as well as input at meetings and workshops held as part of the plan development process.

3.2 **Network Meetings**

Three meetings were held in Townsville for the BDT Regional Local Government Network (NRM) during the later stages of development of the Regional NRM Plan and Regional Investment Strategy (RIS). The meetings were used to provide Network members with updates on the NRM planning process and to record feedback on draft material. Meeting summary details are provided in Table 3-1. Notes from the meetings appear in Appendix C.

Table 3-1 Network Meetings 2004

Meeting	Council	Participants
2 June 04	Dalrymple Shire	Cr Bill Breen and Raymon Jayo
	Thuringowa City	Lyonelle Lane and Shaun Warner
	Mirani Shire	Cr Dave Price
	Townsville City	Greg Bruce, Andrew Hannay, Sri Suryati (Environmental Management Services (EMS)) and Andrew Bengsen, Darren Alsemgeest and Cathleen Crouch (Pest Management)
	Apologies: Mick Langburne (Charters Towers City) and Mark Allpress (Burdekin Shire)	
11 Oct 04	Burdekin Shire	Mark Allpress and Cr Robert Marriot
	Charters Towers City	Mick Langburne
	Thuringowa City	Rachel Allen
	Townsville City	Greg Bruce and Andrew Hannay, Grant Steen (HESROC Secretary)
	LGAQ	Kathryn Dryden (CB01 North Queensland Project Officer)
	Apologies: Cr Dave Price (Mirani Shire), Cr Bob Oakes and Mark Crawley (Nebo Shire), Raymon Jayo (Dalrymple Shire)	

6 Dec 04	Burdekin Shire	Mark Allpress
	Bowen Shire	Cr Greg Smith
	Dalrymple Shire	Raymon Jayo
	Thuringowa City	Rachel Allen
	Townsville City	Andrew Hannay and Sri Suryati
	BDTB	Belinda Zunker
	Apologies: Mick Langburne (Charters Towers City)	

3.3 Council by Council

As not all Councils attended the Network meetings the Project Manager visited Councils individually and provided opportunities for feedback through presentations to Council and follow up meetings. A list of the interaction is provided in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Planning Interaction Network Meetings

Date	Council	Opportunity	Participants
28 Sep 04	Burdekin	Presentation	Full Council
7 Dec 04	Thuringowa	Presentation	Full Council (in conjunction with CB01 Project Officer)
13 Jan 05	Belyando Shire	Presentation	Full Council
23 Feb 05	Belyando Shire	Meeting	John Torpy (CEO) and Tony Goldsworthy (Manager Environmental Services)
28 Feb 05	Bowen Shire	Meeting	John Finlay (CEO), John Gibbons (Environmental Services), Gary Martin (Manager Water and Sewerage) and Cr Greg Smith
11 Jan 05	Jericho Shire	Presentation	Full Council
13 Jan 05	Nebo Shire	Presentation	Full Council
23 Feb 05	Nebo Shire	Meeting	Mark Crawley (CEO)
Feb 05	Nebo Shire	Email comments	Reg Norman (Technical Officer)

Results from the interactions are recorded in Appendix D. A summary of the issues and needs that emerged during the planning stage is provided below.

3.3.1 Issues

Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council/s feeling overwhelmed with all the issues to deal with and cannot easily see how they can be actively involved in NRM beyond their current commitment; • Time and resources are seen as the main constraints; • Being split by NRM regions means splitting resources; • State Land not well managed resulting in mosquito breeding and fire risk; • Water supply is an issue for Nebo and Belyando Shires with both reliant on pipelines and bores. Increasing mining activity within the Shire is also adding to water supply problems; • Increased population growth is placing additional pressure on existing community infrastructure and resources; • Reliance on primary industry e.g. farming and mining, and susceptibility to external factors, namely world markets for mining and agriculture and variable climates.
Information/communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodian issues e.g. DNRM; • Pathway of the information from the Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG) to BDTB and back again is problematic and not necessarily suited to Council processes.

3.3.2 Needs

Engagement, Communications and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of written material to 'readable' portions; • Make NRM information relevant to local government; • Combine LG component with BSIG meetings; • Hold Network meetings on a rotational basis (2 or 3 times a year); • Earlier notification of meetings and requests for action; • Improve partnerships with sub-regional groups; • Improved communication lines from the BSIG and BDTB to representative organisations; • Ongoing visits and support from the HESROC NRM Facilitator and Network; • Assistance, direction and practical examples with input to planning and project development; • Involvement of Traditional Owners to identify and showcase indigenous culture and history; • Clarification of local government 'representation' on the BDTB and amendment of the Constitution; • Cooperative and cross-regional arrangements for NRM activities.
Pest Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated regional arrangements - catchment approach from the headwaters downstream; • Mapping of pest animal distribution; • Integration of mapping and on ground works with Council systems; • Property pest management plans for coastal areas; • Investigate herbicide subsidy as an incentive; • Mapping extent of weeds; • Increase community support through activities in urban areas; • Rubber vine control to maintain riparian vegetation; • Practical assistance with pest management is required e.g. off-sider for the Stock Routes Officer; • Cross regional coordination of projects e.g. with Central Highlands Pest Management Group; • A relatively small effort to maintain weed free areas would benefit the whole catchment.
Planning and Planning Schemes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link NRM mapping to planning schemes and development assessment processes; • An information exchange so that strategic planning, planning schemes and development assessment could use available and future information; • Consideration of future development in the NRM plan and RIS as the majority of potential future development on rural properties could be stifled by restrictive legislation and regulations; • Shorter, more readable Corporate Plan.
Waste Management;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional involvement through LAWMAC, WHaMBROC and HESROC; • Local waste management plans as components of regional plans; • Advance to full recycling systems in rural areas.
Urban areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration and protection of coastal wetlands near urban areas; • A generic stormwater quality management template would be a useful for rural Councils; • Integrate stormwater quality and biodiversity outcomes; • Investigate and implement effluent recycling and reuse possibilities.
River management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated projects with River Improvement Trusts (RIT) (Don and Burdekin Rivers).
Biodiversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land for Wildlife cross-regional projects (e.g. Mackay Whitsunday)
Community Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On ground coordinators/extension staff; • Greater involvement with BBIFMAC; • Resources for BSIG coordination activities; • Recognition of the importance of people and their socio-economic circumstances.

4. CB07 BDT Component

4.1 Building Capacity

Funding was secured to continue to support the capacity building efforts initiated by the BDTB HESROC project. The avenue was through CB07, a State Investment Plan project, which provided funding to the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board. The BDTB subsequently engaged HESROC via Townsville City Council, to manage and deliver the project. Part of the project has involved the continued provision of feedback to the BDTB on behalf of the BDT Regional Local Government Network (NRM) as the Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) was being finalised in early 2005.

In an ideal situation developing the capacity of local government to be involved in regional NRM would have commenced prior to, and as a parallel process, to the development of the regional NRM Plan and RIS. The resources from CB07 have been used to remedy this situation to some degree with the intent to increase the capacity of local government to engage in NRM while providing the support necessary to compensate for the capacity deficiencies in the interim.

Along with the need to develop relevant capacity building material and programs the project was designed to fill some critical information gaps associated with existing local government NRM activities.

The need for a situation assessment became even more evident at the regional RIS stakeholders workshop in March 2005. One of the initial exercises was to determine what was happening in the region and what needed to be delivered through the RIS. The original local government skills inventory proposed as part of the CB07 project was subsequently expanded to include local government NRM activities and associated education resources as well as the skills inventory of the people in local government who are involved, or potentially involved, in NRM and sustainability initiatives.

An inventory of local government NRM activities was undertaken with the results to inform regional NRM planning processes and especially potential pathways for delivery of projects and programs under the RIS in association with local government.

4.2 Council by Council

A summary of workshops/meetings is provided in Table 4-1. Issues and needs identified as part of the NRM Inventory appear below Council by Council.

Table 4-1 NRM Inventory Workshops / Meetings

Council	Date	Participants
Nebo Shire	17 May 05	Mark Crawley (CEO) and Reg Norman (Technical Officer)
Belyando Shire	18 May 05	John Torpy (CEO)
Mirani Shire	19 May 05	Ray Geraghty (CEO), Cr Dave Price (Mayor) and Cr Paul Tippett
Burdekin Shire	25 May 05	Mark Allpress (Director Planning and Environment)
Charters Towers City	26 May 05	Mick Langburne (EHO) and Cr Brian Beveridge (Mayor)
Dalrymple Shire	15 Jun 05	Raymon Jayo (Director Administrative Services)
Thuringowa City	15 Jun 05	Rachel Allan (Environment Officer)
Townsville City	May – Jun 05	Andrew Hannay (Environment Officer) and Environmental Management Service staff
Jericho Shire	28 Jun 05	Des Howard (CEO)
Bowen Shire	25 Jul 05	John Finlay (CEO)

4.2.1 Belyando Shire – 18 May 2005

Issue	Need
Low level of GIS skill amongst staff	Assistance with GIS and updating layers and themes
No arrangements exist for regional pest management across ROC boundaries	Coordination of pest management on a regional basis i.e. catchment basis
No existing local guidelines on NRM	Provision of best management practice for NRM
No knowledge of biodiversity programs	Information on Land for Wildlife
Increasing population and dry years placing pressure on water supplies	Funding for investigations on better use methods and installation of more efficient waste water reuse systems
Little experience in developing NRM projects and funding applications	Assistance with funding applications for NRM related initiatives

(See also previously documented information)

4.2.2 Bowen Shire – 25 July 2005

Issue	Need
Understanding of funding avenues and arrangements for regional NRM	Presentation and explanation to Council with diagrams and a question and answer session
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Council staff do some activities associated with NRM • No real direction or policy on NRM • No inventory of Council properties and their condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person (Extension Officer) to coordinate NRM activities • Identification of potential projects and priority issue areas • Identification and mapping of priority biodiversity areas • Open space review
Broadscale recycling abandoned for economic reasons	Review of recycling opportunities and potential regional arrangements

4.2.3 Burdekin Shire – 25 May 2005

Issue	Need
No guidelines available to include NRM in the Planning Scheme	Review of IPA draft scheme for development and inclusion of NRM relevant Codes

(See also previously documented information)

4.2.4 Charters Towers City – 26 May 2005

Issue	Need
Little understanding of the BDTB	Presentations to Council and summary information
Large volumes of information to read associated with NRM and other subjects	Make summary information available so Council can see what is happening and provide feedback if interested
Pressure for Councils to amalgamate	Looking at arrangements with Dalrymple for economy of scale/mutual management arrangements.
Under utilisation of wastewater	Information on Smart Water and other funding schemes
Flying foxes using town trees as a refuge to the detriment of urban lifestyle	Some solution to the problem which does contravene requirements of the Nature Conservation Act etc
Chinee Apple in town reserves	Funding for initial assault
Waste methane from the STP	Assistance to determine feasibility of methane extraction
Parthenium and other weeds	Involvement in relevant weed control programs
Unmanaged properties	A scheme to engage landowners in weed management so others are not disadvantaged by the inaction of the few

(See also previously documented information)

4.2.5 Dalrymple Shire – 15 June 2005

Issue	Need
Lack of resources	Assistance
Fear of being dumped with further responsibility that Council can't resource	Assurance of an ongoing commitment and funding by State and Commonwealth governments

(See also previously documented information)

4.2.6 Jericho Shire – 28 June 2005

Issue	Need
Technical skills lacking e.g. GIS, due to population size, isolation and lack of trainers	Sharing of specialists between Councils
Difficult to attract and retain skilled staff	Train 'champions' i.e. long term staff, rather than all staff
Dependence on state government	Partnerships and innovation
Dissipation of funds through duplication and 'administration'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional arrangements based on practical operational units • Use of templates and guidelines
Proficiency in map reading, GPS, GIS, computers etc	Training through property planning process or some other project
Stock Routes Officer is a practical not a technical person	Assistance with GIS and mapping to translate experiential knowledge into electronic form
Lack of partnerships between local and state government	Assistance for western Councils to find better ways to deliver NRM
State devolving responsibility	Ongoing Commonwealth and State funding
Weeds especially in the vicinity of waterways	Funds for projects to hit weed hot spots as has been done in the past

4.2.7 Mirani Shire – 19 May 2005

Issue	Need
Grazing excluded from expanding areas of NP and State Forest. Build up of grasses and other material - potential fire hazard	Assistance with coordinated weed management
Erosion and water quality	Riparian fencing, off stream watering points and management of riparian areas
Lack of strategic direction for NRM matters such as weed management	Assistance with weed mapping as a first priority
Lack of budget for NRM	Identify potential for integration of NRM activities
Involving landholders in NRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant information products • Incentive schemes

4.2.8 Nebo Shire

(See previously documented information)

4.2.9 Thuringowa City – 15 June 2005

15 June 2005

Issue	Need
Substantial areas to manage and responsibilities under legislation	More staff for on ground work, especially coastal management and Pest management

(See also previously documented information)

4.2.10 Townsville City

(See previously documented information)

4.3 Communications

Each Council has its own method of operation and reporting. As part of the CB07 project a review of each Council's communication processes with respect to NRM activities was undertaken. The results are included in the Appendix of the Communication Strategy including individual communication pathways with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) for each Council.

5. Other Sources

5.1 Broader Perspective

To gain a broader perspective and provide some relativity to other NRM regions in Queensland additional sources of information have been included which raise issues and suggest needs with respect to regional NRM and local government. The additional sources are:

- *Natural Resource Management Capacity Needs Analysis Report and Project Plan* (LGAQ 2004);
- HESROC response to the 'Green Paper' titled *Options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management* (DNR & M 2005);
- Notes compiled at the LGAQ 2005 Environment and NRM Conference.

5.1.1 LGAQ Survey for CB01

The main objective of the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) managed project CB01 '*Local Government and Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Queensland NAP and NHT regions*' is to improve "Local Government's capacity to effectively participate in and integrate effort towards the design, establishment and delivery of sustainable NRM planning arrangements in the local and regional context" across Queensland (LGAQ 2004, p.3).

As part of the project LGAQ undertook a survey of Councils in Queensland to develop the *Local Government Natural Resource Management Capacity Needs Analysis Report and Project Plan* (LGAQ 2004).

"A total of 79 Local Governments, 2 Aboriginal Community Councils were interviewed across the four priority NAP investments regions within Queensland, including:

- Burdekin-Fitzroy;
- Lockyer-Burnett-Mary;
- Condamine-Balonne-Maranoa; and
- Border Rivers" (LGAQ 2004, p.5).

The key results (extracted) from the CB01 report were:

- 35% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed and a further 34% under developed in demonstrating a clear understanding of natural resource management issues in a local and regional context.
- 63% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed in demonstrating linkages between local and/or regional natural resource management goals and Council's corporate and planning scheme.
- 54% of Councils were rated as under developed in relation to demonstrating effective support and participation either between adjoining Councils, Regional Organisation of Councils or District Local Government Associations in addressing regional natural resource management issues.
- 56% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed in having involvement in local and/or regional natural resource management programs e.g. Natural Heritage Trust Mark 1.
- 55% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed in relation to demonstrating examples of Council's support and participation in the development of effective community partnership programs.
- 57% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed in relation to access and utilisation of knowledge to develop local and regional natural resource management standards and targets.
- 55% of Councils interviewed were rated as not developed in relation to participating in the development of an integrated regional natural resource management plan.
- 47% of Councils interviewed express concern with the current performance of the Regional Natural Resource Management Board. Ineffective communication strategies were identified as the key concern.

- 97% of Councils interviewed expressed support for Local Government training, awareness building and network development programs.

Councils from the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region interviewed were; Charters Towers, Burdekin, Dalrymple, Jericho (Desert Channels, Desert Uplands and Fitzroy Basin, Bowen (Mackay Whitsunday), Mirani (Mackay Whitsunday), Belyando (Fitzroy Basin), Nebo (Fitzroy Basin), and Hinchinbrook (Wet Tropics). Some of the local government areas overlap with other regional NRM areas and these are indicated in brackets (see Figure 1-1).

Prior to the interviews a needs analysis survey was undertaken by LGAQ. The key results from the survey (February 2003), as per Appendix C of the 2004 Report (LGAQ 2004) include:

- 66% of Councils expressed an average understanding of their role and responsibilities in the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust Mark 2;
- 56% of Councils expressed an average understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Bodies for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust Mark 2;
- 44% of Councils expressed an average understanding of the Integrated Planning Act 1997 as a mechanism for delivering natural resource management outcomes;
- 84% of Councils support the need for and would participate in a regional training and education program to implement solutions to natural resource management issues through planning schemes;
- 88% of Councils support the need for and would participate in a closer working relationship with the local catchment group and/or the Regional Strategy Group.

79 councils were contacted across the four priority investments regions within Queensland and 75 councils (95%) responded. Respondents included 40% Chief Executive Officers; 36% Directors/Managers; 8% Environmental Health Officers; 7% Planners; 6% Councillors; 1% Engineer and 1% Consultant.

5.1.2 Future NRM Arrangements Options Paper – ‘Green Paper’

Options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management (DNR & M April 2005), otherwise known as the ‘Green Paper’, was released by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines in April 2005.

The “discussion paper has been prepared to provide information, promote discussion and seek views about future community engagement in regional natural resource management (NRM) in Queensland. The paper provides some background information and presents several options for consideration. This paper does not seek to assess the current regional NRM system, or analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the possible options. Such reflection and analysis is encouraged through submission in response to the paper” (<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/index.html>). Submissions on the paper closed on Friday 24 June 2005.

The main issue identified through discussion generated by the release of the Green Paper relates to the change of scale of community based NRM and the expectations placed on community based NRM Boards and staff to perform at the ‘raised’ level. Sufficient attention has not been paid to lifting the capacity of NRM Boards and staff to operate in the new regime and support from the Commonwealth and State governments has not been adequate to deal with the situation.

The difficulties faced by Regional NRM Groups in the new funding environment have stifled effective engagement of local government in community based NRM. Additionally the culture of Local government (regulative roles, elected representatives, and legislative based service provision functions) is not well understood by NRM groups and is therefore not adequately considered. Significant work is required to improve regional NRM arrangements overall and integrate them with other planning processes, including those involving local government. HESROC supported the continuation of the current system with some specific improvements (Option 1.2), rather than creating yet another new set of arrangements. The HESROC submission is reproduced in full in Appendix E.

5.1.3 LGAQ Environment and NRM Conference

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) held its third (annual) Environment and NRM Conference in Gladstone from 29 June to 1 July 2005. HESROC NRM Facilitator and CB07 Burdekin Dry Tropics component Project Manager, John Gunn, attended the conference and compiled a set of notes for the information of HESROC and the Network (see Appendix F).

A summary of the issues and needs identified by presenters and conference delegates during presentations and open sessions is provided in Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 (marked with a Y).

Table 5-1 Issues Identified at LGAQ Conference

Issues Identified	BDT	BMNRM	Condamine	Cape York	FNQ/NRM	SEQ	Open Session	LGAQ	DLGPSR
A variety of people/politics/personality issues marred progress	Y		Y						
Capacity of regional bodies e.g. governance and accountability								Y	
Changing regional NRM 'rules' disrupts continuity and partnerships	Y		Y						
Communication back to LG from regional NRM groups is a failing					Y		Y		
Communication is the main problem in the field of regional NRM					Y		Y		
Competitive nature of regional NRM delivery	Y					Y		Y	
Confusion over regions and boundaries								Y	
DNRM 'no risk' processes result in slow funding distribution							Y		
Energy use (air conditioners) and housing design									Y
Fear of responsibility for NRM being passed on to LG							Y		
Fragmented NHT and NAP programs								Y	
Regional NRM funding timeframes interrupt processes & momentum			Y	Y			Y		
Uncertainty about continuity of arrangements created by Green Paper			Y						
Inadequate consideration of LG in regional arrangements							Y		
Integration of planning processes impaired by time constraints			Y						
Inadequate representation of LG on regional NRM Boards		Y							
Lack of integration with ROC/RPACs								Y	
Limited understanding of regional NRM within LG and LG role in NRM	Y				Y			Y	
Lack of partnership building	Y								
Lack of understanding of engagement								Y	
Legislative backing for NRM could result in community alienation							Y		
LG has been largely 'left out' of the regional NRM planning processes	Y								
Measuring improvement in NRM is not practical in the short term							Y		
NHT process was fairly slow so funds were not generally available				Y					
NRM legislative model in NSW is not working - little LG involvement							Y		
Planners are leaving LG for the corporate sector									Y
Provision of adequate financial resources							Y		
Queensland population growth and infrastructure needs									Y
Received no help from the Commonwealth or State			Y						
Responsibility of regional NRM Boards not generally well understood	Y								
Skill based Boards versus sectoral representation	Y	Y			Y				
Too much planning and not enough on ground action								Y	
Lack of trust between C'wealth, State and NRM Groups (all levels)			Y				Y		
Water supply, especially with recent dry weather									Y

Table 5-2 Needs Identified at LGAO Conference

Needs Identified	BDT	BMNRM	Condamine	Cape York	FNONRM	SEQ	Open	LGAO	DLGPSR
Adequate consideration of LG in future regional arrangements							Y		
Agency integration with regional NRM groups							Y		
Better communication between LG and regional NRM groups							Y		
Decisions on future arrangements should not be made yet								Y	
Defined roles and responsibilities between EPA, LG and NRM									Y
Discussions on proposed developments prior to the design phase									Y
Effective and pragmatic governance						Y			
Employ people rather than using consultants (greater ownership)			Y						
Environmental accounting factored into NRM							Y		
Facilitated LG networks	Y								
Functional sub regions for communications and consultation						Y			
Greater LG representation on regional NRM Boards								Y	
Independent Chair (paid part-time position)			Y						
Intra and inter agency integration							Y		
Joint Steering Committee (JSC) should include LG								Y	
Legislative backing to overcome influence of political agendas							Y		
LG liaison officer/s necessary for LG involvement in the region			Y			Y			
LG representation on Boards determined regionally								Y	
LG should be included in Regional Coordinating Committees								Y	
Liaison officers controlled / directed by LG panels		Y							
Maintenance of the Queensland 'voluntary' NRM arrangements							Y		
Minimum of 2 LG representatives on regional NRM group Boards					Y				
More erosion and sediment control power at LG level									Y
MOUs, protocols for operation and interaction of LG 'clusters'		Y							
NRM group amalgamation to rationalise operations						Y			
NRM plans should go to RPACs for endorsement								Y	
Ongoing capacity building programs				Y					
Options to deal with erosion and sedimentation from agriculture									Y
Particular areas need additional 'national' assistance e.g. the Reef							Y		
Processes controlled by regional groups and not state government							Y		
Rational and operative Boards separate to representation						Y			
Regional Pest Management Plans developed with / by LG				Y					
Specific and continual funding e.g. National environmental levy							Y		
State wide prioritisation of investment in NRM							Y		
Stormwater management and reuse projects									Y
Template for local government for investing in NRM					Y				
Unity is required for maximum outcomes							Y		
Use of a cluster arrangement to coordinate LGs in the region		Y							
Water, wastewater and energy efficient design matters									Y

6. Conclusion

6.1 Change and Transition

Some common themes emerged from the review of issues and needs of local government in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, many of which were common to other parts of Queensland (and Australia). More than anything else the key issues are associated with change and the transition from one set of arrangements to another.

There is little doubt that the new funding arrangements under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) have driven the regional NRM scene and have been the main catalyst for a variety of issues that have arisen since 2001. The new arrangements have a greater focus on accountability and measuring the achievement of outcomes and have not adequately considered the social aspects of community based NRM in the equation.

The implications of changing the system were either underestimated or unanticipated by Canberra resulting in significant social disruption as community volunteers and NRM staff attempted to navigate the transition phase with little in the way of guidance. The transition was not well managed and individuals and groups involved in regional NRM were largely left to circumstance with variable capacity and ranges of group formation and function.

Due to the requirements for regional NRM groups to meet various criteria for NAP and NHT funding and conform to administrative arrangements and timeframes a number of preliminary actions required for effective group functioning could not be given a high enough priority. The inability to address these fundamentals has hampered the transition from the old NRM arrangements to the new. The situation is not unique to the Burdekin Dry Tropics region with NRM groups in other parts of the state in a similar position, with common issues and difficulties. The key issue areas and issues associated with the regional NRM scene, and the transition so far are summarised in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Key Issue Areas and Issues

Regional NRM - 'External'
Slow development and roll out of NRM guidelines by State and Commonwealth government
Lack of integration of State agencies in community NRM
Ongoing changes to NRM regimes reducing confidence for involvement
Ratio of planning compared to on-ground works
State and Commonwealth politics impacting local / regional NRM e.g. water and vegetation management
State and Commonwealth government intervention on NRM issues deters LG involvement
Timelines for LG involvement in NRM are restrictive i.e. too short for meeting cycles and gaining consensus
Delays in provision and continuity of funding from NAP and NHT (State and Commonwealth governments)
Information sharing and access
Fragmented NHT and NAP programs
Regional NRM – Structure, Governance and Processes
Multiple pressures to operate as a fully functional Regional NRM Group under the new funding regime
No practical experience, precedents or 'guidelines'
Lack of structure, protocol and processes for interaction between NRM groups and stakeholders
Poor definition of representative roles of stakeholders in NRM
Development of policy and operational processes on an ad hoc, priority needs basis
Actions undertaken without accompanying policy and processes
Competitive nature of funding during pre-plan development and plan development phases
No culturally appropriate mechanism to involve local government and other sectors
Lack of local government representation on NRM group Executive Committees
Integration

Lack of integration of planning processes
Lack of partnership building
Local Government Interaction Related
Community NRM group expectations of LG contribution to NRM
Community understanding of NRM issues and solutions;
Differences between LG and NRM group issues and priorities;
Planning for LG involvement without LG involvement in planning;
Poor community perception of LG through past experiences
Separation between LG and the 'community' and understanding of LG roles
A variety of people/politics/personality issues
Poorly developed communication processes and networks
Competitive nature of regional NRM delivery
Inadequate consideration of LG in regional arrangements
Local Government Internal
Understanding of regional NRM 'scene', issues, roles, responsibilities and opportunities
Undeveloped NRM communication and feedback networks within local government
Generic culture of local government and variable internal processes of individual Councils
Variable interest and priority of individual Councils for involvement in NRM
Variable NRM experience and resources within local government
Fear of NRM responsibilities being devolved to LG without adequate resources
Volume of information on NRM on top of all the other LG responsibilities - overwhelm
Personality and political differences within and between Councils

6.2 Into the Future

Regional NRM is still in its infancy and needs to be forgiven for its mistakes. Ongoing guidance and understanding is required as the transition period is still underway. Failure of the new NRM arrangements will almost certainly occur if the bodies that impose the conditions do not support the transition process appropriately. As with parenting the 'NRM child' will only grow to be a healthy and functional adult with the appropriate guidance and support in a nurturing relationship.

If the guidance and support is absent the outcomes are less certain and time becomes the main factor i.e. the greater the elapsed time the greater the learning from mistakes and improvement in functioning. Unfortunately the timeframes for regional NRM do not generally support relationship building as a primary process.

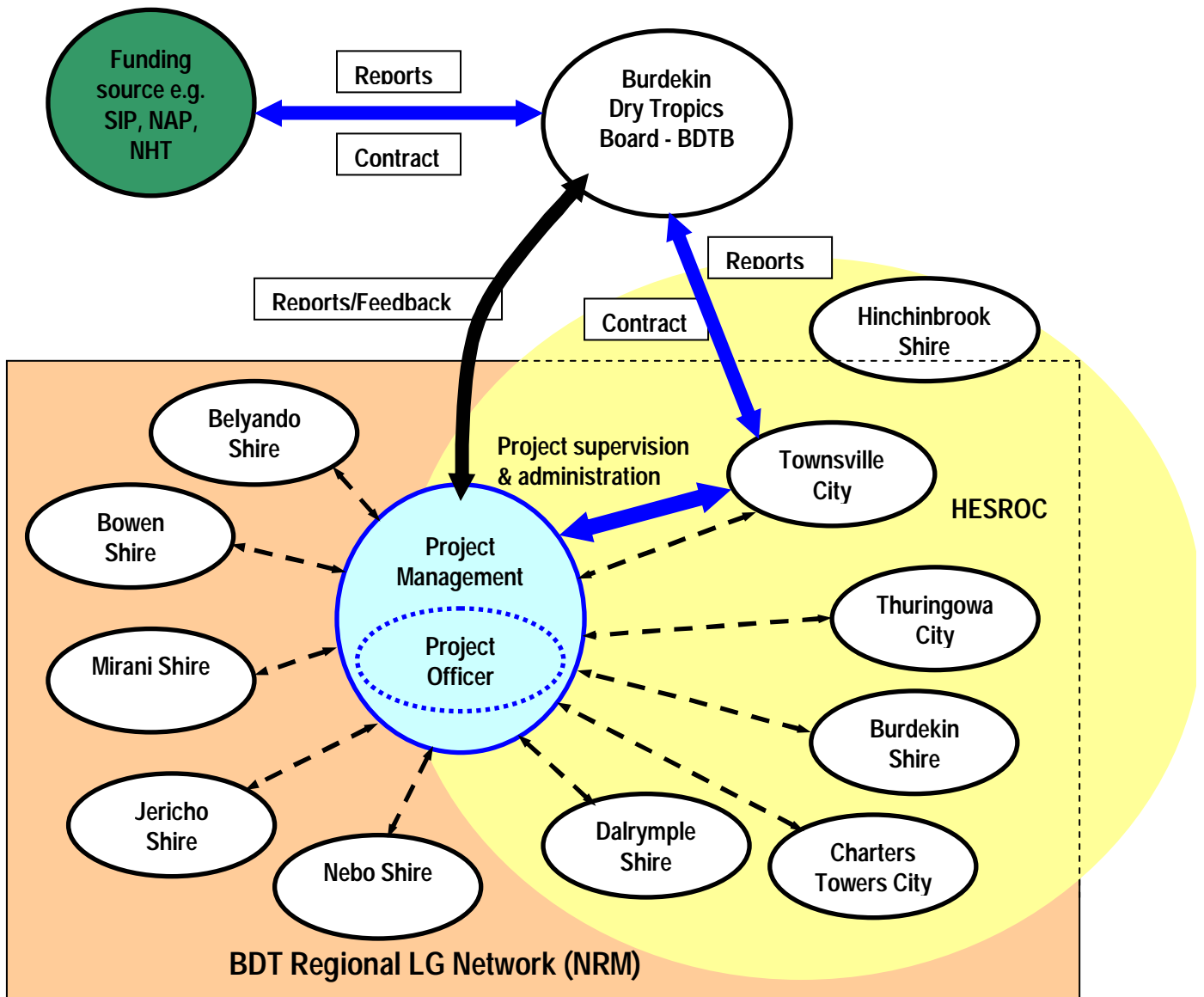
Local government has a role to play in the transition although their capacity to initiate action and provide leadership is variable. Councils with the capacity can act as mentors and assist other local governments to engage in regional NRM if sufficient support is provided through the regional NRM body e.g. funding contribution for local government liaison officers / Network facilitation.

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) (the Network) is one practical model for engagement of local government in the new regional NRM arrangements. The Network model is not prescriptive and is capable of adapting to changing circumstances i.e. coping with transition. The Network is primarily about developing and maintaining relationships, establishing effective communication processes, developing partnerships, translating information to suit the local government culture and providing an interface between local government and NRM groups. The Network operational model (see Figure 6-1) has been endorsed by HESROC and the non-HESROC Councils participating in the Network.

The most significant need for local government in the Burdekin Dry Tropics into the future is ongoing support for the Network both conceptually and financially. The relationships that have developed through the formation of the Network need to be consolidated, expanded and enhanced to maintain the momentum that has accrued to date. This includes engendering confidence in the enduring nature of the relationships.

While it is difficult to provide continuity and certainty in the world of regional NRM an effort needs to be made by local government and the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board to ensure a functional and appropriate partnership into the future. People and process needs that could contribute to better functioning of regional NRM arrangements and engagement of local government are listed in Table 6-2. NRM program specific needs are listed in Appendix G.

Figure 6-1 The Network Operational Model



The key issue areas that have, and are, impacting regional NRM arrangements in general, and with local government in particular, have been identified throughout this report. The Network can work towards the resolution of some of these issues in cooperation with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board while combined submissions to relevant administrative bodies may assist with the resolution of some external factors.

The key component is the development and maintenance of effective relationships in a spirit of cooperation, not competition.

Table 6-2 People and Process Needs

Relationships and Partnerships - General
Building and maintaining trust, partnerships and networks
Defining roles and responsibilities within relationships
Developing protocols and processes to support relationships and partnerships
Processes controlled by regional groups and not State and Commonwealth government
Regional Arrangements
Maintenance of the Queensland 'voluntary' NRM arrangements
Defined roles and integration between State agencies (DNRM, EPA etc), LG and NRM bodies
Adequate consideration of LG in future regional arrangements
Board representation determined regionally and reflected in the Constitution
Board 'business' operations separate to representation arrangements
Greater LG involvement (representation) in regional NRM decision making processes
Regional arrangements based on practical operational units, effective and pragmatic governance
Inclusion of LG in Regional Coordinating Committees
Better communication between regional NRM groups and stakeholder groups / sectors
Functional 'sub regions / sectors' for communications and consultation
Intra and inter agency integration
Inclusion of LG on the Joint Steering Committee (JSC)
Cooperative and cross-regional arrangements for NRM activities
Funding
Assurance of an ongoing commitment to NRM specific funding by Commonwealth & State governments
Local Government Arrangements and Partnerships
Facilitated and supported LG network
Use of intra-Network cluster arrangement to coordinate LG NRM activities across the region
MOUs, protocols for operation and interaction of LG 'clusters'
Investigate partnerships and integration / facilitation of 'sub-regional' activities with LG Network activities
Hold full Network meetings on a rotational basis (2 or 3 times a year)
Earlier notification of meetings and requests for action to Network participants
Improved communication lines between the BDTB and the Network
People and NRM in Local Government
LG liaison officer/s / arrangements necessary for LG involvement in regional NRM
Ongoing capacity building activities – various areas
Appointed internal LG person (Extension Officer) to coordinate NRM activities
Sharing of specialists between rural (smaller) Councils
Train 'champions' who can pass on knowledge as required i.e. long term staff, rather than all staff
Promote partnerships and innovation
More staff for on ground work, especially coastal management and pest management
Engagement and Knowledge
Improving understanding and awareness through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing visits and support from the (HESROC) LG Network NRM Facilitator; • Presentations to Councils; • Provision of NRM summary information (LG relevant and readable quantities); • Development and use of templates and guidelines for NRM; • Facilitation of meetings, workshops and planning activities; • Development and coordination of NRM projects and programs.

References

Department of Natural Resources and Mines April 2005, *Options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management*, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Brisbane.

Gunn, J. 2004 (May), HESROC Natural Resource Management Proposed Projects and Partnership Review Report, HESROC, Townsville.

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Appendix A

Local Government Statistics

	Belyando	Bowen	Burdekin	Charters Towers	Dalrymple	Jericho	Mirani	Nebo	Thuringowa	Townsville
Area (sq. km)	30,281	21,177	5,053	42	68,346	21,873	3,280	10,035	1,867	1,869
Population '04	10,524	12,566	18,636	8,832	3,485	1,101	5,299	2,144	57,488	97,923
Pop'n Density	0.35	0.59	3.69	210	0.05	0.05	1.62	0.21	29.7	52.4
Council Staff	~140	~120	~220	~60	~124	~50	~60	~52	~442	~1100
Pop'n per staff	75	105	85	147	28	22	88	41	130	89
% of Pop'n	1.3%	0.95%	1.2%	0.7%	3.6%	4.5%	1.1%	2.4%	0.8%	1.1%
Sq km per staff	216	176	23	0.7	551	438	55	193	4.2	1.7
Population, population change and projected population change										
Population '04	10,524	12,566	18,636	8,832	3,485	1,101	5,299	2,144	57,488	97,923
Popn change '04	24	20	-25	16	-33	30	7	-16	1,497	1,976
Natural	142	37	86	32	33	12	27	30	638	633
Migration	-118	-17	-111	-16	66	18	-20	-46	859	1,343
Growth Rate	0.2%	0.2%	-0.1%	0.2%	-0.9%	2.8%	0.1%	-0.7%	2.7%	2.1%
'03 Population	10,488	12,532	18,640	8,806	3,514	1,070	5,286	2,157	55,888	95,837
'03 Popn change	261	15	26	17	34	-29	-22	63	1,431	1,940
'03 Growth	2.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	1%	-2.6%	-0.4%	2.3%	2.6%	2.1%
'02 Population	10,239	12,531	18,635	8,799	3,484	1,100	5,314	2,097	54,520	94,007
'01 Population	9,948	12,409	18,512	8,751	3,491	1,094	5,283	2,094	52,715	92,074
'96 Populatin	10,759	13,142	18,955	9,023	3,439	1,040	5,019	2,257	45,410	86,715
2011 Proj Low	9,848	12,200	17,700	8,200	3,340	1,060	5,860	1,910	67,700	103,000
2011 Proj High	15,666	12,800	18,500	8,550	3,530	1,160	6,160	2,060	70,100	107,600

Note: Population is estimated resident population at 30 June 2004. Population increase is from previous year.

Pop'n Density is population density calculated as number of people per square kilometre.

Source: Population and Housing Fact Sheets (Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPSR) - Planning Information and Forecasting Unit (PIFU))

Sources for the Population and Housing Fact Sheet:

ABS Cat Nos 3201.3, 3218.0, 3235.3. ABS unpublished births and deaths data. ABS unpublished dwelling approvals data.

ABS Census of Population and Housing 1991, 1996 and 2001. QDLGP Queensland's Future Population 2003 Edition.

Queensland Government Population Projections 2003. Copyright © 2004 PIFU - QDLGPSR, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Source (03 Population): Queensland local government comparative information 2003/04 (DLGPSR 2005) using population figures at 30 June 2003. Area, population and growth figures are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication - Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand 3218.0, 2002-03.

Source (02 Population, 01 Population and 96 Population): APPENDIX A: Population growth - highlights and trends Queensland 2005 (PIFU - DLGPSR May 2005)

	Belyando	Bowen	Burdekin	Charters Towers	Dalrymple	Jericho	Mirani	Nebo	Thuringowa	Townsville
04 Population	10,524	12,566	18,636	8,832	3,485	1,101	5,299	2,144	57,488	97,923
03 Population	10,488	12,532	18,640	8,806	3,514	1,070	5,286	2,157	55,888	95,837
02 Population	10,239	12,531	18,635	8,799	3,484	1,100	5,314	2,097	54,520	94,007
01 Population	9,948	12,409	18,512	8,751	3,491	1,094	5,283	2,094	52,715	92,074
96 Populatin	10,759	13,142	18,955	9,023	3,439	1,040	5,019	2,257	45,410	86,715

Appendix B

HESROC NRM Partnerships and Projects Review 2003

HESROC Natural Resource Management Proposed Projects and Partnership Review Report May 2004

Background

Community based natural resource management

Recent changes to the delivery of community based natural resource management (NRM) funding have resulted in a number of fundamental changes to the structure and requirements of community groups. This became apparent when the Commonwealth Government launched the **National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality** (NAPSWQ) in October 2000.

As part of their new role 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 NAPSWQ and **Natural Heritage Trust** (NHT) programs.

To achieve accreditation Regional NRM Plans are required to include essential characteristics, or elements, described in the *Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and NAPSWQ Bilateral Agreements*.

The three main differences between the requirements for accredited Regional NRM Plans and the 'old' style catchment and regional strategies are:

- The requirement to set specific targets to measure progress against;
- The development of an Investment Strategy for priority actions;
- Greater integration of social, economic and environmental information.

The requirements are part of the new 'landscape' for NRM funding designed to improve the value for money achieved through government-funded community NRM initiatives.

Regional NRM Groups have been *thrust* into the new NRM environment and expected to perform on a professional basis using voluntary Boards and inexperienced staff. There are no real precedents to call on as examples for structure and process. Just as the first years of the Landcare movement were a learning experience such is the case for Regional NRM Groups.

Making things more difficult is the expectation of the Commonwealth government that the new system will function effectively from the outset with regional groups, coordinating committees and other relatively new bodies achieving deadlines for funding and other submissions. Recognised Regional NRM Groups are also expected to meet the other criteria associated with their roles under the NAPSWQ and/or NHT2 while the groups and government agencies all feel their way in the new environment, developing guidelines and process as they go.

Adding to the situation is the background, and foreground, politics between the States and Commonwealth, which has impacted the delivery of funds to Regional NRM Groups to carry out tasks expected of them. It has been a somewhat circular argument, especially for NHT2 regions where the Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland remains unresolved. An accredited Regional NRM Plan is required before Regional NRM Groups can access funds to carry out NRM initiatives. Without funding to meet NAPSWQ and NHT2 requirements associated with the development of the Plans the process stalled in pre Plan planning.

Foundation funding has been made available to NAPSWQ regions and planning 'proper' is now in full swing with most groups expected to have a draft Regional NRM Plan ready for accreditation in 2004. Foundation funding for NHT2 regions, under an Interim Financial Agreement, will be released in the near future.

The result has been that, in general, Regional NRM Groups have not had the luxury of developing and formalising processes and relationships essential to the involvement of all sectoral groups in the planning and implementation of accredited Regional NRM Plans. They have relied on the 'old' systems of 'voluntary' involvement, which if not adequately developed, have remained undeveloped and inadequate. Even voluntary participation requires form and process to be effective.

Local government and natural resource management

Involvement in natural resource management is a normal component of local government activities whether the activities are recognised as natural resource management or not. Local government contributes substantial amounts to natural resource management (NRM) through both routine 'business' activities and voluntary initiatives.

Stage 1 of the NHT allowed local government, along with a range of other incorporated organisations, to access 'new' funds for NRM initiatives. Under the altered NHT regime (NHT2) funds are only delivered through 'recognised' **Regional NRM Groups**. The same situation applies for NAPSWQ funds.

With the changed funding criteria for community based NRM local government needs to be more involved in regional NRM planning to access support for NRM initiatives outside traditional local government funding areas. This is especially applicable for 'regional' projects extending across two or more local government areas.

As implied above the difficulties faced by Regional NRM Groups in the new funding environment have not resulted in processes for effective involvement of local government in community based NRM. Instead local government has been expected to slot into the somewhat nebulous 'voluntary' community framework without fully taking into account the function/s, processes and culture of local government.

Local government is an important part of the 'community' and at the same time is an inherently different 'business' entity and service provider when compared to other stakeholders involved in community based NRM initiatives.

Some of the defining characteristics include:

- The policy makers (Councillors) are elected from the constituency of the local government area while the administrators and policy implementers are employees of the organisation
- Local government is 'driven' by statutory requirements as well as political agendas
- Local government has access to a variety of funding sources which are specific to certain situations requiring local government intervention i.e. issue specific funding with associated criteria
- All local governments do not operate in the same way, or have the same division of responsibilities amongst 'departments'
- As the main 'local' authority and service provider there are community expectations that local government will be able to deal with all local situations as a matter of right
- Regional planning may appear to be an additional superfluous task for local government as their prime responsibility is service provision to their local constituents

In essence local government as a whole needs to be considered as a sectoral interest with its own 'culture' and a 'constrained' ability to contribute to broader NRM initiatives in the realm of community based NRM. Additionally each local government in the BDT is an individual entity with individual characteristics, needs and resources. Therefore the context for involvement of local government in NRM needs to be considered on both an individual and a collective basis to ensure the substantial contribution made to NRM by local government is applied effectively at both the local and regional levels.

Whilst specific details of local government expenditure are not available for the Burdekin Dry Tropics, without undertaking additional research, it is worth noting that according to Australian Bureau of Statistics local governments in Australia spent in the order of \$1.8 billion on NRM in 2000-01. Queensland local government recorded the highest level of expenditure at \$628m, or 38% of total the total expenditure for Australia.

The task

The Health and Environmental Services Regional Organisation of Councils-North Queensland (HESROC) has been operating as an entity since 1998 focussing predominantly on issues associated with core business of local government such as waste disposal and pest control.

In general community based NRM has been a relatively minor consideration for HESROC although two proposals for NRM (NHT and NAPSWQ) funding at the regional level were developed by HESROC representatives on behalf of the organisation Councils. HESROC Councils have provided funding for NRM initiatives and allowed provision for one to one funding for the proposed projects.

These proposals were:

- Regional Local Government Natural Resource Management (Salinity, Water Quality. And Biodiversity) Capacity Building and Facilitation Project, and
- Regional Biodiversity Conservation Planning for the Greater Townsville Region (Identifying the gaps and opportunities) Project

Both proposals were unsuccessful in attracting funding as NHT Stage 1 came to a conclusion and the new NAPSWQ and NHT2 arrangements came into being. It appears that prioritisation for funding of project proposals was done on the basis of limited available funds and a desire to strictly adhere to the criteria, as interpreted, of the new NRM guidelines. The inability to attract complimentary funding was not a function of the quality, relevance or applicability of the proposals.

As part of its commitment to the HESROC *Regional Local Government NRM Capacity Building and Facilitation Project*, Townsville City Council allocated \$20,000 towards project costs. As full implementation of the project was not possible without the complimentary funding requested from NHT and NAPSWQ Townsville City Council (TCC), through Environmental Management Services, reallocated the committed funds to review the proposed projects in light of the new community based NRM arrangements and at the same time facilitate improved relationships with the regional, sub-regional and local community NRM groups in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Region.

Earth Environmental was engaged on behalf of TCC and HESROC to undertake a number of tasks principally:

- 1) To review working relationships between TCC and community NRM groups, and HESROC and community NRM groups
- 2) To review the NRM project proposals previously submitted by HSEROC and revise appropriately
- 3) To gain the views of HESROC members with respect to the revised NRM project proposal/s and HESROC involvement in community based NRM in general
- 4) To promote the significance of HESROC and its potential role in community based NRM at the regional level
- 5) Through the review process, consultation and revision of project proposals (3-6), improve working relationships with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board and other relevant NRM bodies

Tasks 1 to 5, directly involving HESROC, are addressed in this report.

Consultation

Consultation was undertaken to;

- Gather information on partnerships and communications
- Determine views and attitudes regarding local government involvement in community based NRM including feedback on the revised HESROC *'Regional Local Government Natural Resource Management Capacity Building and Facilitation Project'*
- Look at options for local government involvement in community based NRM
- Raise awareness of issues associated with local government involvement in community based NRM
- Build communication lines, and
- Promote coordinated action for local government involvement in community based NRM

Consultation took two primary forms (see Table 1 for details):

- 1) Interviews with representatives of HESROC member Councils to determine views on;
 - o HESROC and local government involvement in community based NRM, and
 - o the revised local government NRM capacity building project proposal.

- 2) Meetings and liaison with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, LGAQ, DNRM and NaREF to;
 - o investigate synergies and potential for integration of the HESROC NRM capacity building proposal with the LGAQ SIP project CB01,
 - o ensure a coordinated approach to local government involvement in NRM in the BDT,
 - o improve relationships and communications between local government/HESROC and NRM groups in the BDT.

Table 1 Consultation Details

Person	Organisation	Consulation Date	Comments
Cr Treena List	Burdekin Shire	13 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Mark Allpress	Burdekin Shire	13 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Gus Gonzo	Hinchinbrook Shire	7 & 16 October 2003	HESROC Council
Cr Judy Beatts	Hinchinbrook Shire	Comments received via Gus Gonzo	
Cr Brian Reiffel	Charters Towers City	14 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Mick Langburne	Charters Towers City	14 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Grant Steen	Townsville City	8 September, 15 October 2003	HESROC Secretary
Cr Ann Bunnell	Townsville City	5 and 19 August 2003	HESROC Chair
Mr Greg Bruce	Townsville City	5, 18 and 19 August, 26 September, 15 October 2003	Manager of Environmental Management Services and HESROC NRM advisor
Cr Jenny Lane	Thuringowa City	15 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Gavin Lyons	Thuringowa City	15 October 2003	HESROC Council
Lyonel Lane	Thuringowa City	15 October 2003	HESROC Council
Mr Raymon Jayo	Dalrymple Shire	16 October 2003	HESROC Council
Cr John Woods	Burdekin Shire	30 October 2003	BDTB member and local government representative
Kirk Smith	BDTB	6 and 15 September, 15 October 2003	Chair of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB)
David Wood	BDTB	6 August 2003	Community Liaison Officer- may have been present at BDTB staff meeting
Arwen Rickert	BDTB	19 August 2003	Planning Officer- may have been present at BDTB staff meeting
BDTB staff	BDTB	18 August 2003	NHT Foundation Funding project application preparations
NaREF members	NaREF	4, 15, 16 and 18 August 2003	Various including Operational Structure and NHT Foundation Funding proposal coordination
Malcolm Petrie	LGAQ	19 and 22 August 2003	Project Manager SIP CB01
Michael Bradby	DNRM	5 August, 18 September 2003	State NRM Taskforce and BDT and Wet Tropics State Government Regional Liaison Officer

Note: 'Consultation Date' is a record of face-to-face meetings only. Emails and telephone conversations were separately recorded. The HESROC meeting was held 6 August 2003.

Results

Project review

An initial review of the projects was undertaken to determine their relevance to the current situation. The first project was considered to be the most pressing and accordingly received the most attention.

Regional Local Government Natural Resource Management Capacity Building and Facilitation Project

The capacity building project provides the pathway for a coordinated approach to local government involvement in community based NRM in the Burdekin Dry Tropics. The original project proposal was submitted to the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board for consideration in their submission for Foundation Funding, including Priority Action Projects, under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ). A copy of the original proposal, the subject of review, was distributed to HESROC members via email following the 6 August 2003 HESROC meeting.

The original proposal was reviewed and revised taking into consideration:

- Comments from the Chair and staff of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB)
- Likely future funding opportunities
- State Investment Plan (SIP) project CB01- *'Local Government and Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Queensland NAP regions'*, managed by the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
- Needs and capacity of local government for involvement in NRM from the author's experience in NRM

The revised project proposal was then used as a discussion paper for consultation with Kirk Smith (Burdekin Dry Tropics Board Chair), LGAQ and Department of Natural Resources and Mines, HESROC member Council representatives, and John Woods (BDTB member and Mayor of Burdekin Shire Council).

Following the consultation process the revised proposal was amended to incorporate comments raised by HESROC representatives. The project proposal as amended is included as Attachment 1.

New project format

The format of the project proposal has been modified to take into account the short-term opportunity and longer term needs of local government in the context of the current NRM environment prevailing in the Burdekin Dry Tropics.

Short term opportunity

The opportunity exists to provide input to the BDT accredited Regional NRM Plan over the next 4-5 months. For this to happen a short-term commitment of resources is required to facilitate the process. This will enable the implementation of components of Tasks 1, 2 and 6 (Actions 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 6.1) to fast track what would otherwise be a more leisurely process. The main objective is to establish the conduit between the local government sector and the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board so that local government is part of the driving mechanism of Regional NRM from the start.

The alternative is to continue with the current situation where local government will be expected to be significantly involved (driven) in initiatives based on a perspective devoid of significant local government input. This situation was identified at the local level during consultation with HESROC representatives. It can also be seen at the state level in the State Investment Plan (SIP). Two SIP projects (CB01 and CB02) are specifically aimed at local government but were developed in Brisbane primarily by State Government departments in isolation from rural and regional local government.

Long term needs

An enduring and robust system to support the involvement of local government in community based regional NRM is required to buffer local government from the vagaries currently suffered as a result of changing regimes and fluctuating political situations and policy. This system does not exist in the BDT at present and will not eventuate unless adequate structures and processes are developed and defined.

The remainder of the tasks, not included in the immediate tasks for involvement in development of the Regional NRM Plan, will provide the vehicle for future and ongoing involvement of local government in community based NRM in the Burdekin Dry Tropics. It will also provide a platform for interaction with other regional local government NRM groups and State and Commonwealth agencies.

The focus is on developing partnerships and processes and thereby increase the capacity of local government to be involved in NRM. The main delivery mechanism involves provision of support to facilitate collaborative development of the processes which will at the same time assist partnership development and lay the foundations for future implementation of actions.

Regional Biodiversity Conservation Planning for the Greater Townsville Project

The project concept was generally supported by HESROC representatives but not considered to be a priority given the current situation associated with the development of the accredited Regional NRM Plan and the need for local government to effectively engage in that process.

Overall the project was assessed to be valid for future consideration as part of an integrated approach to information gathering for; condition assessment, target setting, monitoring and evaluation, and decision support.

HESROC consultation

HESROC representatives interviewed were provided with a copy of the revised '*Regional Local Government Natural Resource Management Capacity Building and Facilitation Project*' and asked to comment on the contents at the interview. Suggestions received were subsequently incorporated into the final draft proposal (see Attachment 1). Those consulted were also given the opportunity to provide additional feedback. No further comments were received other than confirmation that the revised proposal appeared to cover requirements for HESROC facilitated local government involvement in community based regional NRM.

Comments of note relevant to the revised proposal include:

- HESROC is the most suitable organisation to facilitate local government involvement in regional NRM
- A local government NRM coordinator is integral to local government involvement in regional NRM
- Local government capacity building for involvement in NRM has to be addressed at the local level
- Understanding of NRM, including roles and responsibilities, needs to be clarified for all parties
- Communication and interaction processes and protocols need to be developed/defined as a priority

While the appropriateness of the proposal (renamed *Building Capacity of Local Governments to Participate in Regional Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation in the Burdekin Dry Tropics*) as a HESROC initiative was confirmed individually by representatives of the HESROC member Councils the issues and experiences of local government involvement in community based NRM were less uniform. Some issues were common to all, or the majority of; Councils while some were situation specific. The variation in issues emphasises the need for the local, sub-regional and regional approaches to NRM by local government, as described in the proposal, rather than trying to take a generic 'blanket' approach.

A summary of the issues and needs raised by the HESROC local governments is provided in Table 2.

Table 2 Issues and Needs Identified

Issue or need identified	Local government	Burdekin	Charters Towers	Dalrymple	Hinchinbrook	Thuringowa	Townsville
Differences in LG and NRM group issues and priorities	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Confusion of roles by Council representatives on NRM groups	Y						
Community expectations of LG contribution to NRM	Y			Y			Y
Lack of LG representation on NRM group executive committees	Y						
NRM group structure and processes to interact with LG	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
LG processes and protocols for interaction with NRM groups	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
Recognition / legitimacy of LG contribution to NRM	Y	Y			A		Y
Nurturing of relationships between LG and NRM groups	Y				A	Y	Y
Planning for LG involvement without LG involvement in planning	Y				A		Y
Communication and feedback on NRM within LG is inadequate	Y			Y			Y
Understanding of the NRM 'scene' by Councillors / Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
Understanding of NRM issues by Councillors / Council	Y	Y					Y
Understanding of NRM responsibilities by Councillors / Council	Y			Y	A		Y
Poor definition of roles of stakeholders in NRM	Y			Y		Y	
Timelines for LG involvement in NRM are restrictive-too short	Y	Y			A		Y
Personality and political differences retard LG NRM cohesion	Y						Y
Community understanding of NRM issues and solutions	Y						
LG interest and recognition of need for NRM involvement varies	Y			Y			Y
State and Commonwealth politics impact local / regional NRM	Y	Y	Y	Y	A		Y
Volume of information on NRM is daunting for LG			Y				
Changes to NRM regimes reduces confidence for involvement			Y	Y	A	Y	
Fear of LG being left with the responsibility of NRM			Y	Y			
The amount of planning compared to on-ground works			Y			Y	
Separation between LG and the 'community'			Y				Y
Capacity building at both local and regional levels is needed			Y				Y
Social and economic issues need consideration in NRM				Y	A		Y
Poor community perception of LG through past experiences							Y
LG internal 'culture' and processes can stifle NRM initiatives				Y			Y
Integration of State agencies in community NRM			Y	Y			Y
Understanding of LG role by community							Y
Benefits of community NRM need to be defined				Y	A	Y	
Resources to be involved in community NRM			Y	Y	A		
Government intervention on NRM issues deters LG involvement				Y			

Note: LG is local government. Y indicates the issue or need identified by Councils. A indicates the issue or need was identified and added following feedback on the draft report.

The SIP project

State Investment Plan (SIP) project CB01- 'Local Government and Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Queensland NAP regions', is managed by the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ).

The review of the HESROC local government NRM capacity building proposal sought to incorporate CB01 as far as possible to:

- avoid duplication of effort
- ensure the BDT local/regional situation was adequately addressed by CB01
- incorporate any resource/funding opportunities from CB01 into the HESROC proposal

It became apparent during consultation with LGAQ and DNRM that the intent and outcomes of the CB01 project were inherently different to those of the HESROC proposal which seeks to address the needs of local government in the BDT to enable engagement in community NRM at all levels, and particularly through involvement in the accredited Regional NRM Plan development and implementation process.

On the surface there are obvious similarities between CB01 and the HESROC proposal. There are also some substantial differences based on assumptions made by the 'designers' of the CB01 project and the processes adopted to achieve project outcomes. One of the main issues surrounding the CB01 project is the lack of flexibility built into the project as a consequence of the process required to have the project approved and operational. This is not necessarily a fault of the people involved in the delivery of the project but rather a deficiency in the process prior to the implementation stage.

Quoting from the CB01 project summary:

"Description / objectives

The project aims to build the capacity of Local Governments to effectively participate in and integrate effort towards the design, establishment and delivery of sustainable natural resource management (NRM) planning arrangements at the local and regional context across the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality Regions (NAP).

The project objectives include:

- *Assist Local Governments, including Aboriginal Community Councils, to develop an effective and coordinated approach to local and regional planning and management of NRM issues, in partnership with regional NRM bodies, including the establishment of effective relationships within and between regions;*
- *Develop and deliver training, awareness building and network development programs to Local Government Councillors, Corporate Managers and Technical Officers specific to the NAPSWQ priority regions which builds on the strength of their existing skill and knowledge level in NRM;*
- *Produce relevant support products for Local Governments to equip them to be involved in setting standards and targets; and*
- *Integration of NRM priorities into regional planning initiatives and Local Government planning schemes".*

It can be seen that the CB01 project 'aim' is similar to the concept of the HESROC proposal, however, the CB01 project 'objectives' are defined as 'actions' or intent rather than as desired outcomes. The actions, outputs and objectives have become entangled. As the measure of success for the project is achieving the 'objectives' then it is perceived that the 'objectives' have to be adhered to. If the 'objectives' are actions then the actions 'have' to be carried out for project success. The suite of potential options (actions) to achieve the objectives is effectively nullified and flexible delivery of the project is significantly reduced.

The planning and development of the CB01 project occurred in a difficult political environment using assumptions, information and processes with inherent flaws. While the 'products' may meet the objectives of the CB01 project and its funding criteria it is doubtful that the products will be particularly relevant to building capacity and assisting local government involvement in regional NRM in the Burdekin Dry Tropics.

Requirements in the Burdekin Dry Tropics involve; partnership building, increased understanding, development of trust, development of communication processes and protocol, role definition, needs analysis, coordinated planning and development and implementation of cooperative projects. This needs to be carried out at the local level as an evolving process facilitated by local entities. Building solid foundations has to be attended to before any externally developed products will have any relevance, or be accepted.

Lines of communication with the CB01 project will remain open to optimise any synergies between that project and the HESROC capacity building proposal.

The BDTB and HESROC/local government

Discussions with the Chair of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, Kirk Smith, and staff (David Wood and Arwen Rickert) provided an insight into the relationship between HESROC and the BDTB. The main point to note is that in a general sense a good relationship was considered to exist between the two parties even though there is no formal role definition or any recognisable structure or processes for interaction.

Part of the reason for the vagaries of the relationship can be apportioned to the array of pressures on the BDTB to function as a Regional NRM Group under the new funding regime with no practical experience or 'guidelines'. During the formative period the development of policy and operational processes was done on a needs basis, or actions taken without the luxury of developing policy and processes.

The 'place' of HESROC and local government in regional NRM was considered from a strategic focus of inclusion rather than through a detailed situation analysis and the subsequent development of options and processes for inclusion using defined engagement, consultation and communication strategies. From the local government perspective it was difficult to see how inclusion was to occur, as there appeared to be no real mechanism to involve local government beyond input through sub-regional NRM groups, which existed as part-time entities with little formal coordination.

HESROC as a body is not much 'older' than the BDTB. Additionally HESROC was not formed as a NRM specific group even though the majority of issues dealt with involved NRM at some level. As a player in community based Regional NRM HESROC is still in the formative stages and, like the BDTB, has not had the focus required to develop the processes needed to interact effectively in that context.

In essence consultation has shown that both parties agree that HESROC has a role to play as the regional body coordinating local government input to the Regional NRM Plan and other processes and that the role/s and interactions need to be defined so that there is no confusion or uncertainty as to the relationship between the BDTB and HESROC / local government.

Conclusion and recommendations

At present local government is not adequately engaged in community NRM in the Burdekin Dry Tropics, at either the regional or sub-regional level, despite varying levels of involvement at the local level and the presence of two local government members on the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB).

The lack of engagement is primarily a function of the BDTB having inadequate processes in place to keep abreast of the changes occurring in the realm of community based natural resource management over the last three years. It is not the intention of this report to imply any 'fault' by individuals or organisations but rather to identify the issues and provide options to progress towards mutually desirable outcomes.

It needs to be remembered that the Landcare movement, the real beginning of community based natural resource management, had its genesis as recently as 1989. Some local governments have been involved in community NRM since the start of Landcare and others have come on board at a later date following lobbying by their constituents. When catchment management became the focus for strategic NRM some local governments became involved at the 'regional' level while continuing to support local initiatives. The amount of involvement depended on the capacity of the local government and the interests of the Council, both Councillors and staff.

The uptake of community NRM by local government has not been uniform or immediate. Local government is generally not prone to jumping into new and untried ventures especially when there are a host of other regulatory and service requirements that have to be met on a day-to-day basis. Local government is more likely to join in when material benefits for its constituents can be seen to accrue through its involvement, and the expected level of ongoing service provided to constituents is not compromised.

The degree of local government involvement in NRM, for any particular local government, may be due to political expedience, conservatism, lack of capacity, unwillingness, limited understanding or a myriad of other possibilities. How community groups perceive local government involvement is dependent on the understandings of the individuals and of the group/s as a whole.

Community groups often 'see' local government as an 'outsider' with a different agenda and different 'rules'. The perceived differences between community groups and local government have created a separation, which has pervaded most areas of community based natural resource management. Personalities, politics and perceptions work from both sides to confound a coordinated approach to NRM. Fortunately most of the issues stem from a lack of understanding and/or transference of perceptions associated with past experiences involving local government. Either way the issues can be addressed through an open and honest discourse.

The assumption that local government has to be 'dragged' into natural resource management has altered the approach of individuals, community groups and State agencies involved in NRM even spawning a number of State projects aimed squarely at local government. While the intentions may have been honourable the execution has at times been questionable particularly where initiatives have been developed for local government without local government involvement. To be successful planning for local government involvement in NRM requires local government involvement in the planning.

NRM is in a stage of transition from 'local' initiatives to a more regional form of NRM governance and project delivery. A new approach needs to be taken to involve local government in natural resource management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics commensurate with the changing face of natural resource management. The approach requires local government to be acknowledged as a sectoral group with its own issues, capacity and needs. Local government is in need of understanding by community groups and individuals as much as local government requires an understanding of the operation of community based natural resource management and the benefits of being more fully involved. Effective communication is requisite to success.

The approach required to effectively engage local government in regional NRM is outlined in the project proposal titled '*Building Capacity of Local Governments to Participate in Regional Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation in the Burdekin Dry Tropics*'. The fine detail of the proposal is necessarily incomplete as providing that detail would defeat part of the purpose of the proposal. It is a function of local government and its partners in natural resource management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics to fill in the detail through a range of initiatives aimed at building the capacity of local government while developing the policy, processes and protocols required for ongoing involvement in community based natural resource management.

The main theme of the proposal is building. Building awareness, understanding, protocols, trust, partnerships, networks and processes.

From the analysis of the current situation with respect to community based natural resource management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics it is recommended that HESROC:

- Support the progression of the project proposal '*Building Capacity of Local Governments to Participate in Regional Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation in the Burdekin Dry Tropics*' and especially the short term opportunity to provide input to the accredited Regional NRM Plan currently being developed by the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board
- Appoint and/or acknowledge representatives to continue to liaise and negotiate with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board to secure resources to compliment the potential input by local government to the project proposal '*Building Capacity of Local Governments to Participate in Regional Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation in the Burdekin Dry Tropics*'
- Develop a formal policy on its role as facilitator of local government involvement in community based Regional Natural Resource Management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics including a model to involve non-HESROC Councils
- Develop a Communication Strategy to ensure the effective flow of information between HESROC, the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board and all other relevant stakeholders and interested parties

- In conjunction with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, implement the actions required to progress the *'Building Capacity of Local Governments to Participate in Regional Natural Resource Management Planning and Implementation in the Burdekin Dry Tropics'* proposal and to develop and implement other regional initiatives and projects involving local government.

Appendix C

BDT Regional LG Network (NRM) Meeting Notes 2004

Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)

Meeting Notes

Wednesday 2 June 2004, Council Chambers, Townsville City Council, Townsville

Present:

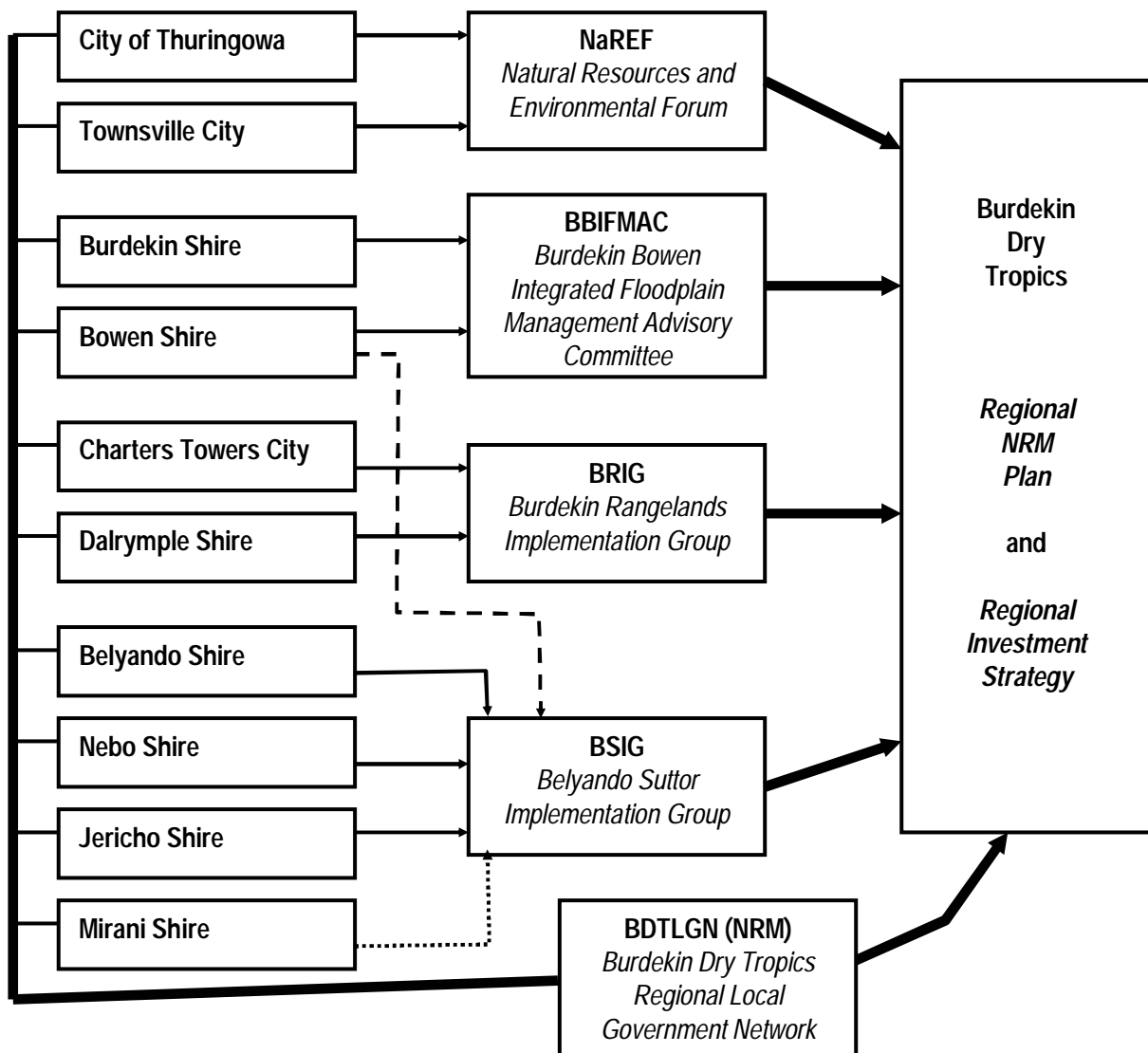
Dalrymple Shire (Cr Bill Breen, Raymon Jayo), Thuringowa City (Lyonelle Lane, Shaun Warner) Mirani Shire (Cr Dave Price) and Townsville City (Greg Bruce, Andrew Hannay, Sri Suryati – EMS), [Andrew Bengsen, Darren Alfengeest and Cathleen Crouch -TCC Preventive Programs)

Apologies:

Charters Towers City (Mick Langburne), Burdekin Shire (Mark Allpress)

1. The process for the development of the Regional NRM Plan was briefly summarised (see Figure 2) to ensure network members were clear on the intent of the plan and the 'products' produced by the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB) to date. The BDTB has placed emphasis on the inclusion of community via the sub-regional groups and while the concept is commendable it has made the plan development process somewhat unwieldily and created a certain amount of frustration for those involved. The nominal pathways for local government involvement in the Regional NRM planning process are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Local government input pathways to Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional NRM plan



The involvement of individual local governments with the sub-regional groups varies considerably across the region. While sub-regional groups have encouraged local governments to be involved in the planning process there is not the same degree of invitation to be involved at the regional level, as was experienced at the regional forum held in early April. The regional forum was held in the week following the local government elections.

It needs to be noted that the forum was by invitation only with the invitations extended by the sub-regional groups. Local government was not invited to attend by sub-regional groups. It appears that the role of local government was not understood or the involvement of local government in the community NRM planning process not considered relevant beyond the sub-regional level.

However, John Gunn attended the regional forum representing the HESROC/BDTB '**Local Government Involvement in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Accredited Regional Natural Resource Management Plan Project**' (the local government project) through direct negotiation with the BDTB Executive Officer (formerly Planner), Arwen Rickert. This was the first major interaction of the emerging Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) with the planning processes of the BDTB and highlighted the importance of the 'direct' pathway to the planning process (see Figure 1) through the local government network.

The short term challenge is to make the local government network an effective and efficient conduit between local government and the BDTB planning processes. This requires cooperative participation of network members to ensure communication and reporting processes are established or adapted within their Council network so that information can flow to the relevant people within their Council and from Council back through the network to the BDTB. HESROC is continuing its lobbying to secure funding for ongoing support of the local government network which will in turn assist each Council establish effective communication lines from and to the local government network.

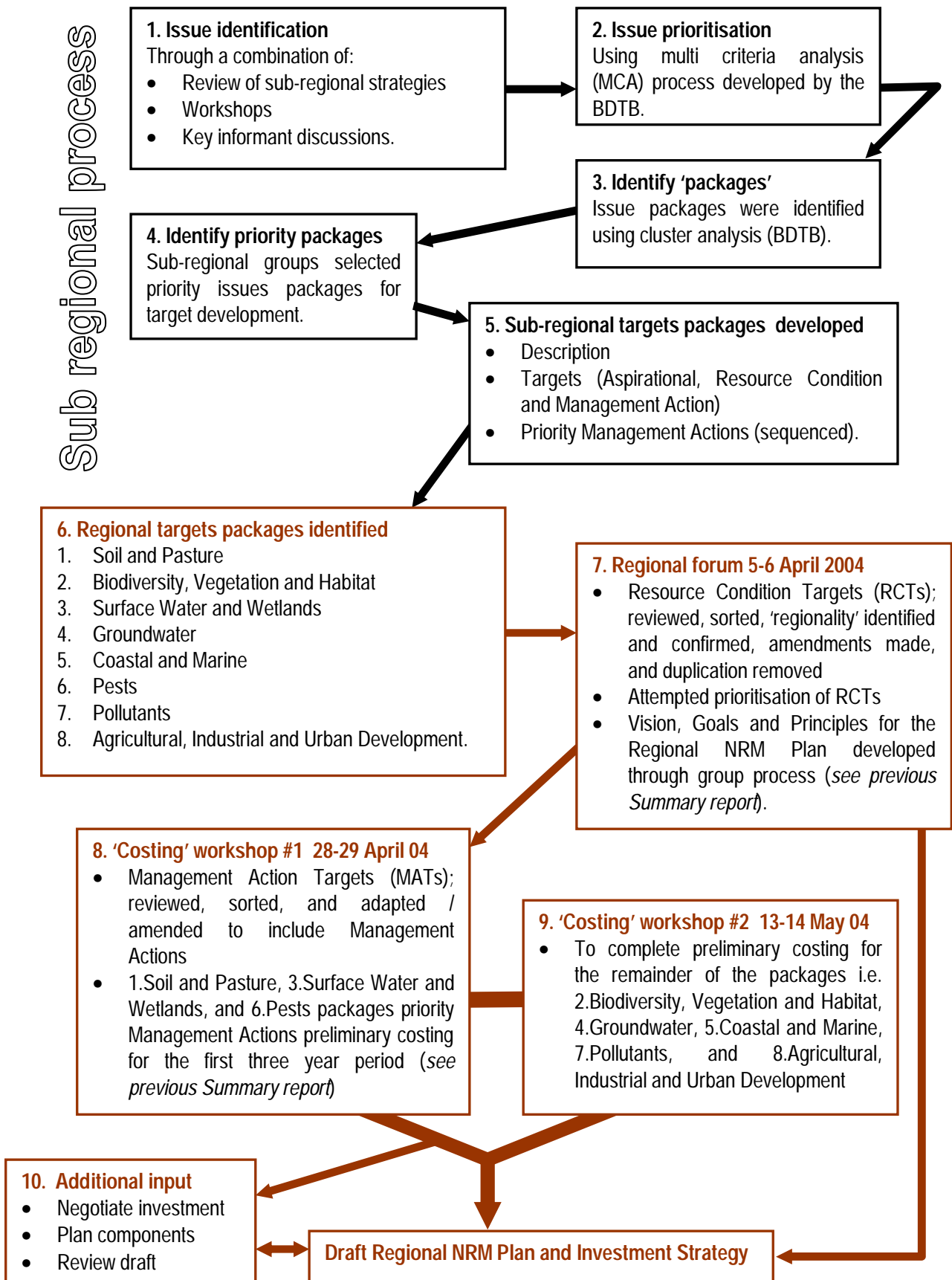
The distinction needs to be made between local government representation on the Board and the involvement of local government in the regional planning process. They are, at present, two distinct and predominantly separate processes. It is envisaged that the network, when it is operating effectively, will be able to act as the communication arm for the two local government representatives on the BDTB to facilitate the dissemination of information from the local government Board members to the respective local governments they are representing.

2. To date the BDTB has produced draft sections of the Regional NRM Plan (available on the Web site www.burdekindrytropics.org.au) including a 'Linkages' section, which will be updated with input provided from the HESROC Partnerships and Projects Review and the current HESROC/BDTB local government project. The 'working components' of the plan, which we had hoped to examine at the network meeting, are still being prepared. A set of draft regional 'Targets' have been made available by the BDTB however the updated costing for priority Management Actions have not been released.

The plan products produced at the regional level are an amalgam of the sub-regional products. The Regional Forum (4 and 5 April 2004) focused on the Resource Condition Targets developed at the sub-regional level. The targets were sorted and their relevance at the regional level confirmed or otherwise. There was not enough time at the regional forum to consider Management Action Targets or to prioritise Management Actions.

The Costing Workshops (28 and 29 April and 13 and 14 May 2004) focused on Management Action Targets. Targets were sorted and reclassified into Management Action Targets and Management Actions. The 'priority' Management Actions were then costed for first three years for inclusion in Regional Investment Strategy supporting the Regional NRM plan. Management Actions were prioritised from the perspective of whether participants felt an action needed to be funded in the first three years.

Figure 2 Representation of the BDT regional planning process



Discussion followed including the expertise employed in refining the plan and costings. A diagram of the structure of the BDTB and relationship of BDTB staff, Board members and others involved in the planning process was sketched on the white board (see Figure 3).

“The Board has 10 voting members who contribute a range of specialist skills and geographic representation. Four government advisory members assist the Board. The structure and membership of the Board was determined during a series of regional community forums in 2000 and 2001. The entity is registered as Burdekin Solutions Ltd trading as Burdekin Dry Tropics Board”.

The current composition of the Board is:

Board member	Representative of;
Mr Kirk Smith	Chairman (resignation tendered)
<i>Mr John Woods</i>	<i>Local Government Eastern councils (Thuringowa, Townsville, Burdekin and Bowen)</i>
Vacant	Local Government Western councils (Dalrymple, Charters Towers, Belyando, Jericho [Nebo and Mirani-not included in the Constitution])
Mr Tony Chandler (Secretary)	Community - Burdekin-Bowen Integrated Floodplains Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC)
Mr Tony Allingham	Community - Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG)
Mrs Ros Kenny	Community - Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG)
Mr Steve McDermott	Community - Townsville-Thuringowa Natural Resources and Environment Forum (NaREF)
Mrs Lesley Marshall	Community - Eastern Desert Uplands
Mr Mike Cannon	Biophysical science
Assoc. Professor Mark Fenton	Social science
Ms Chris George	Traditional Owner
Mr Phil Rist	Traditional Owner

(Source: www.burdekindrytropics.org.au and Arwen Rickert (pers.comm.))

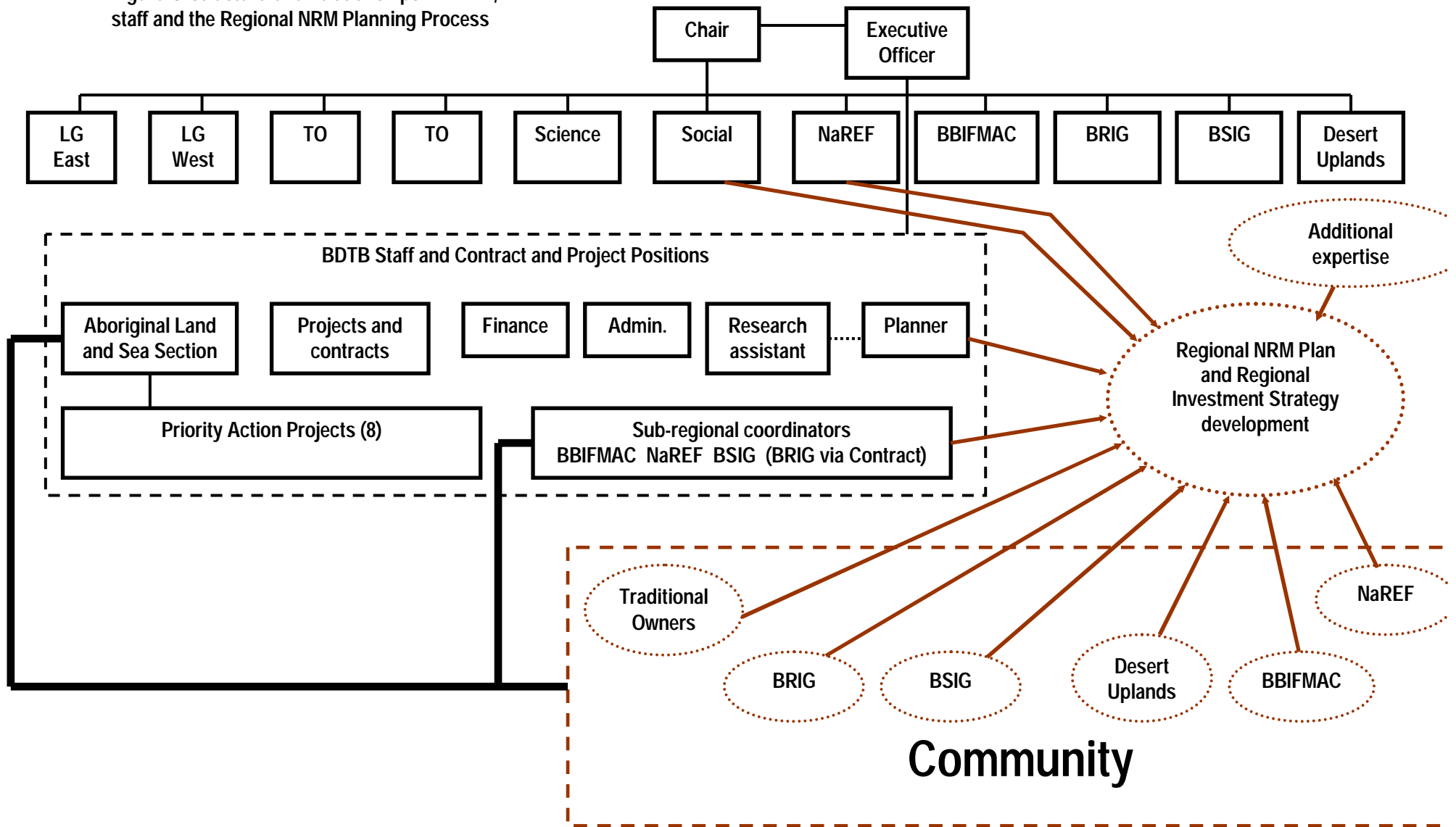
In addition there are Advisory members and advisors who do not have voting rights. Some of these are; Mr Peter Gilbey (DNRME Townsville) and Mike Bradby (DNRME Brisbane)- Queensland Government; Mr Geoff Dyne and Gale Duell - Commonwealth Government; and Mr Leigh Gray - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The Board is not directly involved in the development of the plan although some Board members have specific input and policy decisions are made by the Board based on advice from relevant sources e.g. staff members and Commonwealth and State Government advisors. BDTB staff essentially runs the plan development process. Arwen Rickert, now the Executive Officer, commenced the planning process on secondment from DNRM, and as Executive Officer still has significant input. Belinda Zunker has taken over most of the background planning work. In addition to BDTB staff Board members with significant input are Mark Fenton (Social science) and Steve McDermott (Community NaREF).

Initially the majority of planning input was via the sub-regional groups with BDTB staff coordinating input, providing templates and formats, and coordinating preparation of sections of the plan by external sources e.g. Condition Reports and Regional Overviews. The workload has now shifted to BDTB staff with the amalgamation of sub-regional inputs to the regional level. A consultant has been engaged to develop the Regional Investment Strategy, which is informed by components of the Regional Plan, and especially the Resource Condition and Management Action Targets, and priority Management Actions.

Changes in BDTB staff arrangements and the emphasis on amalgamating community input from sub-regional groups has made the coordination of plan development, at the very least, difficult.

Figure 3 Structure and relationships – BDTB, BDTB staff and the Regional NRM Planning Process



3. After determining and prioritising issues the main focus of the planning process has revolved around 'target setting'. An explanation of target setting in the context of the plan was provided as part of the discussion. The main point of setting targets is to measure the outcomes being achieved by regional groups so the expenditure of Commonwealth funding (tax dollars) can be justified. At the local level targets will provide a guide for regional groups and be an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Types of 'targets' in the context of Regional NRM plans are;

Aspirational targets

A vision or goals for NRM in the region. Long-term 'targets' which are aspirational statements about the desired condition of natural resources in the longer term e.g. 50 years. These targets guide regional planning, and set a context for the more measurable and achievable targets.

Resource condition targets

Specific, time bound and measurable objectives (targets) relating largely to resource condition. The timeframe for achievement of these targets is likely to be 10-20 years. These targets must be pragmatic and achievable.

Management action targets

Short-term objectives (targets) spanning 1-5 years, relating mainly to management actions or capacity-building. These targets must contribute to progress towards the longer-term resource condition targets.

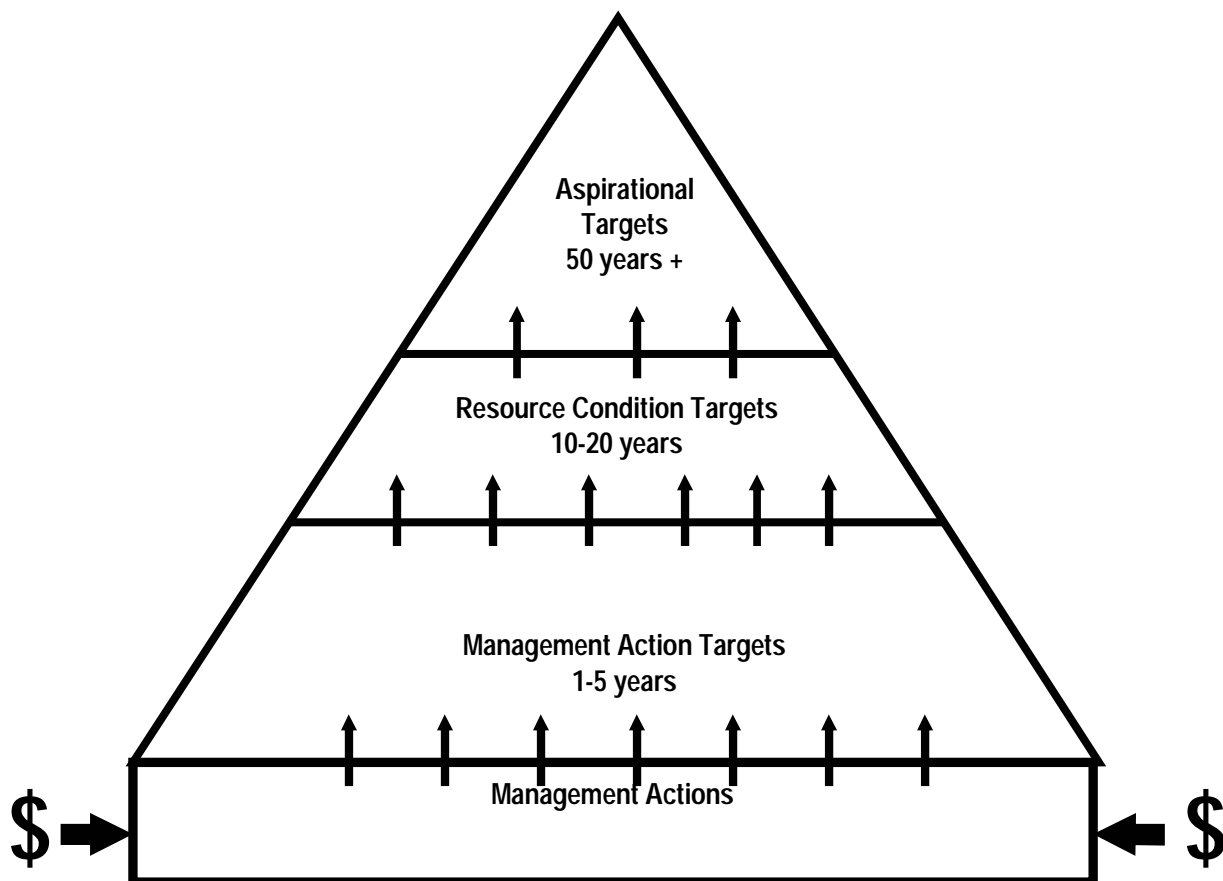


Figure 4 Hierarchy of Targets and Management Actions

Because of the emphasis placed on the target setting process the importance of determining actual management actions become somewhat obscured. The management actions will be the driving force of the Regional NRM plan leading to achievement of all levels of targets (see Figure 4). It is the management actions and associated costings that are of prime importance for the local government network to focus on as that is where partnerships, investment and funding comes into play.

4. Given the unavailability of information required to elicit feedback from network members discussion focussed on the development of process and formats for providing information for feedback and input to the Regional Investment Strategy. An example based on the 'Pests' issue/management category was used for discussion.

Example extract from Pests package

Aspirational Target

By 2050, effectively manage impacts of pest plants and pest animals on environmental, economic, social and cultural values and prevent the spread of new pests into the region by having an informed and involved community.

Resource Condition Target

By 2010, contain and reduce the infestations of priority pest plant and feral animal species identified with in Local Government pest plant and pest animal plans, specific to individual subregions.

Management Action Target

By 2007, establish a baseline for all priority pest species.

Management Actions

- Support and collate integration of current/new mapping of all priority and declared pest infestations in government, freehold and leasehold lands (**Yr 1 \$100,000, Yr 2 \$100,000, Yr 3 100,000**).
- Develop regional list of potential pest species and distribute a list of potential weed species to nursery industry (**Yr 1 \$50,000, 25% in-kind**).
- Determine feral cat and fox populations and recommend control options, based on existing information.

Management Action Target

By 2007, have a coordinated approach to pest management.

Management Actions

- Develop a Regional Pest Management Plan, which is collaborative between all Local Government Authorities in the region.
- Support active management and control of all priority, environmental and declared pests from local and state government pest management plans.
- Facilitate cooperative approaches between Local Governments, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Rail, Sunwater (**100% in-kind**)
- Support for, and development of Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres as having a key role in feral animal management.
- Track potential high-risk weed seed spread by advising local governments of cross shire stock movements

(Note: The costs and in-kind figures (**in bold**) are from notes taken at the costings workshop 28-29 April 2004)

Network members agreed that the format used to present the targets was workable and that it would be desirable to meet as a group to go through all the management actions and costings when they become available. This would allow discussion of; the meaning of the management actions, local government programs and needs, and potential for integration and value adding. Material will be distributed through the network in advance of future meetings.

A response sheet will be developed for management actions included in the regional NRM plan to enable comment from network members either at joint meetings or via meetings with individual Councils if they are unable to attend meetings.

The suggested format was a table with management actions and space for comment on;

- is the management action relevant to local government
- is local government already involved in similar or supportive actions and what resources are utilised
- is the action seen as a priority for funding
- what level of funding is required to achieve targets
- general comments including implementation suggestions

Example format for feedback

Pests	Comments			
	Relevant	Current	Funding	General
Management Actions				
Support and collate integration of current/new mapping of all priority and declared pest infestations in government, freehold and leasehold lands (Yr 1 \$100k, Yr 2 \$100k, Yr 3 100k).				
Develop regional list of potential pest species and distribute a list of potential weed species to nursery industry (Yr 1 \$50k, 25% in-kind).				
Determine feral cat and fox populations and recommend control options				
Develop a Regional Pest Management Plan, which is collaborative between all Local Government Authorities in the region				
Support active management and control of all priority, environmental and declared pests from local and state government pest management plans.				
Facilitate cooperative approaches between Local Governments, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Rail, Sunwater (100% in-kind)				
Support for, and development of Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres as having a key role in feral animal management.				
Track potential high-risk weed seed spread by advising local governments of cross shire stock movements through the DPI weigh bill system				

Information for consideration and feedback will be made available to network members as soon as it released by the BDTB and reformatted for local government purposes.

For clarification on any points about the planning process and the local government network please contact:

John Gunn (HESROC NRM Facilitator)
Ph 0413019359
Email earth@mackay.net.au

Andrew Hannay (Project Support Officer)
Ph (07) 47279520
or Email azh@townsville.qld.gov.au

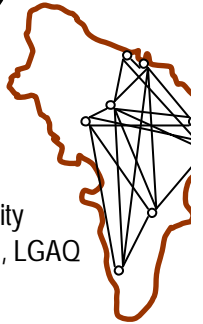
Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)

Meeting Notes

Monday 11 October 2004, Council Chambers, Townsville City Council, Townsville

Present:

Burdekin Shire (Mark Allpress, Cr Robert Marriot), Charters Towers City (Mick Langburne), Thuringowa City (Rachel Allen) and Townsville City (Greg Bruce and Andrew Hannay) HESROC (Grant Steen - Secretary), LGAQ – CB01 North Queensland Project Officer (Kathryn Dryden).



Apologies:

Mirani Shire (Cr Dave Price), Nebo Shire (Cr Bob Oakes, Mark Crawley), Dalrymple Shire (Raymon Jayo)

1. Cr Ann Bunnell (Acting Mayor Townsville City Council) welcomed those attending and spoke about the value of the partnerships being formed through the Local Government Network as a part of the process of providing input to the Regional NRM Plan. Trusted that the day would be useful in preparing for the review of the draft NRM Plan and coordinating the local government approach to the RIS and implementation.

2. An update on the Regional NRM Planning process was provided by John Gunn, with discussion by participants. The main points of the update and discussion are summarised below (discussion in italics).

The development of Regional NRM Plans is driven by the requirements of the Commonwealth Government in providing funding for NRM across Australia.

Current NRM Funding

- o •National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality NAPSWQ or NAP - \$1.4 billion committed over 7 years with half contributed by the Commonwealth and half by States – subject to Bilateral Agreements•Natural Heritage Trust Extension - NHT2 - \$1 billion committed over 5 years from the Commonwealth with States expected to contribute – subject to Bilateral Agreements.

Accountability

- o •Regional groups are required to prepare a Regional NRM Plan and Investment Strategy
- o •The format and contents of the Plan are guided by Intergovernmental and Bilateral Agreements
- o •The Plans have to be accredited by a Joint Steering Committee – Commonwealth and State government representatives – before funds become available
- o •Due to lag time for planning interim funds have been made available to groups e.g. Priority Action Projects (PAP).

The map of the Burdekin Dry Tropics region provided the backdrop for discussion on the difficulties associated with the size of the region and the 'tyranny of distance'. The basis of NRM regions is water catchments, which cut across local government boundaries, social catchments, Regional Organisations of Councils and vegetation and landscape bioregions e.g. Desert Uplands. The fact that both Nebo and Mirani Shires initially indicated that they would attend the meeting was encouraging for the operation of the network. Ways of incorporating input of the southern Councils would be pursued so that the issues of distance don't thwart their desire to participate.

It was also noted that a significant portion of Herberton Shire was within the Dry Tropics area along with small portions of Etheridge and Flinders Shires. Cross regional contact is also important between regional NRM groups and local government to ensure adequate consideration of all issues.

The structure of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board was discussed including the need for support to be provided to the local government members. The current composition of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board is provided below. It was noted that the position of Chair has not yet been filled.

Board member	Representative of;
Vacant	Chairman (applications for position closed 1 10 04)
Mr John Woods	Local Government Eastern councils (Thuringowa, Townsville, Burdekin and Bowen)
Cr Ben Calcott (offered the position) Dalrymple Sire Council	Local Government Western councils (Dalrymple, Charters Towers, Belyando, Jericho [Nebo and Mirani-not included in the Constitution])
Mr Tony Chandler (Secretary)	Community - Burdekin-Bowen Integrated Floodplains Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC)
Mr Tony Allingham	Community - Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG)
Mrs Ros Kenny	Community - Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG)
Mr Steve McDermott	Community - Townsville-Thuringowa Natural Resources and Environment Forum (NaREF)
Mrs Lesley Marshall	Community - Eastern Desert Uplands
Mr Mike Cannon (Acting Chair)	Biophysical science
Assoc. Professor Mark Fenton	Social science
Ms Chris George	Traditional Owner
Mr Phil Rist	Traditional Owner

The role of sub-regional groups was discussed including the genesis of sub-regional groups from the previous NHT Regional Strategy process and their reluctance to become incorporated bodies under the new regime. Structures and roles of sub-regional groups varied and it was not considered to be a benefit or disadvantage to local government if they were incorporated or not.

The process for electing representatives to the BDTB was discussed and concluded that it was a process driven by individual sub groups and they were responsible for determining their own processes. All groups are in the same boat in as much as it is a new experience for all with learning and evolution being a part of the process.

Sub-regional Groups in the BDT are:

- Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplains Management Committee (BBIFMAC)
- Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG)
- Belyando Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG)
- Natural Resources and Environmental Forum for the Townsville Thuringowa Coastal Plains (NaREF)
- Desert Uplands.

The Regional Planning Process - Sub-regional Components

- Issue Identification
- Issue Prioritisation
- Issues Packaged
- Priority Packages Identified
- Targets Developed for Packages.

Targets

- Aspirational Targets – Longer term goals (50 years)
- Resource Condition Targets – Medium term objectives (10 – 20 years)
- Management Action Targets – Short term achievements from implementation (1-5 years depending on actions)

The Regional Planning Process - Regional Forum April 5 & 6

Combined Regional (Issues) Packages

- Soil and Pasture
- Biodiversity, Vegetation and Habitat
- Surface Water and Wetlands

- Groundwater
- Coastal and Marine
- Pests
- Pollutants
- Agriculture, Industrial and Urban Development

Outcomes

- Resource Condition Targets Reviewed
- Resource Condition Targets reduced from 86 to 48
- Attempt at prioritisation of Resource Condition Targets
- Vision, Goals and Principles defined
- Recognition of need to sort and refine Management Action Targets

Regional Investment Strategy

- Workshop 28 and 29 April – Pasture and Soils, Surface Water and Wetlands, and Pests packages dealt with
- Workshop 13 and 14 May – Biodiversity, Vegetation and Habitat, Groundwater, Coastal and Marine, Pollution, and Industrial and Urban Development and Traditional Owner package dealt with

The Realisation

Priority Management Actions needed to be identified before the Regional Investment Strategy could be developed – the NRM Plan would have to be finalised first, and the Regional Investment Strategy put on hold.

Back to the Plan

- First Draft completed mid June
- Comments received from the Northern Region Coordinating Group (NRCCG) 16 July
- Comments incorporated and draft resubmitted to NRCCG
- Comments incorporated and draft resubmitted to NRCCG
- Final draft to the Joint Steering Committee -28 September 2004
- Public Release expected late October, followed by a 6 week comment period.

Some discussion on the composition of the Northern Region Coordinating Group and Joint Steering Committee and their roles.

Main Changes (to the plan)

- Timeframe – from June to October 2004;
- Contents – from eight to five packages and more detail on the planning process;
- Regional Investment Strategy to be submitted separately, at a later date.

New (Issues) Packages

- Land and Soils;
- Biodiversity;
- Surface Water and Groundwater;
- Coastal and Marine;
- Atmosphere.

The amalgamation of the original eight Issues Packages was discussed especially the incorporation of the various Pest Management components into the other Packages. One of the implications is that the Costed Actions provided to network members for consideration at the meeting are now mixed in with the Management Actions of the draft Plan. The process for considering the Management Actions from the draft Plan and the draft Costed Actions from the preliminary preparations for the Regional Investment Strategy will have to be modified to ensure the best use of time by network members.

Enabling Packages

- Capacity Building;
- Monitoring and Evaluation;
- Institutional Reform.

The Enabling Packages have been added to the draft Plan and are an important area of consideration for local government. While not specifically included in the Institutional Reform package there is some expectation that local government will incorporate regional NRM Plans, or components of Plans, in Planning Schemes. The subject was discussed with reference to:

- *Regional Growth Strategies e.g. Townsville Thuringowa Strategy Plan*
- *Regional Planning Advisory Committees under IPA*
- *Department of Local Government and Planning and its role*
- *Other States and the status of Catchment Management Boards and legislation*
- *Support required for local government to engage in integration of NRM and statutory planning processes*
- *Issues associated with conflict between planning schemes and Building Codes*
- *Issues associated with separation of departments within Councils and between Councils and State agencies i.e. separation between practical infrastructure requirements and planning coordination*
- *The relevance of local government in administration of planning activities and the lack of representation on key bodies such as NRCG, JSC and COAG*

In the Capacity Package the importance of the collaboration with the BDTB was acknowledged. It is the most involved local government has been in regional NRM in the Dry Tropics and it is important to maintain the relationship and continue to build the relevance of the network.

Next Steps

- Public Release of the Draft Plan;
- Recommence the Regional Investment Strategy development process;
- Commence negotiation and development of detail for implementation.

Where to from here for local government?

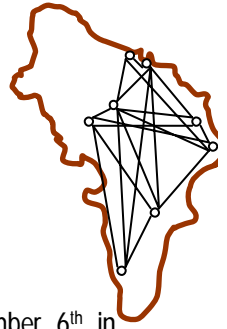
Review of the Draft Plan;
Input to the Regional Investment Strategy;
Negotiation on details of implementation.

The process for review of the Draft Regional NRM Plan was discussed using handouts extracted from the draft submitted to the JSC. It was acknowledged that the network would not distribute the extracts further and that they would only be used to allow local government to prepare the groundwork for a coordinated response to the draft.

The response process will involve:

- *Review of the Management Action tables (17 pages) by individual network Councils following issue of electronic copy and review 'points' by the project support officer*
- *Review of the whole plan by the project facilitator and project support officer to identify local government relevant components, rather than individual review of 200 plus pages by each Council*
- *Visits to individual Councils by project facilitator and project support officer to explain the results of the meeting and the draft plan review process and assist with coordination of individual Council responses*
- *Integration and cross referencing of the Management Actions from the draft Plan and the draft Costed Actions from the preliminary preparations for the Regional Investment Strategy*
- *Compilation of material from individual Councils*
- *Meetings and workshops as required/requested by network members*
- *Network meeting on 6 December 2004 to finalise regional local government response to the draft Regional NRM Plan – invite Rebecca Clear, Arwen Rickert (BDTB) and Kathryn Dryden.*

Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)



Results - Network Meeting Held Monday 6 December 2004, Townsville

The Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) met on Monday December 6th in Townsville to discuss the recently released draft Regional Natural Resource Management Plan for the Burdekin Dry Tropics. Understandably some network members were unable to attend due to the distances involved.

Belinda Zunker from the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board attended the meeting and gave a brief update on the planning process and how it works. The majority of the meeting time was used to discuss the management actions from the draft plan and record the comments of network members. The management actions (10 pages) are the main area of interest as the remainder of the draft plan (190 pages) is mostly background information and is heavy going for the uninitiated.

This document will provide you with the opportunity to have input on behalf of your Council into the Regional NRM Plan via the Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM). Your network facilitators are collating all local government comments to present to the Burdekin Dry Tropics as a combined regional local government submission.

This in no way prevents you from responding through your sub-regional group or individually but rather is an additional avenue to highlight local government NRM issues at the regional level and act as a starting point for combined negotiations for the Regional Investment Strategy.

The attached set of management actions includes a record of the responses from the network meeting on Monday 6 December. Please provide any additional comments, which could include:

- ❖ Issues specific to your Council or sub region that you feel could be addressed through the management actions;
- ❖ Potential for local government involvement in undertaking the management actions at the region, sub-regional or local level whether directly or through partnerships;
- ❖ Work already done that you feel may be duplicated by management actions;
- ❖ Management actions where you can see potential for integration with current projects.

Public consultation will end shortly so this is the last chance to have direct input into the plan via the network. For a combined set of comments to be properly collated and submitted to the Board we will need to receive them by **Thursday 16th December**.

For clarification on any points about the planning process and the local government network please contact:

John Gunn (HESROC NRM Facilitator)
Ph 0413019359
Email earth@mackay.net.au

Andrew Hannay (Project Support Officer)
Ph (07) 47279520
Email azh@townsville.qld.gov.au

Notes on Local Government Feedback Tables

The Tables have been extracted from the Draft Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional NRM Plan and modified slightly to reduce the overall size of the tables.

The tables include:

The Resource Condition Target in a continuous grey row;

The Management Action Target in the column on the left of the table; and the associated Management Actions in the large centre column.

BVH2.1 By 2020, the population viability of 100% of rare and threatened native plants and animals is improved		
BVH2.1.1 By 2010, implement all existing threatened species recovery plans, develop recovery plans for remaining species in the recovery program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify and prioritise threatened species, ecosystems and habitats for future management/protection. • Area especially applicable to LG in coastal zone and wetlands, where LG responsibility overlaps with other management agencies.. i. Support implementation of whole of community approach for existing threatened species recovery plans (e.g. Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat) • Sea turtles, dugongs and other coastal species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Yes ii. Black throated finch

Responses from the network meeting are included as;

- **dot points in bold italics.**

The comments relate to the Management Action directly above.

There is an unused column on the right of the tables for you to add any comments, or to confirm the comments already provided (add Yes or Agree). If there is more than one Management Action in the row please label your comments with the corresponding number so we know which one you are referring to.

The Management Actions highlighted in blue have some level of funding attached to them as per the preliminary draft Regional Investment Strategy. These were considered to be priorities for implementation by the sub-regional groups during the first three years of the Plan. The priority actions have yet to be finalised and any comments provided can be used to influence the development of the final Regional Investment Strategy and detail for delivery of the actions.

Thank you in advance for response.

(Tables not included)

Appendix D

Council Interactions

Belyando Shire – Presentation to Council - Moranbah 13 January 2005

Main points:

- Council is feeling overwhelmed with all the issues it has to deal with and cannot see how they can be actively involved in NRM beyond their current commitment i.e. Margaret Finger as Council representative on BSIG. Margaret Finger would remain as the main contact person for NRM.
- Time and resources are seen as the main constraints.
- Council appreciates the reduction of material to 'readable' portions and making information relevant to local government.
- The main NRM issue for Council is water i.e. a new pipeline to supply the mines and expansion of the town.
- Council is aware of what is happening with NRM and has the information available to read and feel they are not missing out on anything.
- Information can be included in the Information Booklet that accompanies Council Agenda notes but they are not keen to have NRM as another agenda item due to the already heavy workload.
- Continue to liaise with John Torpy to ensure correspondence gets to Council.
- Combining LG component of meeting with BSIG meetings is seen as effective.
- Where possible and necessary holding network meetings on a rotational basis would seem 'fairer' to Council and they would be more willing to participate especially if the meetings were only held 2 or 3 times a year.
- Notification of meetings and request for action needs to be well coordinated and timely as they have been receiving notification of meetings only days prior to the event.

Belyando Shire Council – Moranbah 23 February 2005

Meeting with John Torpy (CEO) and Tony Goldsworthy (Manager Environmental Services)

Council activities and linkages to NRM:

- Pest Management;
 - Stock Route Management Plan – Pest Management Plan,
 - Requires a coordinated regional approach from the headwaters down,
 - Would be involved in coordinated regional approach,
 - Mapping of pest animals, and
 - Potential benefits from integration of mapping and on ground works with Council systems.
- Planning Schemes;
 - Links to planning schemes and NRM mapping, and
 - Would be beneficial to have an information exchange so that planning schemes and development assessment process could use available and future information.
- Waste Management;
 - Regional involvement through WHAMBROC,
 - Internal waste management plans being developed at present for Moranbah and Clermont, and
 - Scavengers rights at both areas and would like to advance to full recycling system.
- Stormwater quality;
 - Not really on the radar but realise there is a responsibility,
 - Some form of generic template would be a useful result, and
 - Lack of rainfall and effective road cleaning service negates most impacts.
- Community Involvement;
 - No projects and not aware of any Landcare groups in the shire, and
 - Some talk from local people about doing some revegetation on Grosvenor Creek near Moranbah.

- Corporate Plan;
 - Currently under review and would like to produce a shorter, more readable version,
 - No environmental issues flagged,
 - DLGP model used for previous plans,
 - Operational plans are the key area for the detail, and
 - Will include regional NRM and the LG network.

Bowen Shire - 28 February 2005

John Finlay (CEO), John Gibbons (Environmental Services), Cr Greg Smith and Gary Martin (Manager Water and Sewerage)

Council activities and linkages to NRM:

- Pest management;
 - Property pest management plans for coastal areas is an objective,
 - Draft Pest Management Plan issued and has priorities,
 - Herbicide subsidy is an effective incentive,
 - Mapping extent of pests is useful, and
 - Urban areas are also important especially for community support.
- Urban areas;
 - Bowen and Collinsville,
 - Opportunities for water quality and biodiversity outcomes,
 - Wetland area adjacent to the ocean drains 75% of Bowen urban area, and
 - Stormwater quality outcomes and biodiversity combined.
- Water management;
 - Flow monitoring in the Bowen Broken, and
 - Sand dams in the Don for water quality/sediment control/aquifer recharge.
- Mapping;
 - For planning schemes and strategic planning e.g. rural residential constraints.
- Information sharing
 - Custodian issues e.g. DNRM, and
 - Advantages for access in partnerships with sub-regional groups.
- Erosion Control
 - Don River riparian areas/banks, and
 - River Improvement Trust funded under NHT so greater potential for integrated projects.

Effluent

- Recycling and reuse possibilities.
- State Land
 - Management improvement required,
 - Issues with mosquito breeding, and
 - Fire management.
- Salinity/Weed Connection
 - Rubber vine taking out trees, which has potential for water table rise.
- Cross Regional Projects
 - Mackay Whitsunday e.g. Land for Wildlife,

- Community Groups
 - Little action in the area and requires urban involvement/high profile areas.
 - Requires coordinator on ground,
 - Greater involvement with BBIFMAC, and
 - Funding for BSIG coordination.

Jericho Shire – Presentation to Council - Alpha 11 January 2005

Main points:

- Future development does not seem to be considered in the NRM plan and is important for Jericho as the majority of potential future development on properties could be stifled by restrictive legislation and regulations.
- The importance of people and their socio-economic circumstances needs to be remembered in the NRM planning process as nothing will happen without the support of individual landholders, Councils and the wider community.
- Pest management is a serious consideration for the shire and practical assistance is required not a reinvention of past work or mapping exercises. Council generally knows what needs to be done and needs assistance to do it. Practical assistance in the form of an off-sider for the Stock Routes Officer would be greatly appreciated.
- JSC is part of the Central Highlands Pest Management Group, which is coordinated from Emerald and is mostly within the Fitzroy Basin, with the exception of JSC and Belyando SC. Cross regional coordination of projects in pest management will be required to be effective as JSC is the top of the Burdekin catchment so any introduction of weeds will have significant implications for the whole catchment. Jericho is free of some of the significant weed issues and a relatively small effort to keep the shire weed free would benefit the whole catchment e.g. Parthenium, as costs of control are much greater than costs of prevention.
- Communication within Council is generally good and anything involving committees where Council is represented by a Councillor has reporting back processes that are effective.
- The main involvement from Jericho has been through the Belyando Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG) with Cr Jack Dillon the current Chair of the group. The communication lines from the BSIG representative on the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB) needs to be effective for BSIG to understand what is going on and for that information to be passed back to BSIG members and then to their respective organisations (see flow diagram).
- NRM and the BDT LG Network can be added as an agenda item so there is a direct link back to Council without all the 'interference' involved in the sub-regional group communication process.
- Des Howard (CEO) to remain as the primary BDT LG Network contact and ensure that information is passed on to Council and feedback is returned as necessary.
- Addition of a LG component to BSIG meetings is seen as an efficient way of dealing with 'meetings' of network members rather than travelling to Townsville and/or having additional meetings.
- Email information to Des is the best way to deal with information. (ceo.jerichosc@).

Nebo Shire – Feedback – February 2005

The following information is provided on behalf of Nebo Shire Council to Mr John Gunn, HESROC NRM Facilitator. This information relates directly to Council's interest in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Draft NRM Plan with emphasis on potential activities to be undertaken through the "Regional Investment Strategy", which is the recognised "Business Plan" for implementation of the NRM Plan.

Key Social and Economic Issues for Natural Resource Management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics
Issues identified by the NRM Plan highlight the region's low productivity, decreasing rural populations, volatile biophysical and economic production environments and its susceptibility to external factors, namely world markets for mining and agriculture and variable climates.

These preceding issues deeply affect the area of Nebo Shire identified within the Burdekin Dry Tropic NRM boundary, and the remaining two thirds of the Shire that falls within another significant regional body, the Fitzroy Basin Association.

Following review of the Draft NRM Plan, Council would recommend involvement by a number of key stakeholder organisations (currently operating in Nebo, Belyando and Broadsound Shires) to pursue cooperative arrangements for activities currently planned for catchment studies, sustainable economic development and Landcare.

These organisations include:

Nebo/Broadsound Landcare – This group has undertaken sustainable resource management workshops with graziers and key Queensland Government Agencies to assist with property management strategies, including ideal remnant fodder forage levels, effectively managing water resources and dealing with weed and pest management.

Fitzroy Basin Association – have facilitated workshops to identify key issues for Graziers within Nebo and Broadsound. The FBA are currently preparing strategies to utilise a Catchment Field Officer to assist Graziers with Weed and Pest controls at the top of the Fitzroy catchment area.

Mackay Regional Pest Management Group [MRPMG] and Capricornia Pest Management Group [CPMG] are two very effective organisations who are working collaboratively to undertake pest management projects and identify strategic washdown locations to control the spread of weed seed. These groups are also developing educational resources to assist the wider community.

Lake Elphinstone Alliance - This group of people have recently commissioned a Lake Management Plan study for the ongoing management and monitoring of Blue/Green Algal Blooms that exist within the lake at dangerous levels.

The preceding organisations should be invited to undertake key roles in the ongoing monitoring and data gathering activities that are necessary to ensure sustained natural resources are available for future generations.

NRM Issues Directly Affecting Nebo Shire's Long Term Future

Nebo Shire does not have any above ground permanent, potable water storages and is entirely dependent upon local bore water [Nebo Township]; Braeside Borefields supply Coppabella; and a water pipeline supplies Glenden via the Bowen River from Eungella. Capacities of these reserves are nearing their maximum and additional water sources are needed in the very near future.

Increasing mining activity within the shire is also adding to water supply problems. Pressure has been placed on mines to commence operations sooner than originally anticipated and demand for available water from all available resources is at an all time high.

Nebo Shire's growth is among the top ten percent of regional centres in Queensland – due mainly to mining related activities. This increased growth is also placing additional pressure on existing community infrastructure and resources.

Tourism. The region is attracting more visitors who are seeking interesting activities to undertake and historic areas of interest they can visit. The area of Nebo Shire contained within the Burdekin Dry Tropics Draft Plan currently would only have Glenden to feature as a highlight. Other important aspects also need pursuing, such as the involvement of Traditional Owners to become involved in identifying and showcasing indigenous culture and history in this area. Future opportunities to open up the Northern end of the shire should also result in increased visitor and tourist numbers undertaking day trips to access the Burdekin via Collinsville or Mt Coolum. Spectacular views of the built and natural environment are available from most of the roads accessing adjacent shires. Nebo Shire Council is committed to and extensively supports initiatives for improving road networks and access to the Shires of Bowen, Whitsunday, Mirani and Belyando, which Council believes is foremost in maintaining the region's sustainability.

Nebo Shire Council – Presentation to Council - Nebo 13 January 2005

Main points:

- Cr Bob Oakes and in his absence, Cr Mark Mackenzie are the Council's representatives on BSIG and are reasonably up to date with events from that perspective.
- They have had input and attend meetings when possible.
- Again the pathway of the information from the BSIG to BDTB and back again is problematic and not necessarily designed for Council consumption.
- HESROC NRM Facilitator visit was the first time that they have had anyone to explain the process to them.
- Mark Crawley to be the main contact point for Council and use the BSIG meetings as another conduit for local government network meetings for the southern Councils.
- As part of the Fitzroy Basin and Burdekin Dry Tropics Council had to split its resources between the two and the majority of the shire is within the Fitzroy Basin as are some of the main NRM issues although the main population centre (Glenden) is in the Burdekin.
- Lake Elphinstone is within the Fitzroy Basin and is the most likely place to gain funding although there may be some cross regional projects that could assist.
- Council is keen to have input and requires some assistance to do so.
- Council recognises the network facilitation staff as a resource and encourages future visits and involvement.

Nebo Shire Council – Nebo 23 February 2005

Brief meeting with Mark Crawley (CEO).

Nebo Council is currently reviewing the Corporate Plan (five years) and will look at including regional NRM and the BDT Local Government Network in the Plan.

Reg Norman is not available this week for discussions about the RIS workshop so comments he has provided will be used as a reference source for Nebo SC.

Appendix E

Green Paper Response

Options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management

Introduction

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines released a discussion paper on *Options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management* in April 2005. The discussion paper provides information on and promotes discussion about options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management in Queensland.

The discussion paper, as downloaded from the regional NRM website (http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/options_paper/index.html), has been used as the basis for comments from the Health and Environmental Services Regional Organisation of Councils – North Queensland (HESROC). HESROC Councils are; Burdekin Shire, Charters Towers City, Dalrymple Shire, Hinchinbrook Shire, Thuringowa City and Townsville City.

Comments are based on the experiences of HESROC, which, in conjunction with the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, has been involved in coordinating local government input to the regional planning process in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region. A brief history of the HESROC local government NRM capacity building initiative is attached.

Landcare to Accredited Regional NRM Plans

Community involvement in natural resource management (NRM) in Australia is not a new phenomenon. Formation of soil conservation boards and catchment groups was encouraged by Agricultural Departments and Soil Conservation Departments as early as the 1930s in NSW, and in the 1960s on the Darling Downs in Queensland. Individual community members, landholders and other land and water managers, are involved in natural resource management on a day-to-day basis.

Commonwealth and State government have increased their support for community based NRM over the last twenty years as indicated by the investment in community based programs;

- **National Soil Conservation Program (NSCP)** - commenced in 1983.
- **Decade of Landcare** - announced in 1989 was the first major Commonwealth commitment to community-based NRM.
- **Natural Heritage Trust (NHT)** superseded the Decade of Landcare funding program and placed more emphasis on strategic planning as the basis for distribution of natural resource funding.
- **National Action Plan (NAP) for Salinity and Water Quality**, was launched by the Commonwealth Government in October 2000. Regional NRM groups in the 21 priority catchments became the main administrative bodies for funding under NAP, as government support for community-based natural resource management moves towards a strategic regional investment approach.
- **Natural Heritage Trust extended (NHT2)** - announced in 2002, has similar requirements for the distribution of regional funding to states and territories i.e. the development of accredited Regional NRM Plans and accompanying Investment Strategies.

The change of scale of community based NRM has not been matched in many cases by an increase in capacity to implement the new systems. This is the case for both community based Boards and the staff employed to 'guide' the planning and corporate governance processes. There is a significant difference between developing and implementing a Landcare project and developing and implementing a multi-million dollar regional NRM plan. The same group of people i.e. community volunteers, are often expected to move seamlessly from Landcare style activities to a more demanding role for which they may not be equipped.

The degree of responsibility asked of community volunteers in the regional natural resource management process through the national approach has been onerous due in part to the capacity of the volunteers and the inadequacy of conceptual support provided to emerging regional NRM groups. The emphasis on accreditation and target setting as the basis for guiding activities and investment served to exacerbate the situation as regional NRM groups struggled to come to terms with the new regime with few guidelines and no precedents. Uncertainty associated with financial support continued to create management, administration and social issues, as has been the case with past short-term NRM programs.

Imbedded social and cultural attitudes such as Commonwealth versus State Government, and community versus government also conspired to disrupt the transition from a government 'owned' and controlled NRM delivery arrangement to full community ownership of the process in partnership with government.

In essence the move from Landcare to Integrated Catchment Management to Regional Strategies and then to Accredited Regional NRM Plans required the employment of significant resources and skills to manage the transition. If the same process was imposed on a corporation without adequate change management resources the most likely outcome would be the demise of the corporation.

It is only due to the fact that the regional NRM planning process involved volunteers genuinely committed to making the process work that it hasn't collapsed. Any significant changes to the way community is engaged in NRM, especially if it involved a 'new' planning exercise, would most likely alienate the community volunteers who have invested significant amounts of time and energy in the regional NRM planning process to date.

Any future changes need to be managed sensitively and in consultation with the people involved in regional NRM. In that respect the ideas generated by the discussion paper need to be properly investigated in conjunction with the regional NRM groups and principle stakeholders. This should be done as a part of any decision making process with the most suitable option/s then judiciously introduced with the minimum degree of disruption to an already stressed network of NRM volunteers.

Local government and natural resource management

Involvement in natural resource management is a normal component of local government activities whether the activities are recognised as natural resource management or not. Local government contributes substantial amounts to natural resource management (NRM) through both routine 'business' activities and voluntary initiatives.

The difficulties faced by Regional NRM Groups in the new funding environment have not resulted in processes for effective involvement of local government in community based NRM. Instead local government in many cases has been expected to engage itself in the somewhat nebulous community volunteer framework. Regional NRM groups have not necessarily taken into account the function/s, processes and culture of local government and their capacity to self-engage.

Local government is an important part of the 'community' and at the same time is an inherently different 'business' entity and service provider when compared to other stakeholders involved in community based NRM initiatives. One significant difference between local government and other entities involved in NRM is that local government is made up of representatives locally elected by the community they serve.

Considerable effort is required to engage local government in regional NRM arrangements as all Councils do not operate in the same way, or have the same division of responsibilities amongst departments. Additionally there may be significant differences in the relationships and interactions between the administration, departments and political components of individual local governments without even considering the complexities associated with inter-Council relationships and interactions.

There is a huge difference in NRM capacity between Councils and given there are 14 regional NRM groups in Queensland compared to nearly 140 Councils it is not surprising that adequate resources need to be committed to engage local government in regional NRM. At the minimum some form of coordination is required, as local government is not well positioned to self-coordinate in the unfamiliar environment of catchment-based regions that do not necessarily align with administrative, regulatory planning or socio-economic boundaries.

The statement made in Appendix 4 (Interstate approaches to regional community-based NRM) under local government involvement "*Regional bodies participate as key stakeholders in the planning scheme making process*" (DNRM 2005, p.30) is far from reality in most parts of regional Queensland. While it may be ideal to integrate regional NRM planning and local government Planning Schemes there are few Councils who have seriously considered NRM plans as a component of or a significant influence on Planning Schemes. This is the case with other NRM components local government is involved in.

Discussion Paper - Section two: Criteria for success

The questions (see text box below) posed to determine whether the goal of regional NRM i.e. to improve the condition of natural resources and environmental assets, may have been best left as questions or directly translated into criterion rather than 'translated' into the large number of criteria suggested. The large number of criteria will serve to confuse any assessment process when it needs to be made as simple and transparent as possible.

The Questions

Will it help to achieve long-term NRM outcomes through the protection and restoration of natural assets?

Will it provide accountability and a good return on public and private investment?

Is it the most efficient way to achieve good NRM outcomes?

Will it help to integrate regional planning and action?

Are community aspirations recognised?

Is it flexible enough to adapt to different regional requirements?

Will it encourage improved NRM practices by land managers and other resource users?

Even with a set of clear questions/criterion the subject matter is difficult to assess. Predictions of success based on proposed human activity systems are highly speculative and generally impractical to measure until after the event. The big question to contemplate may be '*Are stakeholders involved (likely to be involved) in regional NRM willing to support the suggested model for future community engagement in regional natural resource management*'. Without that support and ownership of the process there is little chance of the goal of regional NRM being achieved in which case all the criteria are more or less superfluous.

The most relevant/important suggested criteria to incorporate in consideration of the options for future regional NRM arrangements from a community and local government perspective appear in the table below.

While all the criterion have some merit it is proposed that the key components/criteria for success will focus on:

- Supporting community capacity in NRM, including continuity of capacity;
- Building effective communication processes;
- Building effective partnerships;
- The development of effective information sharing and dissemination systems;
- Improving extension services and processes for landholders and land managers.

Accountability components, 'value for money', improvements in NRM practices and achievement of NRM goals and targets should logically follow if the appropriate underlying principles and processes implied in the key components mentioned above are used as the platform for community engagement and innovation in NRM.

Local government is a significant player in community based NRM and must be included to a greater extent in future community engagement activities (given their role as community representatives, facilitators etc). Greater effort also needs to be made to ensure proposed community NRM activities and plans align with those already undertaken/developed by local government.

Table 1 Criteria Considered Important in Framing Future Community NRM Arrangements

Criterion 1 Achieves long-term NRM outcomes
Encourage retention of knowledge, skills and human resources in the long term
Criterion 2 Provides for accountability and a return on investment
Build on, recognise and capitalise on existing community effort and government investment.
Criterion 3 Maximises efficiency in achieving results
Coordinating the implementation of regional NRM plans and avoiding duplication of effort
Contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of Queensland's overall land and resource use, management and planning system
Improving information management and sharing at regional levels
Criterion 4 Helps to integrate regional NRM planning and action
Criterion 5 Recognises community aspirations
How community aspirations might be defined and balanced with scientific evidence, and how competing objectives might be handled
Criterion 6 Maintains flexibility
How easily the arrangements might be adapted over time in response to changing conditions and priorities
Criterion 7 Encourages improved NRM practices
The degree to which regional NRM arrangements might foster innovation in management practices
The potential of the regional arrangements to encourage the willingness of resource users to use better NRM practices, and to adopt changes
The potential of the regional NRM arrangements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the various constraints that resource managers face when attempting to implement change; • Engender the sharing of information and knowledge about best practice management; • Develop strong links with local governments; • Build people's skills and capacities.

Discussion Paper - Section three Options

The options for future arrangements from the discussion paper (partly paraphrased) have been included in text boxes with comments on the suggested options below the relevant text box.

Option 1 Non-statutory community based regional NRM bodies

Continuation of some form of community-based regional NRM bodies. Non-regulatory approach to encourage the adoption of more sustainable practices. Regional NRM bodies would continue to be responsible for the development, implementation and reporting of integrated regional NRM plans.

Sub-option 1.1: Maintain current system of regional NRM bodies

Regional NRM bodies and associated government support arrangements would be continued. As the regional bodies have no statutory powers, their focus would remain on implementing NRM plans through non-regulatory strategies outlined in agreed regional investments strategies, and on regional monitoring and reporting. They would also continue to inform and assist in integrating existing regional statutory planning mechanisms. The current arrangements include monitoring and evaluation. These allow for continuing improvements in matters such as governance, business performance, partnership arrangements with other agencies, and engagement with the wider community. Under this sub-option, such improvements could continue to be made on a gradual basis.

Sub-option 1.1

The main advantage of maintaining the current system of regional NRM bodies is that they are 'established'. Community volunteers have invested considerable time and energy (and financial resources) into regional arrangements and regional planning since the regional strategic approach was instigated in 1997 through the Natural Heritage Trust. Continual rearrangement is seen as an unnecessary use of resources (financial and human) that could otherwise be used on improving NRM practices and outcomes. While the need for accountability is understood there comes a point where the planning process is seen as excessive and counterproductive.

Scrapping the current arrangements would be seen as a dismissal of the efforts of community. While the arrangements are not perfect, and never will be, a serious attempt has been made by community volunteers to adapt to the 'new' arrangements imposed under NAP and NHT2 (targets and accountability). If some semblance of these arrangements, which were developed to meet Commonwealth and State government requirements, is not retained there may be a backlash from community NRM volunteers as the preceding arrangements are likely to be seen as a cynical attempt by 'government' to appease community aspirations rather than as a method to fulfill them.

There is a real need for the structure and processes involved in delivering government funded NRM programs to be developed in advance of the announcement of a new program. It seems from past experiences that the guidelines for delivery, apart from strategic intent as outlined in Intergovernmental agreements etc, are not available at the same time that community NRM groups are expected to implement them. Expecting the train to reach the station at a certain time while the track is still being laid has created a myriad of issues both between different levels of government and between government and community.

In some regions the current arrangements may be fully functional. In the Burdekin Dry Tropics there have been a number of issues associated with capacity, corporate governance and the lack of development of adequate processes and structures, including from all levels of government, to effectively operate under the new and evolving 'rules'. The issues are now being addressed by the recently appointed Executive Officer of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board and a more functional regional NRM group is expected to emerge over the next twelve months.

Sub-option 1.2: Maintain current system with some specific improvements including stronger links to other planning processes

Continuation of the current system with some specific improvements. In particular, it proposes stronger links between existing regional NRM bodies and regional planning advisory committees (where they exist) to focus government and community effort on agreed regional results. This can be achieved by developing the necessary policy and administrative arrangements to encourage more coordination between the two bodies and define their respective plan-making and implementation roles. This may involve measures such as amending the terms of reference of some RPACs.

The extent to which regional NRM bodies and these committees should be linked would be determined on a region-by-region basis depending on local circumstances, such as the alignment between the boundaries of NRM bodies and RPACs. Other specific improvements that could be addressed under this option include:

- Strengthening the role for regional NRM bodies in community engagement and program delivery processes of state government agencies
- Strengthening the functions of regional NRM bodies to review and improve the quality of regional NRM plans and monitoring progress against targets
- Providing greater recognition and support of the voluntary sector
- Helping the voluntary sector to encourage better NRM practices improving the corporate governance of regional NRM bodies and their ability to engage with and build the skills, knowledge and relationships of regional communities.

Sub-option 1.2

In the context of current knowledge and without the benefit of further investigations of other options this option is probably the most likely to achieve wide support within the community and from local government.

There is little doubt that the current system needs to be improved primarily as a result of its immaturity rather than as a result of major faults in the general delivery concept. There has been little time to this point to develop relationships, define roles and establish linkages with other planning processes and bodies. Regional NRM bodies have been engaged in the 'business' of achieving functionality and have had no capacity to do anything but meet the requirements imposed by the Commonwealth (and state) with respect to regional plan development and administration of interim funding and projects.

As NRM regions are based on water catchments the realignment of boundaries to coincide with RPAC areas will only be practical in a limited number of cases. Where RPACs do not exist or where there is significant overlap between NRM regions and RPAC areas it may be more practical to regionally coordinate the engagement of local government and develop frameworks and processes for the interaction of local government and regional NRM bodies in the critical areas of growth planning, development assessment, land use constraints and conservation and preservation of significant natural assets.

The role of NRM bodies, in conjunction with RPACs and/or local government networks needs to be expanded to integrate the various social and economic aspects of sustainability that accompany natural resource management. RPACs and local government networks require support to engage in NRM matters particularly where there is an expectation that responsibility for delivery lies with these bodies. Without the necessary resources there will be a reluctance or inaction with a resulting diminution of relationships.

Sub-option 1.3: Introduce full integration of regional NRM bodies with RPACs

Integrating regional NRM bodies into the system of planning established under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. This could involve establishing regional NRM bodies as regional planning advisory committee working groups—where RPACs exist. It may require amending the Act to make specific provision for these groups, and formally recognise them as sub-committees of RPACs, which have been established to undertake specific tasks.

As these committees have a planning role, this option proposes that regional NRM bodies would be responsible for the implementation of regional NRM plans and on-ground actions, monitoring and reporting. Funding would flow to them to decide how best to deliver on the regional plan's actions. The bodies would be the implementers of the NRM component of integrated regional planning frameworks developed by the RPACs, which cover all issues in the region.

By admission, in the discussion paper, there are eight Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPACs) under the Integrated Planning Act (IPA) in Queensland which include 60% of local governments and only 40% of the area of the state. While 95% of the state's population is covered by RPACs that leaves 5% of the population managing 60% of the states natural resources. From a natural resource management perspective the integration of regional NRM bodies, which cover 100% of the state, with RPACs, which cover 40% of the state, is not a practical or feasible option.

RPACs are more likely to work effectively in areas with denser populations and therefore well-resourced local governments, such as in South East Queensland. Local government in sparsely populated regional and rural areas are less likely to see the necessity of RPACs and are less likely to voluntarily participate in RPACs due to a paucity of resources and capacity.

Whereas full integration of regional NRM bodies with RPACs as a sub-committee may be feasible in South East Queensland it is more likely to be a recipe for disaster in other parts of Queensland. Sub-option 1.3 and sub-option 1.2 could be combined with full integration applying in SE Qld and better linkages between planning processes instigated in other regions.

Ultimately the role and function of RPACs may need to be reassessed for rural areas as it is doubtful that in their current form they meet the needs of non-urban areas. A bigger picture approach may also need to be investigated whereby a sustainability framework is developed for Queensland, which looks at integration and coordination of all other forms of government, industry and community activity especially with respect to impacts on the natural assets of the state which underpin our social, cultural and economic well-being.

Option 2 Providing a statutory basis for regional NRM bodies

Queensland's regional NRM bodies be provided with a statutory basis, as has occurred in Victoria and South Australia.

Sub-option 2.1: Establish regional NRM bodies under legislation without statutory powers

Formally establishing regional NRM bodies under an appropriate piece of legislation and maintaining their main role of coordinating the development and implementation of regional NRM plans. This could be done through existing or new legislation. Under this option, regional NRM bodies would not have any specific statutory powers, but legislation could:

- Establish statutory regional NRM bodies and define certain matters such as their membership, appointment processes, operating procedures and accountabilities
- Define the bodies' roles, responsibilities and relationships with other statutory entities
- Prescribe requirements for community engagement, monitoring, evaluation and public reporting.

Some of the improvements outlined in sub-option 1.2 could still apply to sub-option 2.1

Sub-option 2.1

The provision of a statutory basis for Queensland's regional NRM bodies has merits in administrative and governance terms and had it been instigated prior to the establishment of the current arrangements may have served to improve the way regional bodies have operated to date.

Having a statutory basis may also have helped to define relationships between regional NRM bodies and other organisations and statutory planning processes. Currently the recognition of regional NRM bodies is largely based on the knowledge of their role as the potential conduit for NRM funds to a region. This role has the potential for creating dysfunctional relationships as well as altruistic partnerships.

There is no simple way to determine whether it would be useful to provide a statutory basis for regional NRM bodies in Queensland. If such a proposal has a possibility of working a significant amount of background information needs to be gathered and disseminated, and consultation with regional NRM bodies undertaken. Matters that need to be investigated and addressed include:

- How statutory arrangements have operated in other states in Australia;
- How existing regional NRM bodies could continue to function under proposed legislation;
- How it is intended to define matters such as membership, appointment processes, operating procedures and accountabilities;
- How it is intended to define requirements for community engagement, monitoring, evaluation and public reporting;
- The framework for interaction with other statutory entities and planning processes;
- How the autonomy and independence of regional NRM bodies can be maintained;
- What arrangements would be put in place to ensure the continuity of support and resources required to operate a statutory body.

Such an option could result in a greater certainty of tenure for regional NRM bodies particularly if backed with sufficient state resources to continue to engage community in a meaningful way. The main disadvantage of the option is the potential for the move to be seen as a means to control the operations of regional NRM groups thereby making them a de facto government department or additional level of bureaucracy.

Sub-option 2.2: Establish new statutory bodies with statutory powers

New statutory bodies would be established, with statutory roles and powers. These would have responsibilities for developing and implementing regional NRM plans. This option would require amending or introducing legislation to establish the statutory authorities and to define their roles, responsibilities, powers, reporting and funding arrangements. This sort of arrangement has been adopted in South Australia and Victoria.

Unlike sub-option 2.1, such statutory bodies could have some specific powers and associated accountabilities. For example, they could be given the capacity to receive funds raised through levies such as a local government levy. They could also be given referral agency status for development assessment under the IPA, which means they would play some role in the development assessment process under the Act. If they had such powers, they would also need a higher level of responsibility in terms of accountability and reporting.

Sub-option 2.2

As with sub-option 2.1 this option has the potential to alienate and disenfranchise community if it was instigated without the proper level of investigation and consultation. The addition of statutory powers could also prove to be divisive as this may be perceived as a regulatory role rather than a voluntary role. There may be reluctance and resistance on the part of community volunteers to take on what is seen as a regulatory role. Again this option may be perceived as the formation of another arm of government rather than a legitimate extension of community participation in 'government' jurisdictions.

There is a significant cultural difference between regulation and volunteerism. As a generalisation Queenslanders, and especially people in rural and regional areas, are wary of 'authority' and dislike imposed management regimes. A serious commitment to the background investigations and consultation mentioned in comments on sub-option 2.1 would need to be made for this option to have any chance of success.

Option 3 Government delivery of regional NRM with community advisory bodies

Under this option, state government support for the existing regional NRM bodies would cease at the end of the NAPSWQ program (and similarly with the Trust program if it were to end). Unless the Australian Government (or other investors) continued to provide funding, the regional NRM bodies would change from planning and implementation to advising on government-led NRM. The type of advice could range from identifying regional priorities to commenting on regional NRM plans. Delivery of regional NRM would revert to the various statutory and non-statutory planning processes that existed before the commencement of the NAPSWQ and Trust bilateral agreements. Such government-led activity could still be based on a regional NRM plan. Responsibility for community capacity building, monitoring and reporting would lie with government.

Option 3

The delivery of regional NRM with community support is only likely to work if community sees itself as an equal partner. We do not believe that the model based on government delivery of regional NRM with community advisory bodies will have the support of community, as it will be seen as a reversion to the 'old way of doing business', where decisions are made by government independently of the community with the advisory bodies established as a token gesture rather than an operational entity.

Option 4 Government delivery of regional NRM

This option is similar to Option 3, but without specific provision for a community advisory body for regional NRM. At the end of current NAPSWO program—and if the Trust program were also to end—the state government would wind up support for the community-based regional delivery arrangements. However, existing statutory and non-statutory NRM planning activities would continue. Under this option, the government could still seek to align its work with regional NRM plans where appropriate. Government would be responsible for monitoring and reporting. The community would still be involved in government-led planning via public consultation or the establishment of issue-specific community advisory bodies.

Option 4

Landcare and similar community based NRM initiatives were launched as a response to the generally held view that government alone could not effect the change necessary to turn around the degradation of Australia's natural assets. In many cases it can be shown that government policy has unwittingly led to the degradation of these resources. To maintain the goodwill and energy of the community in the effort to improve natural resource management practices a genuine partnership approach is required. Option 4 would be seen as disempowering the community and far from the concept of partnership.

It is unlikely that option 3 or 4 would achieve improved NRM outcomes as there would be more resistance to community involvement due to the disempowerment experienced through the perceived withdrawal of support. This would signal a return to the government as regulator model and remove the principle of partnership built up through Landcare, catchment management and regional NRM planning over the last fifteen years. Just as retrograde motion is a matter of relativity withdrawal of support will be perceived by the community as a backward step.

Conclusion

Guiding the process of reviewing options for future community engagement in regional natural resource management needs to done as fully consultative process with regional NRM bodies and other significant stakeholders. This will not be an easy task as regional NRM bodies are currently immersed in getting their 'houses' in order and simultaneously preparing for the roll out of regional plans including development of detail and arrangements to support regional investment strategies.

Of the suggested options Sub-option 1.2 is the most supported by HESROC and Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) Councils. The support is based in part on the absence of any substantial information on benefits of other suggested options and the desire to avoid the creation of further bureaucracies which are perceived to be associated with option 2.

Sub option 1.3 is not supported in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region as there is no RPAC in existence that covers the region and 'excising' the Townsville Thuringowa sub region for inclusion in an RPAC, corresponding to the Townsville Thuringowa Strategy Plan area, would be seen as an alienating move rather than inclusive.

Options 3 and 4 are seen as a withdrawal of support for community NRM, regardless of the mechanisms than may be put in place in the way of 'advisory' bodies.

Option 2, some form, may be supported more widely if background investigations and consultation are conducted prior to any decisions being made to introduce or amend legislation. Roles, responsibilities and resourcing arrangements all need to be defined and agreed for such options to be accepted and owned.

Hopefully the discussion paper is the start of an inclusive process that will see all regional NRM stakeholders involved in the decision making process that set up sustainable regional NRM arrangements for the future.

Appendix F

LGAQ 2005 Environment and NRM Conference

LGAQ 2005 Environment & Natural Resource Management Conference Notes

The 3rd Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Environment & Natural Resource Management Conference was held at Gladstone from 29 June to 1 July 2005. The conference was organised through the LGAQ managed project CB01.

John Gunn, Project Manager and network facilitator for the Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) (the Network) attended the conference on behalf of HESROC and the Network. The following is a brief report on the conference and the main issues and areas of interest for local government in the Burdekin Dry Tropics.

Day One (29 June 2005)

Natural Resource Management Technical Tour

- Byelee Wetlands – former sand extraction site being rehabilitated for wildlife habitat area and environmental education site. Rain on previous days prevented vehicle access to the site so an overview was provided from the ridge above the site. Still in development stages and public access arrangements not yet in place.
- Gladstone (Native) Botanical Gardens – tour of the gardens where work started in 1980s. Based on local/regional vegetation in and around the old dam site, which formerly served as Gladstone water supply. *[Environment Protection Tour – the Big End of Town. Concurrent tour of industrial complexes]*

Natural Resource Management Information Sharing Forum

Wet Tropics NRM Region (FNQNRM)

Ray (Eacham Shire Council) and Mike Berwick (Douglas Shire Council) provided their combined experience of involvement in the Wet Tropics NRM Region (FNQNRM).

Formed in October 2003 as a nine member 'skills' based Board with selection criteria used to evaluate candidates. Board consists of:

Independent Chair - Mike Berwick

Industry

Upper Herbert catchment

Conservation sector

Coast and Marine area

Catchment management

Indigenous

World Heritage area

Local Government – Ray (selected from FNQROC – ten Councils)

Main points:

- Issues with communication back to local government.
- FNQROC responded to NRM 'green paper' and suggested a minimum of two local government representatives be included in regional NRM group boards.
- Need a template for local government for investing in NRM as there is still little knowledge of the links between LG activities and broader NRM.

Condamine Alliance

Bill McCutcheon (Chinchilla Shire Council) has been involved in catchment and water management including the Condamine Balonne Water Management Group established in 1980s. Also involved in the Condamine Catchment Management Group prior to the formation of the Condamine Alliance under new NAP and NHT arrangements.

Condamine Alliance consists of:

Independent Chair (paid part-time position),

2 Eastern Downs Regional Planning Advisory Committee representatives (formerly known as EDROC RPAC),
2 Catchment Management representatives,
2 Landcare representatives,
Condamine Balonne Water Management Group,
Indigenous,
Conservation sector,
Industry-Commerce Queensland.

Main points:

- Received no help from the Commonwealth or State;
- People were employed to build the plan rather than using consultants (greater ownership);
- Financial issues plagued the process i.e. receiving funding 'on time';
- A variety of people/politics/personality issues marred progress;
- Public, community and Landcare groups were suspicious of the new regime;
- Guidelines kept changing while planning proceeded;
- LG wanted the NRM component of the Regional Growth Strategy to be the Regional NRM Plan, however this was not achieved due to time constraints
- Have appointed a LG liaison officer for the region – necessary for LG involvement;
- NRM 'green paper' is premature and creates uncertainty about continuity of arrangements.

Queensland Murray Darling Committee (QMDC)

Peter Blundell (Stanthorpe Shire Council). There are twelve LGs in the QMDC region with four of the LGs being in the Border Rivers section. Darling Downs LG Association (ROC) elects a representative to the QMDC with another rep elected by the Borders Rivers LGs. The QMDC is a representative body with two LG reps. It has a eight person executive committee. Five of the eight have local government experience as current or past LG people.

Main points:

- QMDC has two LG liaison officers 80% funded by the regional body and 20% by LGs;
- Funding arrangements raises the question of who determines the roles of the liaison officers (needs to be LGs);
- QMDC has an indicative allocation of \$18m for the period to 2007;
- QMDC subsidised costs of attending LGAQ conference;
- QMDC has 52 staff and has adopted the concept of doing all projects 'in-house'.

SEQNRM and SEQWC

Chris (Caboolture Council) NORSROC

South East Queensland NRM and the South East Queensland Western Catchments (SEQWC) have been operating as separate groups due primarily to the SEQWC being in the NAP region (aligned with Burnett Mary region). The groups are amalgamating to rationalise operations. SEQWC consists of the Bremer, Lockyer, Stanley and Upper Brisbane River catchments.

Main points:

- Sectors have a high capacity to organise and agitate;
- Need sub regions to improve practicality of communications and consultation;
- Competition is still a major issue in community NRM;
-

SEQWC

Geoff Faulkner (Ipswich City Council – Manager Conservation and Catchments)

The SEQWC Board consists of;

Nine Mayors (WESROC Councils plus Kilcoy, Crows Nest and),

Three Integrated Catchment Management group representatives,
Conservation (Greening Australia),
Industry,
Old Commerce'
Old Dairy,
Old Fruit and Vegetable Growers (Growcom),
Indigenous.

Main points:

- Governance initially provided by Ipswich City Council;
- Meetings revolve around LGs;
- Have a LG liaison officer;
- Have 11 –12 staff;
- The soon to be amalgamated group (SEQNRM and SEQWC) will have a seven member Board;
- Moreton Bay Catchments Partnership has not yet joined the amalgamation.

Burnet Mary NRM

Trevor (Munduberra Shire)

Skill based Board selected by an independent body and consists of:

Independent Chair (Harry Bonano),

Three community representatives;

Three LG representatives;

Three industry representatives;

Indigenous (selected by Traditional Owners – unsure of the process).

Main points:

- Currently looking project delivery following plan building;
- 28 LGs in the region so use a cluster arrangement (4 x 7 LGs) for meetings/consultation;
- MOUs exist for operation and interaction of LG clusters;
- Clusters provide 50% of funding for LG liaison officers (4) with other from regional group;
- Liaison officers are controlled by LG panels (under MOU);
- 400 members of the BMNRM group;
- Issues with representativeness as Mary and Burnett are two separate catchments.

Cape York NRM

Kathy Waldron (Cook Shire)

The Cape York NRM area is based on the old Cape York P Land Use Study (CYPLUS) area, which started in 1992 (\$8m). Most of the funding went to government agencies and a total of 44 reports were written.

The Cape York Regional Advisory Group (CYRAG) was formed in 1995 to develop a management strategy. The report had 30 strategies and around 600 recommendations, including a variety of socio-economic components. Body consisted of 50% indigenous representatives and 50% from peak bodies. The Secretariat (10 people) was run by state government (EPA).

When NHT started the Regional NRM Strategy was developed based partly on the Management Plan. It had ten overarching strategies and the Cape York Regional Advisory Panel (CYRAP) was formed to oversee the process and the administration of the potential \$40m spending.

In 1997 Cook Shire developed a Pest Management Plan. The NHT process was fairly slow so funds were not generally available. A Regional Pest Management Plan, based on the Cook PMP, was developed as part of the NHT Strategy with Cook Shire as the administrator of NHT funds, and the Cape York Pest and Feral Animal Program instigated (\$3-4m). It took too long to get money on the ground and many stakeholders dropped off. Cook Shire kept it going and the NHT was extended via a capacity building program.

With the new arrangements the move is to a community based Board, with an interim advisory group until the Board can be established.

Main points:

- Momentum lost due to issues associated with the funding process;
- Indigenous community engagement also lost due to ratio of planning and to lack of action.

Open session

Main points:

- ALGA and state LGAs will meet with Commonwealth in September 2005 to discuss key issues;
- LGAQ will develop a document stating position of LGs in Qld in regional NRM;
- Adequate consideration of LG in future regional arrangements is required as it does not seem to have happened to date with the exception of one or two regions in the state;
- There is a fear of responsibility for NRM being passed on to LG without provision of adequate financial resources – long term Commonwealth commitment is required;
- A display of unity is required for maximum impact i.e. LG and all sectors;
- NRM is a national issue requiring specific and continual funding e.g. National environmental levy;
- Particular areas e.g. Great Barrier Reef catchments, seem to bear a greater 'national' NRM responsibility and need additional 'national' assistance to ensure natural assets are protected;
- Plans require legislative backing to be effective as they can be/are overridden by political agendas;
- Caution required on any legislative backing as it could result in alienation of the community;
- Legislation in NSW does not have good coordination with LG and the model is not working well without the LG involvement;
- Funding timeframes with regional NRM need to be addressed;
- DNRM processes are dinosaurs and based 'no risk' so funds are incredibly slow to be distributed;
- Trust issues exist between Commonwealth, State and Regional NRM Groups;
- Qld Regional NRM Group Collective is not supportive of a legislative base for NRM groups as it believes the 'voluntary' system is more inclusive and workable;
- Qld is pushing for a national environment levy to fund regional NRM as an ongoing item;
- Needs to be some way of paying for ecosystem services i.e. environmental accounting;
- Tasmania is looking towards greater integration of NRM and breaking down the silos between various departments and disciplines i.e. moving towards sustainability with NRM as a component e.g. incorporating energy and waste management and other components;
- Main points from Townsville City Council involvement in regional NRM in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region include;
 - Limited understanding of regional NRM within LG;
 - Community group domination of processes i.e. no partnership building, and consequential competitive nature of regional NRM delivery;
 - Personality and politics influencing decisions rather than practical applications and partnerships;
 - Level of responsibility of regional NRM Boards is not generally well understood;
 - LG has been largely 'left out' of the regional NRM planning processes despite the recognition by many of the significant role played by LG in NRM;
 - The regional NRM 'rules' keep changing which disrupts continuity and undermines developing partnerships;
 - Involvement of LG in regional NRM is being facilitated in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region through an initiative of HESROC i.e. the Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM);
 - HESROC submission on the 'green paper' supported option 1.2.
- Qld government departments are too separate and require a great deal of inter agency integration as well as integration with regional NRM groups for NRM to start to work effectively;
- Needs to be a state wide prioritisation of investment in NRM;
- Benchmarks and measuring improvement in NRM is not practical in the short term so surrogates such as behaviour change and uptake of BMP etc are likely to be used to monitor change;
- Communication back to LG from regional NRM groups is a failing is major requirement;

- Need to ensure the processes are in the hands of regional groups and not state government;
- Communication is the main problem in the field of regional NRM;

[Environment Protection Partnership Forum – concurrent]

Day Two (30 June 2005)

Welcome and Opening Address by **Cr Paul Bell**, President LGAQ and ALGA

NRM matters and projects involving LG include:

- CB01 Capacity Building Project;
 - Facilitated Desert Channels Regional Pest Management Strategy;
 - Guidelines for Integrating NRM in Corporate, Strategic and Operational Plans ready for release and workshops planned for August and September 2005.
- Review of NRM options paper 'green paper' carried out by LGAQ and option 1.2 supported.
- EP Act review as issues with roles and responsibilities as well as capacity and resourcing to carry out tasks. No arrangements have been entered into between LGAQ and EPA. A discussion paper will be released in August with time for comment and assessment of comments before any decision is reached.
- Looking at sustainable purchasing options for LG.
- National packaging Covenant is being progressed with Greg Hallam of LGAQ Chair for the next two years.

Welcome to Gladstone by **Cr Peter Corones**, Mayor of Gladstone City Council

- In the last decade the population of Gladstone has doubled to around 50,000 people after coming off a base of 10,000 in the 1960s.
- 12% of Australian exports and 34.6% of Queensland exports, by volume, are moved through Gladstone Port facilities.
- Doing water recycling in partnership with Comalco.
- Port Curtis Catchment Management Plan is being integrated with the Planning Scheme.
- Will be incorporating NRM and environmental issues into the Corporate Plan.
- Have an open space and development control strategy to ensure natural areas and parkland is retained.

Ministerial Address by Desley Boyle MP, Minister for Environment and Local Government and Planning

- Queensland is growing through emigration by 80,000 people per year i.e. 35,000 houses.
- Planners are being 'lost' to the corporate sector leaving LGs under resourced.
- Priority Infrastructure Plans will be the next wave requirement for LGs after IPA Planning Schemes are in place.
- Energy use is a big issue to tackle (air conditioners) and housing design needs to improve – potential changes to the building code to address the issue.
- Water is the other emerging issue for Queensland especially with recent dry weather.
- EPA will introduce 'pre conferencing' to look at proposed developments prior to the design phase.
- EPA also looking at water, wastewater and energy efficient design matters.
- The review (EPA and LG) of roles and responsibilities will be completed by next year. The draft LGAQ / EPA MOU is on the LGAQ website.
- Erosion and sediment control is an issue and more power is required for action at LG level.
- Looking for suggestions on how to deal with erosion and sedimentation from agriculture.
- Conference in Cairns in September on Erosion and Sediment.
- Vegetation Mapping REs are online.
- State of the Environment Report is online.

- \$700m is available for water and wastewater infrastructure primarily for 'reef' areas/coastal LGs especially for reuse projects and water management plans to reduce leakage/losses (presumably from the National Water Initiative).
- From 2008 \$60m will be available over a three-year period for stormwater management, erosion control and flood mitigation.

Keynote Speaker - Dr Noel Purcell, **Westpac** Group General Manager

Discussed the move by Westpac to incorporate sustainability as part of its core business and the benefits accruing as a result. Commenced the journey in 1992 with the development of Environmental Policy which was reviewed and updated in 2001 to manage the environmental footprint of the company including the development of an EMS under ISO 14001. The main areas being addressed are: paper, travel (vehicles), water and energy. Looking at supply chain management and assessment of suppliers to see if improvements can be made. If suppliers are not committed to sustainable practices then they change suppliers.

Use Equator Principles for project finance (based on World bank and International Finance Corporation guidelines) to ensure projects are financed in a socially and environmentally acceptable way.

Climate change impacts are seen as a potential risk in financing and need to be taken into account in projects. Opportunities are also emerging as a result with new markets opening e.g. regulatory risk transfer.

Some environmental challenges include; short-termism; climate change; biodiversity; land and water degradation. Example of sustainability BedZed project – carbon neutral energy production in Beddington, England.

Sponsor Presentation - Tony Perrin, **Toyota**

There has been a move towards smaller cars especially overseas and to a lesser extent in Australia. In Australia general community has a greater proportion of smaller cars than big cars, with government using more big cars and LG using even more big cars proportionally than government.

Sponsor Presentation - Cath Robson, **Ergon** Energy

Looking to power 100,000 homes with renewable energy. 5,000 tonnes of macadamia shells are burnt on the Sunshine Coast as part of biofuel energy production to power 12,000 homes.

Plant smart program with Greening Australia.

- Keynote Speaker – Andrew Skeat, **GBRMPA**
- GBRM ark established in 1975 and World Heritage listed in 198 .
- Dugongs are now at around 3% of the population 150 years ago.
- Whales are down to 3,000 compared to 20,000 – 30,000.
- There are around 500 vessels in the trawl fishing industry compared to an estimated \$4.3b annual income from reef-based tourism.
- There are 54,000 private water craft (Queensland) and around 720,000 people living in the reef catchments i.e. hardly any compared to other reef countries.
- Most other coral reefs are in serious decline or already decimated.
- 2-4 degree rise in (sea) temperature is equivalent to 0.1 –0.4 metre rise in sea level.
- In 1998 around 5% of the reef was bleached and died, due to sea temperature rise.
- Algae control by herbivores (fish, urchins etc) is vital to maintain reef health (Caribbean example).
- \$7m available for Coastal Catchments Initiative.
- \$15m for Coastal wetlands Protection Program.
- New GBRMPA offices to be set up at Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton to improve community engagement.
- Reef Guardians Schools (150) has a steering committee involving LG. HESROC will be involved in a trial.

Guest Speaker – **John Lees**

Motivational speaker looking at performance in business and the workplace. Emphasised the importance of the attitude of people, the use of information, learning as a life long process and the enjoying not enduring (attitude). Give knowledge – learn from mistakes – seek problems (rather than letting them find you) – practice realism not ‘positive thinking’ – seek value not success.

Information is of no use unless you have a question in mind.

Natural Resource Management Stream
‘Green Paper’ Future Regional NRM Arrangements Review
Ed Wensing Commonwealth Government
Olwyn Crimp Queensland Government

Malcolm Petrie LGAQ

Main points/issues:

Capacity of regional bodies;
Lack of knowledge of LG NRM role;
Lack of understanding of engagement;
Dissatisfaction with arrangements - ROC/RPACs;
Too much planning and not enough on ground action;
Governance and accountability of regional NRM bodies;
Confusion over regions and boundaries;
Devolution of funds i.e. not available to LG;
Fragmented NHT and NAP programs.

The 2002 LGAQ Conference supported the concept of using RPACs as regional NRM bodies. Met with peak bodies in 02/03 to refine the RPAC delivery model but this has not been progressed.

In April 2005 LGAQ conducted a review and sought feedback on regional NRM arrangements. Some of the points from the review included:

- LG representatives need to be on the regional NRM Boards;
- LG should be represented on the Regional Coordinating Committees;
- NRM plans should go to RPACs for endorsement;
- Local Government Finance Act 1994 could be used for funding arrangements.

Could use LG Act Div 3, s 452 (b) and have NRM bodies as advisory groups to ROCs.

A review of the ‘green paper’ was undertaken using LG in several regional NRM group areas; Border Rivers; SEQ; COLGA; FNQROC, Mackay Whitsunday. As a result the submission from LGAQ included the main points that:

- Joint Steering Committee (JSC) should include LG;
- LG should be included in Regional Coordinating Committees;
- Each region should determine the level of LG representation on Boards;
- Sub option 1.2 was supported at this stage with potential for option 2 in the future;
- The regional NRM scene is still evolving and a decision on future arrangements should not be made yet.

Round Table Discussions

A series of round table discussions were held on various subjects. John Gunn was involved with a group preparing a NRM Communiqué based on points made during the Open Session of the **Natural Resource Management Information Sharing Forum** held on day one. Mike Berwick (Douglas Shire Council) and Michellé Wallace (Old Regional NRM Group Collective) had prepared a draft communiqué for consideration and amendment around table.

The amended communiqué would then be passed onto the LGAO NRM Reference Group for consideration and debate and for subsequent consideration at the LGAO state conference as a 'template' for taking to the Commonwealth.

Day Three (1 July 2005)

Natural Resource Management Stream

Ecosystem Services – Buying a Better Environment

Geoff Faulkner, Ipswich City Council

Richard Collins, Redland Shire Council

Tina Manners, Brisbane City Council

Local Government – A Recipe for Successful Participation in Regional NRM

Scott Hardy, Whitsunday Shire Council

Meryl Eddie, Maranoa Balonne LG NRM Officer

Damien Grace, Richmond Valley Council

Partnership Keynote Speaker – John Quinn, **EPA Sustainable Industries**

- ecoBiz launched in June 2004.
- Consumers not willing to pay more than 4% for sustainable products/services (survey results).
- The Socially Responsible Index (Dow Jones) routinely outperforms the ordinary SX index. Westpac is listed on the SRI.
- ecoBiz Toolbox includes up to 30% rebate for capital costs to convert to sustainable systems e.g. Buderim Ginger water and power savings.
- LG in ecoBiz – Redland, Mackay, Townsville, Toowoomba. Ergon also.
- Old Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund to be extended to water initiatives this year. Used for R & D for sustainable technology. About to call another round.
- Preparing state guidelines for water recycling at present.
- Sustainable Industry Programs – farm management systems.
- Looking for regional leadership for sustainability.
- Promoting complimentary industries i.e. use waste from one industry as an input for other industries and products.
- Looking to develop partnerships for sustainable options/concepts.

Powerlink Presentation – Keith Callaghan

Greening Projects especially Greening Lockyer and Townsville Thuringowa Community Environment Fund.

Guest Speaker – **Peter Thurin**

Motivational speaker – achieving through a positive attitude.

Close

All in all a useful conference with a number of areas to investigate further as opportunities for LG in the Burdekin Dry Tropics to engage in NRM and sustainability.

Key points from the conference and interaction with other LG involved in NRM:

- Burdekin Dry Tropics (BDT) is in a similar position to other parts of the state;
- The BDT Regional Local Government Network (NRM) is a practical model for engagement of LG in regional NRM arrangements and delivery of support;
- Regional NRM groups provide the majority of resources to support LG engagement in NRM:

- Good communication processes are the key to effective involvement of LG in regional NRM;
- LG involvement in regional NRM has to be determined at the regional level;
- Regional NRM is still very young and needs to be forgiven for its mistakes. LGs with the capacity can act as mentors and assist other LGs and regional groups to engage all LGs in regional NRM.

The main issues and needs raised at the LGAQ Environment and NRM Conference, as captured in these notes, will be incorporated into the Issues and Needs Report being finalised as part of the product package for the Burdekin Dry Tropics component of the CB07 project.

Appendix G

Summary Needs

NRM area specific needs

Pest Management
Coordinated regional arrangements with cross regional consideration
Mapping of pest animal distribution
Mapping extent of weeds
Property pest management plans for coastal areas
Investigate herbicide subsidy as an incentive
Increase community support through activities in urban areas
Practical assistance with extension staff / pest management officers
Maintain weed free areas
Funds for projects to hit weed hot spots
A scheme to engage landowners in weed management
Planning and NRM Activities
Information sharing for strategic planning, planning schemes and development assessment
Development of NRM relevant Codes for inclusion in IPA planning schemes
Identification of potential projects and priority issue areas
Assistance with funding applications for NRM related initiatives
Assistance for western Councils to find better ways to deliver NRM
Identify potential for integration of NRM activities
Template for local government for investing in NRM
Assistance, direction and practical examples with input to planning and project development
Capacity building at both local and regional levels;
Definition of the benefits of community NRM.
Greater consideration of social and economic issues in NRM;
Recognition of the importance of people and their socio-economic circumstances
GIS and Mapping
Assistance with GIS and mapping to record experiential knowledge
Assistance with GIS and updating layers and themes
GIS training through property planning process or some other project
Integration of mapping and on ground works with Council systems
Link NRM mapping to planning schemes and development assessment processes
Waste Management;
Advance to full recycling systems in rural areas
Local waste management plans as components of regional plans
Regional involvement through LAWMAC, WHaMBROC and HESROC
Review of recycling opportunities and potential regional arrangements
Urban areas
Restoration and protection of coastal wetlands near urban areas
Generic stormwater quality management template for rural Councils
Integrate stormwater quality and biodiversity outcomes
Funding to investigate and implement effluent recycling and reuse possibilities
Stormwater management and reuse projects
Water, wastewater and energy efficient design
More erosion and sediment control power at LG level
River management
Integrated projects with River Improvement Trusts (Don and Burdekin Rivers).
Riparian fencing, off stream watering points and management of riparian areas
Rubber vine control to maintain riparian vegetation;
Biodiversity
Land for Wildlife cross-regional projects (e.g. Mackay Whitsunday)

Identification and mapping of priority biodiversity areas
Open space review
Rural / Land Management
Options to deal with erosion and sedimentation from agriculture
Provision of best management practice for NRM