

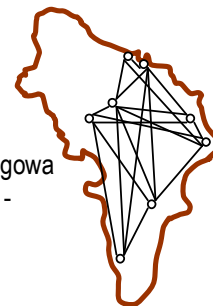
## Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)

### 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

- 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

- Regional groups are required to prepare a Regional NRM Plan and Investment Strategy
- The format and contents of the Plan are guided by Intergovernmental and Bilateral Agreements
- The Plans have to be accredited by a Joint Steering Committee – Commonwealth and State government representatives – before funds become available
- 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 (see Figure 1) 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.*

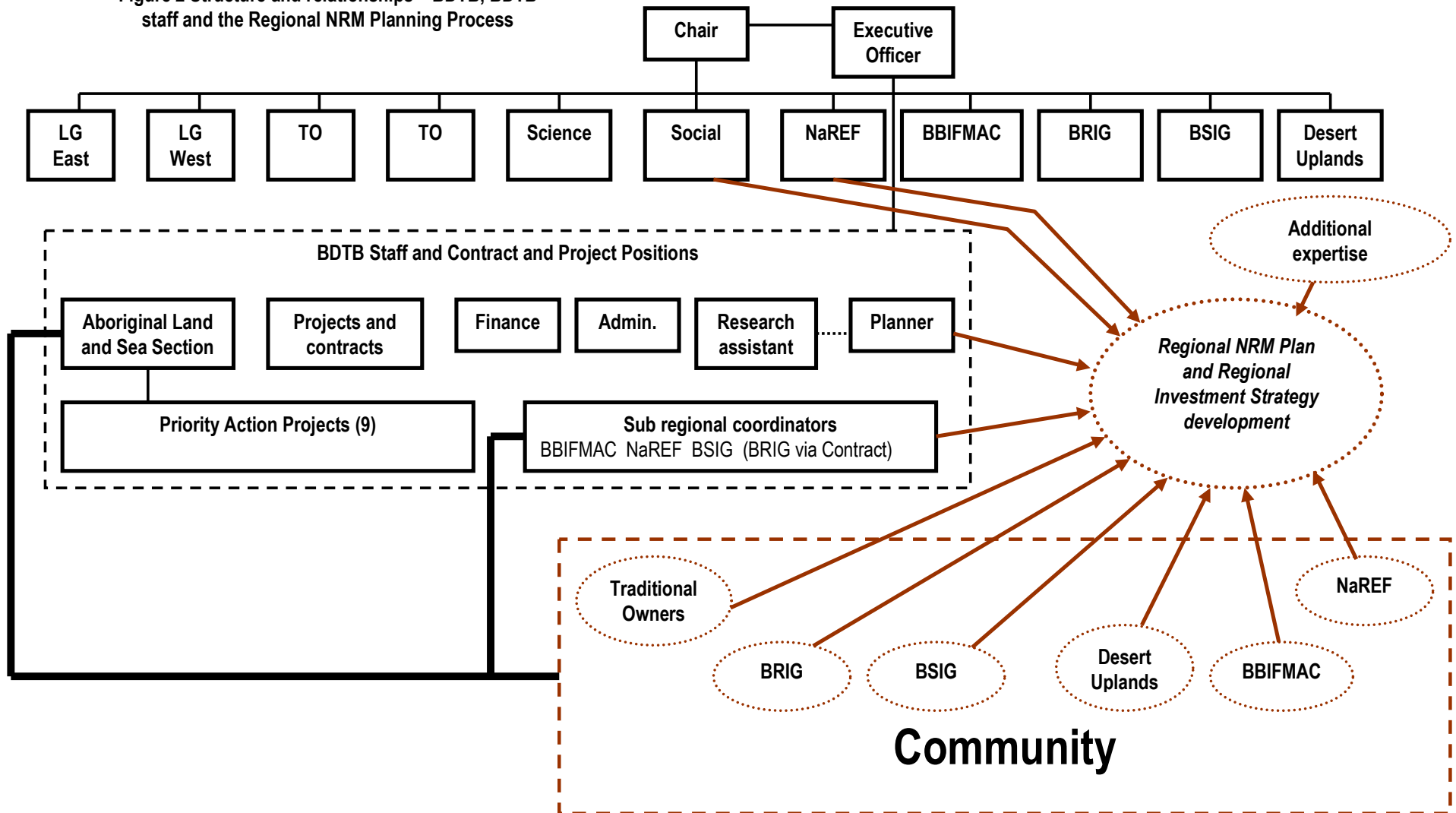
*It was also noted that a significant portion of Herberton Shire was within the Dry Tropics area along with small portions of Etheridge and Flinders Shires. Cross regional contact is also important between regional NRM groups and local government to ensure adequate consideration of all issues.*



Figure 1 : Local Government Areas of the Burdekin Dry Tropics region.

(Source: Map compiled by CSIRO from ABS, 1996a).

Figure 2 Structure and relationships – BDTB, BDTB staff and the Regional NRM Planning Process

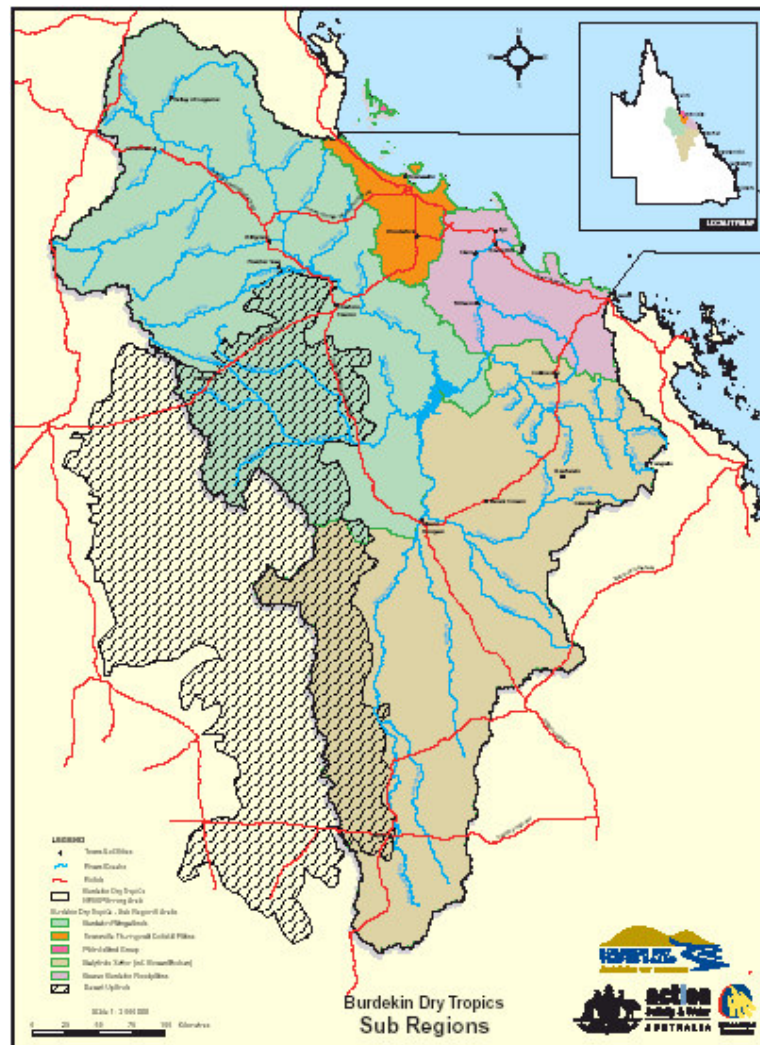




The structure of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board was discussed (see Figure 2) including the need for support to be provided to the local government members. The current composition of the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board is provided below. It was noted that the position of Chair has not yet been filled.

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

Figure 3 BDT sub regions



*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.*

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

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