

# LIVING LANDSCAPES LOCAL LIVELIHOODS

Securing Queensland's Sustainable Future  
Through Stronger Community-based  
Delivery of Natural Resource Management



**QWaLC**  
QUEENSLAND WATER & LAND CARERS

# LIVING LANDSCAPES LOCAL LIVELIHOODS

*Securing Queensland's Sustainable Future Through Stronger  
Community-based Delivery of Natural Resource Management*

*Functioning  
land and water  
ecosystems*



*Resilient  
and engaged  
communities*



*Sustainable  
quality and supply of  
water resources*



*Sustainable  
land and sea  
production systems*





# Indigenous acknowledgement

We acknowledge the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to all lands and waters in Queensland. Their historic role as first custodians of this country merits profound recognition and their aspirations are fundamental to the future health of this land. We pay our respects to these first peoples, and to their elders past, present, and emerging.

## Acknowledgement

NRM Regions Queensland (NRMQR) and Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWALC) have prepared this document in consultation with government, community and industry partners. Their contribution to this document and continuing commitment to deliver living landscapes and local livelihoods for all Queensland communities is greatly appreciated.

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# Foreward

Our enviable Queensland way of life is built on the wealth of our diverse natural assets. The health of our economy, community and environment is fundamentally reliant on our natural systems and their capacity to provide clean air, water, food, fibre, and primary resources that support our great state. Resilient communities are intimately engaged with sustainable resource management, and are built on a culture of collaboration, a habit of custodianship, and a sense of shared opportunity.



Together, NRM Regions Queensland (NRMQR) and Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) have developed *Living Landscapes—Local Livelihoods* to articulate a shared vision to secure Queensland's sustainable future through stronger community-based delivery of natural resource management.

Over the coming decades the challenges facing our natural resources from climate change and other local and global pressures are expected to increase in complexity, frequency and intensity. New national and state funding programs are planned to commence from 2018. Now is the right time to establish the next era of natural resource management in Queensland and embrace innovative management solutions to meet these challenges.

Queensland has its own way of delivering regional natural resource management outcomes and benefits across our diverse, productive and beautiful landscapes. Through good times and bad, Queensland's community-based natural resource management arrangements (including Regional NRM Bodies, Landcare and other partners) have endured and delivered for the shared benefit of all Queenslanders.

Our regional arrangements are the purpose-built machinery to engage stakeholders, capture and share information and safely broker investments in managing complex environmental and natural resource issues at the landscape level. By supporting and improving these arrangements we can extend the positive reach of government and ensure that communities across Queensland are equipped to act when we most need them to deliver critical natural resource management priorities on our behalf.

*Living Landscapes—Local Livelihoods* has benefited from consultation with the Natural Resources Roundtable and has been broadly endorsed. The support of these groups with interests in how Queensland's natural resources are managed provides confidence that the principles and recommendations outlined in this document point Queensland in the right direction to meet existing and future natural resource management challenges. Our approach will help deliver the outcomes of the Queensland Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to which Australia is a signatory.

We look forward to working with the people of Queensland to secure the future of our living landscapes, local livelihoods and unique Queensland way of life.

Stephen Robertson  
**Independent Chair**  
**NRM Regions Queensland**

Geoff Elliot  
**Chair**  
**Queensland Water and Land Carers**





# Purpose, vision and goals

*Living Landscapes—Local Livelihoods* outlines how to strengthen community-based delivery of natural resource management in Queensland. It builds on the 2011 *Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Framework* by describing how all levels of government, community, and industry can work at the regional scale to target investment through collaborative and strategic design and achieve the following purpose:

***Securing Queensland's sustainable future through stronger community-based delivery of natural resource management.***

Our vision is:

***A Queensland where the priorities of people, planet and profit are balanced to protect our Living Landscapes and Local Livelihoods for the benefit of all.***

This purpose and vision are supported by four mutually supportive interlocking goals and six priority actions to further strengthen community-based delivery of natural resource management in Queensland (Figure 1). These goals emerged from a comprehensive review of community priorities found in Queensland's Regional NRM Plans.



**Figure 1** - The four goals and six priority actions for stronger community-based delivery of natural resource management

# Goals

## GOAL 1

### Resilient and engaged communities

*Resilient communities who are connected to Country, people and planet, and are resourced to manage challenges and opportunities to the benefit of all.*

The 10-year outcome areas for this goal include:

- Strong community stewardship and ownership of natural assets.
- Strengthened understanding and respect for cultural heritage values and Indigenous knowledge and culture.
- Effective NRM delivery/governance arrangements and systems.
- Climate risk recognised as a key factor in community decision making.
- Community resilience to the impacts of natural disasters.

## GOAL 2

### Sustainable land and sea production systems

*Sustainable, productive and balanced use of land and sea resources to underpin profitable industries.*

The 10-year outcome areas for this goal include:

- Land and sea production systems that are well informed, innovative and adaptive.
- Policy and planning systems support sustainable land use and management.
- Improved biophysical and ecological condition of soils.
- Reduced impact/cost of invasive species to productive industries.
- Carbon market investment opportunities support sustainable industries.
- Industries effectively plan and manage for climate risk.



## GOAL 3

### Functioning land and water ecosystems

*Healthy land, water and sea country providing natural, cultural and production values that are enhanced for future generations.*

The 10-year outcome areas for this goal include:

- Natural assets and ecosystem services are effectively valued and accounted for.
- Planning and policy systems proactively enable ecosystem function improvement.
- Knowledge for ecosystem management is improved, shared, integrated and used.
- Terrestrial habitats have improved in condition and/or connectivity and increased in size.
- Ecological health of waterways and wetlands is maintained or improved.
- Coastal systems are protected for their intrinsic value and as a buffer against natural events.
- Fire regimes deliver asset protection, cultural and biodiversity benefits.

## GOAL 4

### Sustainable quality and supply of water resources

*Water resources provide critical services and functions for, and meet the expectations of, our community, industries and the natural environment.*

The 10-year outcome areas for this goal include:

- The quality of surface and groundwater meets relevant ANZECC and Queensland WQ guidelines.
- Consumptive use of water (surface and groundwater) is efficient, meeting community and industry needs whilst minimising impacts to cultural and ecological values.



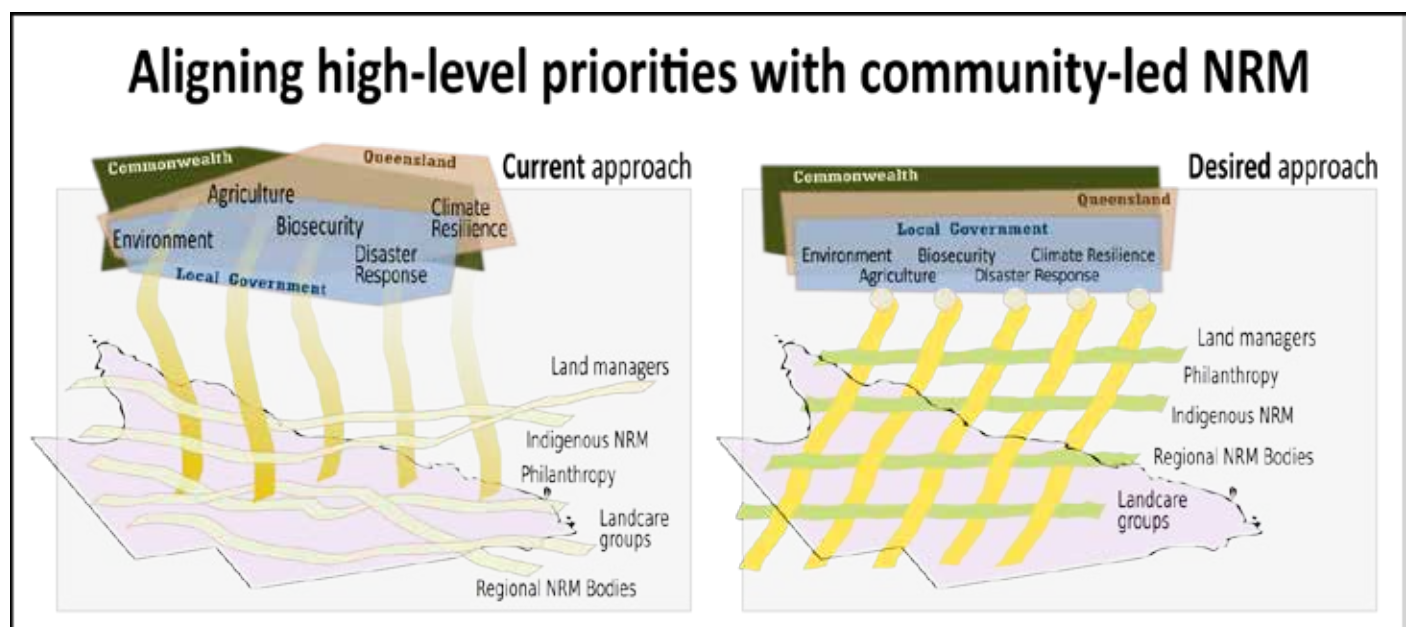




# Priorities to strengthen community-based delivery in Queensland

Natural resource management in Queensland is delivered at a range of scales using a diversity of implementation mechanisms. Rather than attempting to replace, override or entrench any particular element, the proposed delivery model seeks to drive more collaborative approaches that make best use of the willing contribution from all partners.

Portfolio focused priorities driven nationally and at the state level must be meshed with delivery arrangements at the regional and local community scale. A seamless integration of national, state and local strategic directions with community-based intelligence and capability will form a safety net for Queensland's natural resources (Figure 2). This model recognises that the individual contributions of all partners are multiplied and strengthened when deliberately woven together in a collaborative way.



**Figure 2** - Integrating national and state level strategic directions with community-based delivery arrangements

Experience across Australia over more than three decades shows that established, community-based regional arrangements achieve better natural resource management outcomes than fragmented and short-lived alternative service delivery approaches. The following enhancements are recommended to secure Queensland's sustainable future by further strengthening natural resource management delivery arrangements with communities at the centre of their landscapes.

## Priorities

### 1. Providing leadership through an effective Queensland NRM Council

A statutory Queensland NRM Council with the responsibility to influence and inform coordinated decision-making is considered essential. The Council will provide the necessary leadership and allow agencies to benefit from the synergy of knowledge and effort focused on a shared set of genuine Queensland priorities. With representation from community, industry and government sectors, the Council will provide ongoing state-level oversight and drive long-term program and policy integration across all regions, sectors, and government portfolios. Specific functions could include:

- Oversight of regional natural resource management planning standards, governance arrangements, and probity around the management of public funding by delivery organisations.
- Advice and support to the Queensland Government on natural resource management policy interventions and funding priorities.
- Support for collaboration between government, industry, and community natural resource management organisations.



### 2. Championing community priorities for sustainable resource management

Strong community-driven regional NRM plans focussed on mitigating risks to key natural assets through direct on-ground action and collaborative planning processes can significantly improve sustainable resource management outcomes. The range of current regional-scale natural resource management plans provides an effective mechanism for cross-sectoral collaboration and investment. They can be further strengthened through regular review processes to ensure they remain current, aligned with adjoining region priorities and local, state and national programs, and integrated with statutory and non-statutory regional plans and related governance processes.







### 3. Driving continuous improvement through better performance feedback

A system of standardised regional environmental accounts and reporting consistent with the *Queensland Plan* environmental targets (T14 and T15) is needed. These accounts will enable robust assessment of the condition and value of regional natural resource assets over the long-term and guide future decision-making. Adaptive management principles can further be used to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the value added by regional delivery arrangements. This would include evaluation of leveraged funding, the value of coordination, and the additionality achieved through robust collaboration networks.

### 4. Enhancing regional collaboration and engagement mechanisms

To achieve substantial outcomes across Queensland's vast and diverse landscape, an effective approach to coordination is vital. The mechanism for this must provide a point of integration and operational collaboration at the landscape level. The mechanisms will vary between regions and across time but should build on the strengths of current and previous regional coordination functions including those provided by Regional NRM Bodies and similar groups. These mechanisms need to be subject to on-going evaluation to ensure they represent value for the time and effort invested.



### 5. Building community resilience and capacity to deliver at the regional scale

Resourcing and strengthening the existing network of coordinators, facilitators and community capacity builders will deliver multiple benefits especially in rural and remote regions where capacity is often already stretched and alternatives are limited. People are central to the success of natural resource management in Queensland. People create and nurture the relationships that are vital to grow organisational capability, build individual skills, and leverage the investment of time, funds and effort from community partners. The best way to do this is to resource individuals operating at the community scale who can make the connections and drive co-ordination and collaboration.

### 6. Directing investment through competitive and collaborative procurement

The shared benefits of natural resource management are best achieved when the resources of all delivery partners are appropriately aligned and leveraged for optimal benefit (including through innovative funding mechanisms such as emerging carbon, ecosystem services and offsets markets). Procurement arrangements and investment based on longer funding cycles (3-5 years) and greater certainty for core functional capacity is essential. This will provide the much needed continuity and momentum for communities to become more resilient and able to act when we most need them to deliver critical natural resource management priorities on our behalf.

# Learning from experience

Local livelihoods rely on the health and productivity of our living landscapes. Natural resource management is the toolset used to manage landscape health and productivity. It involves identifying, allocating, conserving and utilising natural resources through a self-reinforcing, adaptive management cycle.

As the condition and trend of our natural assets and the pressures on them continue to change it is important to learn from experience, build on achievements and continually improve management. The adaptive management cycle built on the simple steps—think, plan, do, learn, improve (Figure 3)—underpins the preferred Queensland natural resource management delivery arrangements. Committed regional partners with local knowledge are well placed to get the best outcomes because they are directly invested in realising the benefit.

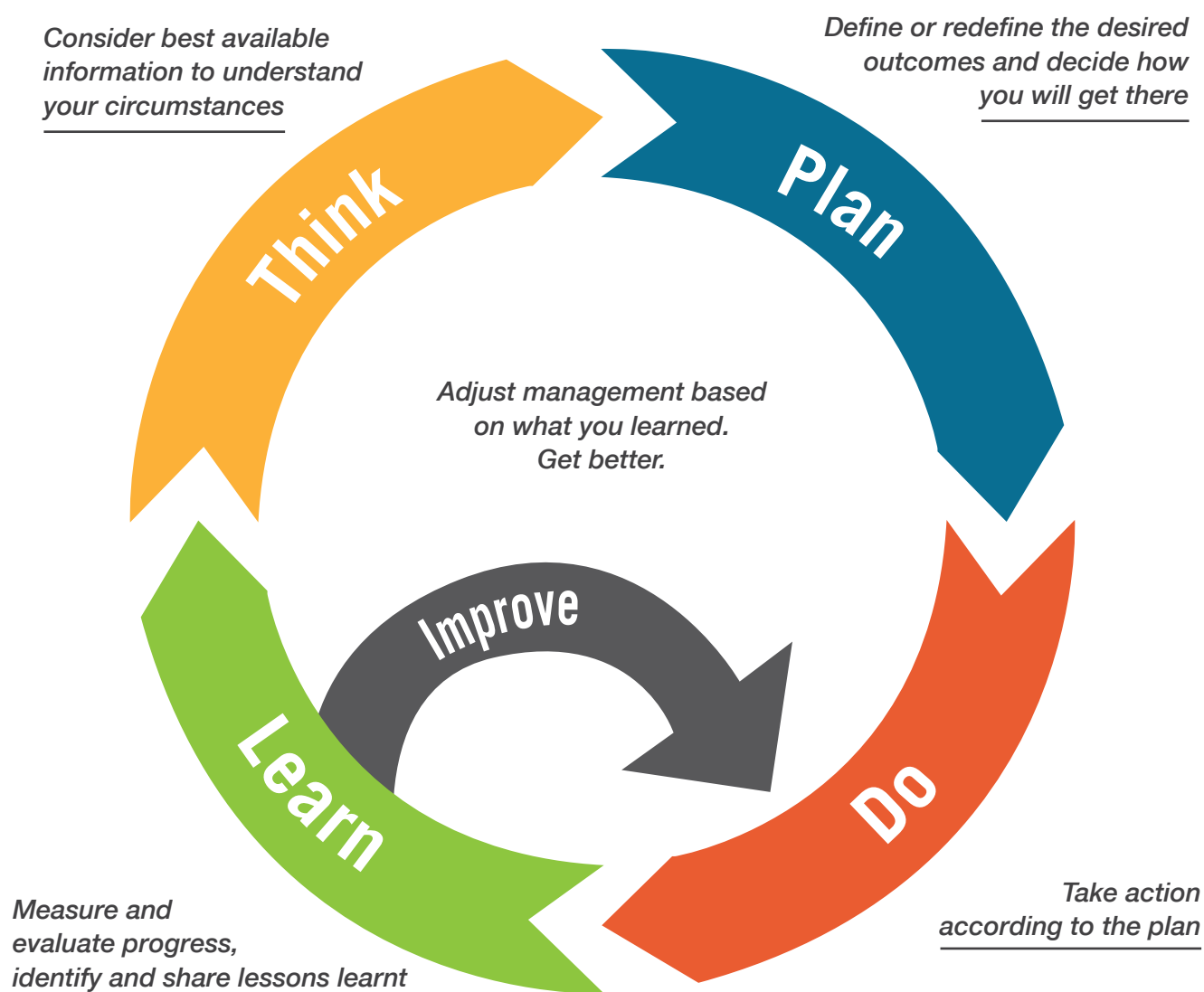


Figure 3 - The adaptive management cycle



# Community-based delivery partners

We all depend on our natural assets and everyone has a role to play in managing these resources for lasting benefit. A healthy environment is the basis for a healthy region—a region where the environment is in good condition, where the community is cohesive and where the economy provides jobs and a reasonable standard of living. A community-based regional approach built on stakeholder engagement to align and integrate efforts suits Queensland's diverse geography and decentralised population.

Because people are inextricably part of their environment and therefore pivotal to both contributing to problems and finding solutions, natural resource management is very much a social process reliant on human engagement. Successful natural resource management in Queensland requires ongoing contributions, collaboration and commitment from individuals, organisations, and communities, all levels of government, businesses and industry groups (Figure 4).



**Figure 4** - Partners in community-based delivery of natural resource management in Queensland (concept only)



## Community

Queenslanders have demonstrated their preparedness and capacity to participate in natural resource management. For example, farmers and graziers as land managers often enter into arrangements to achieve on-ground outcomes. The voluntary Landcare and conservation sectors are vibrant, highly motivated and have made significant contributions across the state. The peak natural resource management volunteer body—Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC)—represents more than 35,000 members from more than 340 registered organisations. The Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) is the peak body representing nearly 60 conservation groups and organisations operating in Queensland.

## Indigenous Queenslanders

The first Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, have a significant connection to Country and a history of managing Queensland's natural resources. Indigenous knowledge is recognised as an important source of knowledge complementary to western science. The Queensland Indigenous Facilitators Network (QIFN), also known as the 'Murri Network', was an example of a mechanism that supported effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Australians in natural resource management. There are a growing number of Indigenous Rangers Programs delivering significant land and sea management outcomes across Queensland.

## Industry

Industry organisations play an important role in achieving natural resource management outcomes, providing information, advice and support to member landholders who undertake on-ground activities. They also provide critical advice to government and influential input into government policy. Peak industry bodies include AgForce Queensland - representing rural producers, the Queensland Farmer's Federation (QFF) - representing more than 13,000 primary producers, the Queensland Resources Council - representing the mining and petroleum industries) and Queensland Tourism Industry Council - representing the Tourism Industry.

### **Knowledge and innovation sector**

We rely on scientific information about the condition of our natural resources and the effect on natural systems of the way we manage the land, water and vegetation. Evidence based decision making is critical to ensure investment is allocated to achieve maximum efficiencies and outcomes. The research sector operating through a variety of partnerships and funding arrangements makes a significant contribution to this need.

### **Philanthropic and not-for-profit sectors**

The philanthropic and not-for-profit sectors will be increasingly important partners in providing funding and advocacy support for projects and ongoing programs at local, regional and broader national and international scales.

### **Local government**

Natural resource management is a core local government responsibility. Effective, strategic decision-making at this level is crucial to maintaining many essential ecosystem services. Queensland's 77 local governments have a statutory requirement to protect, enhance and maintain natural assets and resources as well as support community groups and encourage stewardship and sound land management. As the interface between the community and many natural assets, local governments often engage the community through programs to foster long term sustainable resource management. Queensland local governments are significant partners, investors and enablers for the delivery of natural resource management outcomes. The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body representing local government and supports Queensland councils to deliver their natural resource management obligations. Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) and allied groups such as Chambers of Commerce and development cooperatives interact closely with local governments.

### **Regional NRM bodies**

Queensland's regional NRM arrangements are delivered through 13 non-statutory community-based Regional NRM Bodies and a special relationship with the Torres Strait Regional Authority. These groups develop, review, implement, and coordinate regional NRM plans. Regional NRM Bodies play a pivotal role in regional delivery through engaging stakeholders and building partnerships to deliver agreed priorities. NRM Regions Queensland (previously Regional NRM Groups Collective (RGC)) was formed in 2002 as a peak body to improve delivery of regional natural resource management outcomes across Queensland and act on behalf of Regional NRM Bodies to provide advice to government and cooperatively influence government policy.

### **Queensland government**

The Queensland Government plays a strong leadership, planning, compliance, investment, and coordination role for the delivery of natural resource management at the state level. Departments with specific natural resource management responsibilities include the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury, Natural Resources and Mines, Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment and Heritage Protection, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, National Parks, Sport and Racing, Science, Information Technology and Innovation and State Development.

### **Australian government**

The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy and the Department of Agriculture share lead responsibility for delivery of the Australian Government's environment and sustainable agriculture and land management programs, including the \$1 billion National Landcare Programme.

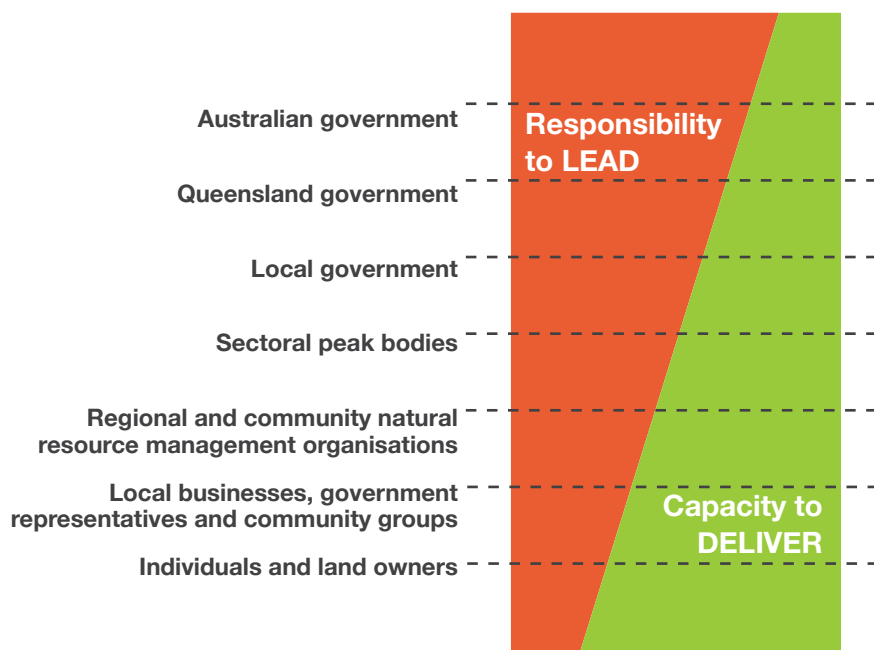
Regional Development Australia (RDA) is an Australian Government initiative that brings together all levels of government to enhance the development of Australia's regions. A national network of RDA committees has been established to achieve this objective.





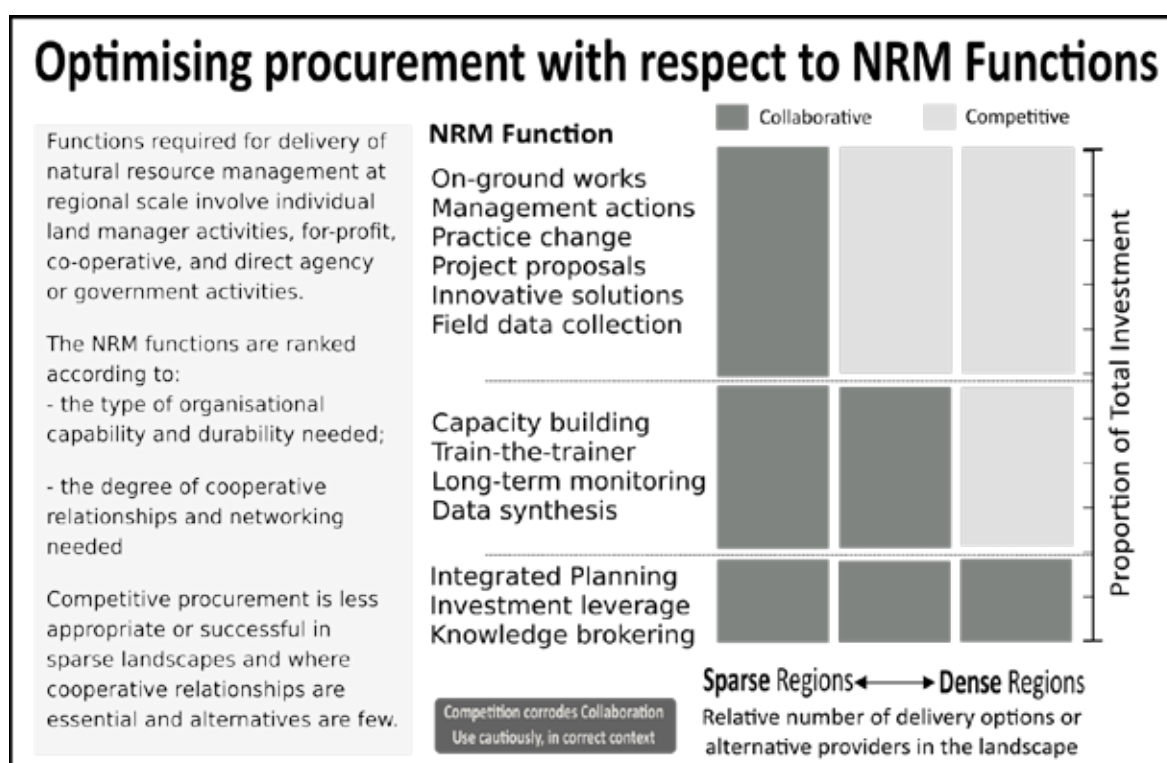
# Shared roles and responsibilities

Each of these partners can play an active leadership and delivery role according to their unique circumstances (Figure 5). For example the Australian and Queensland governments are best placed to provide strategic leadership while regional and community based groups are ideally suited to deliver regional coordination and on-ground projects. There is benefit in this diversity where contributors play to their strengths. In this context we support the concept of localism (subsidiarity) where power and responsibility is devolved to the lowest capable level in the system to deliver the desired outcomes.



**Figure 5** - Partners can play an active leadership and delivery role according to their unique circumstances

Community-based natural resource management delivery involves a range of functions including planning, leveraging and coordinating, capacity building and monitoring, and on-ground works and management actions. The role that individual Regional NRM Bodies and other delivery partners can play varies across regions depending largely on the density of alternative service providers (Figure 6). In sparse landscapes (with few alternative service providers) the Regional NRM Body may be the only delivery option available whereas in more densely populated regions there may be numerous bodies (e.g. local Landcare groups) able to provide services, especially on-ground works and capacity building activities. Regional priority setting and coordination through community-based planning remains an important function in all regions.



**Figure 6** - Opportunities for alternative natural resource management delivery are greater in more heavily populated regions

# Natural resource management in the Queensland context

Queensland is a vast, vibrant and diverse state known for its natural assets and economy built on a proud tradition of primary production. Covering 172 million hectares the state is globally recognised for its outstanding biodiversity with 13 biogeographic regions that stretch from the dry deserts of the outback to the rainforests and reef found along the 6,900km mainland coastline.

Our population of nearly 5 million people live, work and play across the full diversity of rangelands, coastlands and more heavily settled town lands and urban areas. These different parts of Queensland vary significantly in terms of their natural assets, dominant land uses and socio-economic characteristics and capabilities. While every region faces different challenges and opportunities that require regionally relevant responses all communities are united by the desire to be engaged in delivering solutions as part of a collaborative state-wide framework.

## Evolution of natural resource management in Queensland

For millennia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have practiced traditional land and sea management in accordance with their cultural beliefs and obligations. Since the early impacts of European settlement, many Queenslanders have increasingly come to realise the need for sustainable resource management to protect Queensland's unique way of life. Our approach to natural resource management continues to evolve in response to changing opportunities and challenges driven by local and global forces. Natural resource management traces its roots through two complementary histories: the story of famers and graziers seeking to grow productive enterprises over multi-generational timescales, and the emerging appreciation that functional ecosystems and biodiversity must be protected and nurtured.

Queensland provides an especially sharp version of these histories. Beginning with the booming pastoral expansion of the 1840's through to the gold and minerals rushes in decades following, Queensland's economic and cultural narrative is thoroughly grounded in primary production and resource extraction.

The Queensland Government invested more than



**\$51 million**

over

**3 years**



for

**36 projects**

including

**\$18 million**

for Reef water quality outcomes



**14 regional NRM bodies** have helped more than



**880 farmers**

to improve land management practices across



**3.3 million ha**

Running parallel to this colonial heritage is an increasingly confident story of Queenslanders as custodians to ecological treasures of outstanding global significance. From the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics through to the breathtaking diversity of the Rangelands and Channel country, Queensland is endowed with an irreplaceable natural heritage.

Over the past three decades most natural resource management activity has been undertaken at the scale of local communities. Local groups, individual land managers, and special interest organisations have pushed ahead with an organic process of setting regional natural resource management priorities and making progress toward achieving them, often through private funding and resources.





**Figure 7** - Queensland's regional NRM delivery achievement highlights (Queensland NRM Program funding 2013-16)

These local interests and the aggregated intentions of state and Commonwealth initiatives have variously guided the publicly funded mechanism of natural resource management. The *2016 Progress Report on Queensland's Regional NRM Delivery* (DNRM, 2016) highlighted natural resource management achievements across the 2013-16 timeframe (Figure 7).



This three-year snapshot shows a fraction of the effects of community-based NRM. The actual on-ground impacts are much larger. However, the full picture is very difficult to describe for two important reasons:

1. Natural resource management is a complex dynamic system. We can only aim to measure isolated aspects of the whole.
2. There is no formalised effort to comprehensively measure and synthesise the amount of natural resource management effort invested by community, government, and corporate entities.

How to measure and evaluate the “return on investment” to achieving landscape scale outcomes remains a central challenge for the next generation of NRM arrangements.

Initially launched in 1985 to reverse land degradation in central Victoria, Landcare has become a national community-driven movement. Current community-based regional arrangements for natural resource management delivery in Queensland have built on the Landcare ethic and the early response to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the second stage of the Natural Heritage Trust in 2000–01. More recently, the Queensland Government has allocated \$80 million to the Regional Natural Resource Management Investment Program over five years from 2013–2018, including \$30 million to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Most of this funding supports strategic priorities delivered through Queensland’s Regional NRM Bodies, community based groups and Queensland government agencies. Reliable ongoing resourcing is required to build on these earlier successes and maintain community capacity and momentum.

Experience has demonstrated that the most effective management of Queensland’s natural resources involves a range of individuals, organisations and institutions working at the national, state, regional and local level—with regional coordination being critical. A review of Queensland regional NRM by the Queensland University of Technology (Vella, 2017) highlights six key success factors required to deliver effective action for sustainability outcomes (Figure 8). The study also assessed the value of Queensland’s regional NRM delivery system in achieving outcomes and found that the most critical success factors relate to integration and local and regional capacity. Results highlight the importance of sustained investment over the long-term to ensure environmental and community benefits continue to be delivered through regional arrangements.



Figure 8 - Success factors for community-based NRM (Vella, 2017)





## Remaining fundamental challenges

Queensland's natural resource management assets include both natural capital (air, water, soil, biodiversity) and social capital (our people and their capacity to deliver outcomes) that together deliver the natural materials that sustain our quality of life. Despite great progress and many local success stories in managing our natural and social capital, significant challenges remain.

The 2015 Queensland State of Environment Reports highlights:

- Key Great Barrier Reef ecosystems show declining trends in condition due to continuing poor water quality, cumulative impacts of climate change and increasing intensity of extreme weather.
- Despite increases to the protected area system, terrestrial ecosystems remain under pressure from climate change and increasing natural disasters, land-use change, remnant native vegetation clearing (mostly for pasture), invasive non-native plants and animals, inappropriate grazing and fire regimes, and habitat fragmentation and degradation especially in the heavily populated southeast.
- The highest densities of terrestrial threatened fauna and flora species habitat are found in the South East Queensland, Wet Tropic, Brigalow Belt and New England Tablelands bioregions.

The 2016 Australia State of Environment Report found a number of key challenges to the effective management of the Australian environment remain and addressing these challenges requires:

- Integrated policies and adaptive management actions that address drivers of environmental change and the associated pressures.
- National leadership.
- Improved support for decision-making.
- A more strategic focus on planning for a sustainable future.
- New, reliable sources of financing.

World Economic Forum data ranks Australia 7th in terms of tourism competitiveness (WEC, 2017a) and 13th for overall economic competitiveness (WEC, 2017b). The Global Environmental Performance Index ranks Australia very low on some key environmental management scores including agriculture (91), forests (89), fisheries (92), biodiversity and habitat (68) and climate and energy (EPI, 2016).

In addition, several persistent challenges remain including the need to:

### ***Harmonise public and private costs and benefits***

Attempts to harmonise private interests and public goods and allocate costs and benefits between the public and private sector are fundamental to the functioning of our society and future of natural resource management. Because natural systems can cross many jurisdictions, tenures, and policy boundaries, effective investment must be responsive to these underlying functional landscape elements and seek to optimise net benefits for all stakeholders (including the natural assets).

### ***Invest in the landscape as a depreciating asset***

Our culture approaches the land with the expectation that its resources are available for a wide range of consumptive uses. Water and soil are converted to cattle and crops, which are exported to distant markets and minerals are recovered and likewise removed from the local catchment. Some wastes and disturbance are handed over to ecosystem services for treatment and remediation, both of which draw energy out of those systems. These activities drive a conversion of natural wealth into economic wealth, which is enjoyed by local and more distant communities.

The public and the private sector both play a strong role in creating and capturing this wealth. But as with any valuable asset, regular investment is required to maintain its productive capacity for the benefit of current and future shareholders. Treating our natural resources as a depreciating asset would allow the cost of sustainable management by the public and private sector to be more accurately accounted for as a necessary and prudent investment in preserving the productive capacity of Queensland's natural assets.

### ***Strengthen connection between urban, rural and remote communities***

Less than half of all Queenslanders live in rural and regional areas where natural resources are central to all aspects of daily life. When considering the needs, aspirations, values and communities of the entire state, over 70% of the land area is home to barely 2% of the population (ABS, 2015).

Many government initiatives seek to overcome the disadvantage of geographic isolation and improve the lifestyle of regional Queenslanders through better planning and coordination of service delivery and creating stronger, more prosperous, resilient and sustainable communities across the whole state but especially in rural and remote areas. Despite this effort, different perspectives and priorities remain between the city and the bush.

Familiar fracture lines occur around animal welfare, mining, vegetation management, water use, and Indigenous economic development among others. In some instances, the value positions of urban populations are poorly mapped onto the realities of regional livelihoods and landscapes. Sustainable natural resource management provides an avenue to build connection and collaboration between urban and rural communities and build the social capital, community resilience and behavioural change that make Queensland stronger. This includes the need for more holistic natural resource management decision-making processes that strengthen connection between urban and rural communities.





# Looking to the future

Natural resource management is fundamentally a human activity focussed on building resilient regional communities with capacity to act as wise stewards of our shared land, water, air and sea resources. Queensland's community-based regional natural resource management arrangements are much more than a convenient purchaser-provider service delivery option. They provide vital mechanisms for communities to work together, share information, engage all stakeholders and broker the investment required to tackle large, complex landscape level problems facing our regions.

Sustainable management of natural resources demands skill, determination, and investment. Capacity needs to be maintained in regionally focused organisations so they can effectively engage communities, aggregate effort and quickly respond to unforeseen natural resource management needs including disaster recovery.

With commitment and time we can restore the productive capacity of our landscapes and the strength of our communities. We can step forward, nudging catchments from scarcity to abundance, from the brittle margins to robust resilience. Together we can achieve the *Living Landscapes—Local Livelihoods* vision and secure Queensland's sustainable future through stronger community-based delivery of natural resource management.



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