
**Queensland Regional NRM Groups Collective and
Queensland Water and Land Carers**

Memorandum of Understanding



Statement of Common Purpose (MOU)

Queensland Regional NRM Groups Collective and Queensland Water and Land Carers

Who we are.

Queensland Regional NRM Groups Collective (RGC)

We are a Company Limited by Guarantee who has as its member base the 14 Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Bodies in Queensland. The Board consists of the Chairs of 13 of the Regional Bodies, with the Torres Strait Regional Authority an Associate Member.

The Collective was formed in 2002 to improve the state-wide delivery of regional NRM outcomes in partnership with industry, community and government, and to act as a representative body for NRM in Queensland by providing a single, strong voice for its members. The Collective is funded by these members – the 14 Regional Natural Resource Management Bodies in Queensland, and the Queensland State Government and Australian Government through Caring for Our Country.

The Collective supports our regional NRM groups to deliver sustainability outcomes by coordinating statewide programs, providing mentoring and leadership, advocacy for improved investment in natural resource management, and identifying areas for training and improvement. The Collective provides a cohesive forum to: collaborate, support, advocate for and add value to regional groups to affect positive environmental and social changes at the regional level.

The Regional Groups Collective works collaboratively with other peak bodies with an interest in natural resource management, regional sustainability and conservation and is often called upon to provide comment on government policy and consultation processes.

Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC)

Queensland Water and Land Carers Inc. (QWaLC) is the peak body for NRM volunteers in Queensland. We are an independent, non-government, not-for-profit organisation. QWaLC formed in April 2004 to fill an important need in supporting the valuable work of volunteer community groups in the Natural Resource Management sector in the State.

The organisation is answerable to our membership, which is made up of a broad range of volunteer NRM groups. Members include: Landcare, Coastcare, Waterwatch, Bushcare, Catchment Associations, conservation groups, Regional Bodies and sub-regional organisations.

The organisation is incorporated and governed by a constitution that sets out its objectives, powers and administrative arrangements. QWaLC is funded by the Queensland State Government. The funding provided gives us the ability to work on behalf of thousands of natural resource management volunteers and to advocate on their behalf independently at all levels of the decision-making process.

QWaLC's network extends across the 14 NRM regions of Queensland, each of which is represented by a QWaLC Board Member elected from member groups. The Board Members participate on a Board of Management.

In line with the **National Statement of Common Purpose** (Landcare communities and regional NRM organisations working together in changing landscapes) April 2012, together we share the common objective of:

Fostering communities that are aware, engaged and active in ensuring Australian landscapes are healthier, better protected, better managed, more resilient and provide essential ecosystem services in a changing world.

We agree that grass-roots community-based groups (formal or informal) working on public good, natural resource management activities including: on-ground works, knowledge brokering and capacity building activities inclusive of engagement are fulfilling the “landcare ethic”.

Our Roles:

Queensland Regional NRM Bodies work to produce improved natural resources productivity and thus business profitability, resilient environments and communities. We have the capacity to quickly respond to changing government’s natural resource management priorities, for example facilitating a quick response to natural disaster recovery needs.

We do this through developing Regional NRM Strategies (landscape plans) and prioritise investment targets that align government (three tiers) investment directions, and regional community visions for the region.

We broker investment and participation in priorities identified in regional plans and build regional and community partnerships to deliver projects.

We foster the knowledge, skills and capacities needed by communities to engage in NRM activities and implement plans.

Increasingly the Australian Government has identified important roles for Regional Bodies in delivering regional plans, guiding the implementation of the Carbon Farming Initiative and other Government initiatives, forming partnerships across all NRM Sectors and with business and Industry and in increasing community capacity to play a role in planning and implementation of plans along with the delivery of investment to achieve on-ground outcomes.

Naturally, there is also variation in our roles and responsibilities due to regional differences and while we strive to work cross regionally where it makes sense to do so, our business aligns with the specific conditions and priorities in each region.

Queensland Water and Land Carers has grown from community and is governed by community. As a grassroots body, we foster self-determination and respond to the needs of community land and water carers and NRM volunteers across the state by providing practical solutions to real issues (e.g. information, insurance, governance, capacity building, facilitation). We provide a voice that represents members and the interests of Natural Resource Management Volunteer groups including the Landcare community.

Queensland Water and Land Carers key objectives are:

- Promotion - promote community Landcare.
- Networking - connect people and organisations with an interest in Landcare.

- Insurance – group policies covering Public Liability, Volunteer accident and Association.
- Support - support land and water carers with administration, information and funding.
- Representation - represent community Landcare.
- Advocacy.

Like the NRM Bodies we work to deliver a triple bottom line outcome. In that context we particularly focus on building the capacity of communities to engage in natural resource management thus resulting in productive, profitable and resilient communities.

The benefits of working collaboratively are:

- Landcare and NRM Regions together can more effectively address environmental challenges to maintain and improve landscape health and resilience.
- Better linkages between community empowerment and ownership, and policy development and delivery.
- Opportunities for mutual public recognition at all levels, strengthening the joint and separate reputations of both partners.

The risks of not working more collaboratively together are:

- We fail to adequately address landscape challenges to achieve improved environmental health and resilience.
- We weaken our reputations in the eyes of communities, governments and other investors.
- We have a divided, disengaged and disempowered community.
- We lose community capacity and social capital.

What we agree to do together.

- Communicate openly.
- Check assumptions.
- Recognise a *one-size fits all* approach should not be adopted, so that decision-making and implementation processes to deliver on local, regional and state priorities can be adapted to regional and local situations.
- Develop mutual recognition.
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate.
- Explore and promote continuous improvement in community engagement activities across Queensland.
- Identify and address differences, including points of tension, at the regional, State and National scale.
- Combine capacity to contribute to Local, State and National policy.
- Strengthen community input at regional and local levels.
- Plan initiatives that address the key elements of the *Australian Framework for Landcare 2010-20 Community Call for Action* (see appendix).
- Measure progress.

We agree to hold ourselves accountable for our actions through evaluation and reflection on our own performance.

NRM Bodies seek to:

- Use Queensland Water and Land Carers networks to engage and build capacity with community groups and to make it easy for community to access services.

- Recognise Queensland Water and Land Carers role as an advocate for the Landcare movement and the needs of Landcare and other care groups.
- Share resources and technical expertise where appropriate.
- Align with Queensland Water and Land Carers activities where appropriate within the context of the regional strategy and regional landscape plans.
- Maximise the efficient use of NRM resources avoiding unnecessary competition and duplication.

Queensland Water and Land Carers seeks to:

- Recognise and align with the Regional NRM strategies where relevant.
- Recognise NRM Regional Groups effective partnerships and opportunities to work together.
- Share resources and technical expertise where appropriate.
- Develop efficiencies regarding the use of resources to avoid competition and duplication.
- Co-ordinate support available to provide better services to community land carers.

Together we agree that 'we will further the intent of this document by developing and implementing an agreed annual work plan. We will promote and support the development of regionally specific MoU agreements (or similar) between each Regional Body and Queensland Water and Land Carers'.

We will review this statement annually.

This statement is agreed and signed by:

Chair of QWaLC

Chair of QRNRMGC

Dated: / /

 / /

Appendix A

Australian Framework for Landcare 2010-20 Community Call for Action **Prepared for the Australian Landcare Community by the Australian Landcare Council** **Page 2**

All Australians will take responsibility for the way they live in the landscape to ensure a healthy environment that supports a sustainable future.

The key elements to progress this are:

- Opportunities to be involved: All people are inspired to participate.
- Effective information and knowledge sharing: Mechanisms are available for generating and sharing knowledge and information.
- Acknowledging change: The differences land carers make are measured and acknowledged.
- Links to plans at all levels: The Landcare approach is intrinsic to the big picture of sustainable resource management in national, state, regional and local planning.
- Succession planning: The vitality of people involved is maintained into the future by engaging all generations and cultures.
- Celebration: The achievements of land carers are recognised and celebrated by all Australians, together with the potential of the Landcare approach to meet future environmental challenges.
- Professional credentials established: Individuals, groups, support staff and networks involved in the Landcare approach achieve high standards of governance and professionalism.

Abbreviations:

NRM – Natural Resource Management
QWaLC - Queensland Water and Land Carers
RGC – Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Groups Collective
LANDCARE - Landcare, Coastcare, Waterwatch, Bushcare, Catchment Associations, conservationgroups, Regional Bodies and sub-regional organisations