



Developing the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan

Edited by
Libby Larsen and Sandra Pannell



Rainforest CRC

Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management

DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Rainforest CRC



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This document contains language and expressions that some readers may find offensive.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Rainforest CRC.

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The original format and content of the workshop proceedings contained in this publication has largely been retained, however for publication purposes, minor typesetting and grammatical changes have been instigated.

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACC	Aboriginal Coordinating Council
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANT	Aboriginal Negotiating Team (for Interim Negotiating Forum)
ARC	Aboriginal Rainforest Council
ARMP	Aboriginal Resource Management Program (within WTMA)
ATFI	Australian Tropical Forest Institute
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
BBIFMAC	Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee
BDT	Burdekin Dry Tropics
BDTG	Burdekin Dry Tropics Group
BRIG	Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group
CAFNEC	Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
CAT	Centre for Appropriate Technology Inc.
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CY HOAIG	Cape York Peninsula Heads of Agreement Implementation Group
CYHOA	Cape York Heads of Agreement
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
CYP	Cape York Peninsula
CYPDA	Cape York Peninsula Development Association
CYPLUS	Cape York Peninsula Land Use Study
CYRAP	Cape York Regional Assessment Panel
DEH	Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage
DNR&M	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (now: Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water)
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
DPI	Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
DTAC	Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation
EA	Environment Australia (now: DEH)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Queensland Environmental Protection Agency
FNQ NRM Ltd	Far North Queensland Natural Resource Management Ltd.
FNQ ROC	Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNT	Government Negotiating Team (for Interim Negotiation Forum)
HOA	Heads of Agreement
IAP	Indigenous Assessment Panel
ICPR	Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights
IEU	Indigenous Engagement Unit (EPA)

ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPLU	Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit
INF	Interim Negotiating Forum
IRG	Interim Reference Group
ITSG	Indigenous Technical Support Group
IWG	Indigenous Working Group
JCU	James Cook University
JWG	Joint Working Group
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Plan (for Salinity)
NaREF	Townsville Thuringowa Natural Resource and Environment Forum
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NHT 1	Natural Heritage Trust Stage 1
NHT 2	Natural Heritage Trust Stage 2
NNTT	National Native Title Tribunal
NPA	Northern Peninsula Area
NQAA	North Queensland Afforestation Association
NQLC	North Queensland Land Council
NQRTA	North Queensland River Trusts' Association
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NR&M	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (now: Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water)
NRM Board	Natural Resource Management Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (now FNQ NRM Ltd.)
QIWG	Queensland Indigenous Working Group
QMDC	Queensland Murray Darling Commission
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Rainforest CRC	Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management
RAP	Regional Assessment Panel
RFA	Regional Framework Agreement
RIS	Regional Investment Strategy
TAFE	'Technical And Further Education' – Publicly-funded post-secondary technical and vocational education and training organisation.
TO	Traditional Owner
TOAC	Traditional Owner Advisory Committee
TRG	Tenure Resolution Group
USL	Unallocated State Land
VSL	Vacant State Land
WAMP	Water Allocation Management Planning
WHA	World Heritage Area
WTAPPT	Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority

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PREFACE

As the first dedicated regional Aboriginal NRM Plan, not only in Queensland but also within Australia, the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) signals a unique moment in the entangled and often embattled environmental history of this continent.

The Aboriginal Plan provides details of some of the natural and cultural resource management issues and priorities for Indigenous people of the Wet Tropics. It identifies a range of strategies to address the interests and aspirations of Traditional Owners in caring for their country and culture. More than this, the Aboriginal Plan acknowledges the long struggle for recognition and respect by Aboriginal people of far northern Queensland. It is also an affirmation of the achievements of Aboriginal people in retaining a pride in their culture and keeping their connections to country strong. The Plan sets out some of the practical steps to be taken and the material needs to be fulfilled to maintain healthy communities, country and culture for generations to come.

Rather than being seen solely as a blueprint for managing country and culture, the Aboriginal Plan can also be viewed as a call for change – both institutionally and socially. In this respect, one of the fundamental aims of the Plan is to instigate a new era in NRM. Hopefully, by raising awareness of Indigenous concerns and issues regarding NRM, the Plan will bring about improvements in Indigenous involvement in NRM and foster new relationships between Indigenous land holders, NRM agencies and regional communities.

While regional NRM plans are promoted as the key to the strategic delivery of Natural Heritage Trust funds in the current phase, this plan, like other plans, has its limits. It in no way replaces customary means for caring for country, which Traditional Owners may enact on a day-to-day basis. For example, those cultural responsibilities associated with speaking to and about country. Nor does the Plan adequately address the trauma, stress and frustration experienced by Indigenous landholders when country is used in inappropriate ways, at times resulting in misfortune, injury and death to others. Finally, the Plan is not a 'quick fix' for current environmental ailments and previous social injustices. In many ways, the limits of the Aboriginal Plan reflect the hurdles that still remain regarding cross-cultural understandings of country and culture. Recognition and respect are critical to overcoming these perceptual obstacles.

This discussion raises the question of the identity of the audience for this plan. The Wet Tropics is a region with considerable cultural and ethnic diversity. This diversity closely reflects the varied histories of regional industries, particularly primary industries, and the ebb and flow of movement and settlement trends. Indigenous Australians in the region include Traditional Owner groups, Torres Strait Islanders and those Aboriginal people living away from their homelands. In the latter instance, many of these people were forcibly removed from country and relocated to one of the missions or settlements in the region. This 'stolen generation' of Aboriginal people, together with their descendants, have made a home in the Wet Tropics. While coming from country outside the Wet Tropics region, these people have formed close bonds with Traditional Owners through marriage and co-residence, and have established a sense of belonging to the region and the community through birth, occupation and employment. It is hoped that the Aboriginal Plan will not only speak to the many Traditional Owner groups within the Wet Tropics, but will find interested readers across the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of the region, and in a range of environmental management agencies.

Throughout the Wet Tropics region there are many ways of speaking about the environment and natural resources, as there are ways of talking about country and culture. Increasingly, the language we hear, particularly from government environmental agencies, is that of the new managerialism and neo-liberal governance. These days it is common to hear and read about nature as an 'asset' or as 'capital infrastructure'; protecting the environment as an 'investment strategy'; ecological knowledge as 'capacity'; and our actions in the world in which we live as a form of 'management'. Nowadays, all manner of things are fed into the meat-grinder of management, including cultural and natural values, fauna and flora, even understandings and perceptions. In the language of management-speak, some terms can be readily interpreted, while others defy such attempts and point to new ways of thinking about the environment or novel relationships with it.

For many Aboriginal people, the challenge is to see the wholeness of country and culture when the language of environmental management speaks of bits and pieces. Among Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics, some are more familiar with this way of speaking about country and culture, situated as they are within a range of government organisations and agencies. These individuals play an important role in their community as cross-cultural interpreters. The Plan recognises the multi-lingual nature of our environmental experiences and attempts to build bridges and linkages between the various ways Indigenous people now talk about country and culture.

Notably absent from the discourse of environmental management are references to affect and aesthetics, and the strong emotions and attachments embodied in the Aboriginal notion of 'country'. Throughout the preparation of the Aboriginal Plan, Traditional Owners spoke of the affective force of country in shaping their sense of 'we-ness'. All too often the sentiments and feelings that Aboriginal people express in relation to their claims to land are regarded as irrational or inappropriate in terms of the predominant, non-Indigenous NRM models. If language reflects, shapes and limits how we act within and understand our world, then we need a new language for talking about NRM. Reflecting this re-visioning of NRM, the Aboriginal Plan includes new words or building blocks for NRM – cultures and concerns, landscapes and values, sentiments and senses. The use of these words points to our need to develop different kinds of literacy and skills with respect to NRM.

This plan has its origins and momentum in the historical marginalisation and, at times, exclusion of Indigenous landholders from NRM programs and planning processes. In many respects, the absence of Indigenous people from local, regional and state plans reflects what amounts to the historical invisibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on the national census prior to 1967. The counting and classification of populations is an integral element in the planning and mapping exercises undertaken by the State in the name of governance.

In the post World War II environment, planning represents one of the key strategies in the project of modernity embarked upon by Western democracies. Under the auspices of planning and management, Western ideas about development and modernisation have been imposed upon the non-Western world. For Indigenous peoples of Australia and elsewhere in the world, planning signifies one of the techniques used by governments to order, control and, too often, intervene in their lives in ways that often appear passive and even beneficial. Indeed, planning as a basic tool for achieving social change, and controlling people and space often goes unchallenged. Yet, as many Indigenous Australians know from their own experiences, this supposedly common-sense approach to NRM all too often produces inequity, unsustainability and intolerance. This intolerance is apparent in the way that Indigenous people's refusal to comply with State policies, their resistance to development efforts, and their sluggish participation in a range of planning processes is characterised as 'antimodern'. In this situation, Indigenous people are readily blamed for their apparent inability to embrace the ideas and benefits of development. In the twenty-first century, the old language of modernisation and development has been replaced by new talk about

capacity building, governance and institutional change for Indigenous people. Mindful of the limitations of this new language and the problems with planning and similar top-down approaches to environmental management, the Aboriginal Plan not only advocates new ways of thinking about NRM, but also new ways of *doing* NRM.

Planning projects can be seen as one of the ways in which nation-states produce the 'space of nation-ness' and, through a range of bureaucratic structures, simultaneously create the sites and apparatus for state surveillance, discipline and mobilisation. In the production of these places, planning projects all too often impose linear models of time and produce new bounded spaces in which socio-economic activities are understood. For example, under the regime of NHT 2, the emphasis is upon regionalism and the creation of new strategic regions for this purpose. This emphasis upon regionality has gained momentum in recent years and increasingly we see all manner of socio-economic services delivered at this scale. Aboriginal notions of country and people's attachment to traditional localities appear at odds with the imposition of these NRM administrative spaces. In this era of bureaucratic regionalism, it is easy to see how Indigenous peoples' focus upon the local could result in a range of exclusions. Aware of the challenges posed by regionalism, this plan attempts to span the distances between locally based Aboriginal landscapes and neighbourhoods and the larger-scale spatial and social formations of NHT 2.

Issues of scale and focus direct our attention to the complex environmental histories of the peoples and areas included in the Aboriginal Plan. These environmental stories paint a vivid picture of the varied nature of Indigenous engagement with the primary industries of the Settler population. This is not a simple tale of Indigenous resistance and European colonisation, or of widespread environmental degradation. Rather, these histories speak about the ways in which landscapes and identity are produced through the intersecting rituals and customary practices of Traditional Owners and Europeans alike. This said, it is important to recognise that the co-production of these cultural landscapes and social identities is inherently colonising, not only of people but also of environments. The effects of these colonising moments are histories of people and place which defy the all too easy imposition of simple dichotomies, such as 'traditional and modern', 'before and after', and empty stereotypes – 'pristine rainforests', 'noble savages' and 'ignoble settlers'. The Aboriginal Plan attempts to recognise some of the social and environmental consequences of these varied and often hidden histories. In doing so, the Plan represents a step forward in reconciling the disadvantages and injustices experienced by Indigenous groups and communities throughout the Wet Tropics.

While the Aboriginal Plan provides a wordy framework for addressing a multitude of Aboriginal NRM concerns and issues, it is real people who form the backbone of the Plan. The ongoing cooperation, collaboration and commitment of individuals and groups throughout the region forms the key to realising this vision of what a culturally and ecologically sustainable future should look like. In the course of developing the Aboriginal Plan, the designations and roles of many of these individuals and groups evolved and changed as structures and processes emerged to address the demands and requirements of the task at hand. In this sense, the Aboriginal Plan does not represent a template for 'best practice' Indigenous NRM or a 'one size fits all' blueprint for Indigenous engagement.

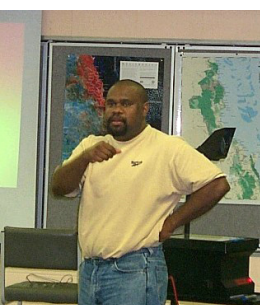
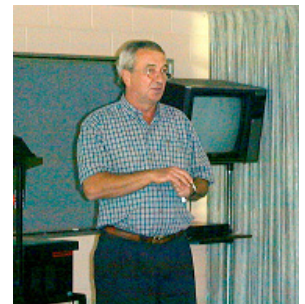
Indeed, although plans have yet to be finalised and accredited for many NRM regions, it is apparent that throughout Australia Aboriginal people have engaged with, and responded to, the planning process in a myriad of ways. For example, Traditional Owners in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, which adjoins the Wet Tropics in the south, have focused upon improving their involvement in NRM decision-making structures. Other Traditional Owners have worked towards establishing 'protocol agreements' for indigenous involvement in NRM with regional authorities (see Smyth *et al.* 2004).

The varied and circumscribed nature of indigenous responses to contemporary NRM planning processes reflects the historical conditions and experience of marginalisation throughout Aboriginal Australia. It also points to the rhetorical limits of both science and the state in addressing and effecting social, let alone environmental, change in the concentrated time-frames identified for the NHT program. In many ways, the circumspect approach adopted by Aboriginal people to current planning initiatives reveals the hurdles that still remain regarding cross-cultural understanding of the 'lie of the land' throughout settled Australia.

Dr Sandra Pannell

Leader, Program 7

Rainforest CRC





Main picture: Dancer at the celebrations for the launch of the Aboriginal Plan in Innisfail on 29 April 2005 (Photo: Roger Wilkinson).

Insets and overleaf: Snapshots of people and events involved in the preparation of the Aboriginal Plan, 2002-2005 (Photos: Various).





PART ONE:

**DEVELOPING THE
WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AND
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

by Libby Larsen and Sandra Pannell

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management region have adopted a unique approach to ensure that their interests and aspirations are considered in the new, Australia-wide Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funded regional arrangements for integrated natural resource management (NRM). Dissatisfied with the engagement process associated with the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan¹, Traditional Owners made a collective decision in 2002 to develop their own Wet Tropics Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan). In doing so, they envisioned that the Aboriginal Plan would inform the content and direction of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and, in itself, constitute a groundbreaking vision for caring for country and culture in a holistic sense.

The Aboriginal Plan took over three years to develop, commencing with the first Traditional Owner regional workshop held in March 2002 to discuss Indigenous involvement in NHT 2. Indigenous groups were largely excluded from the planning process in the first phase of the NHT program (1997-2001), and consequently only a handful of Aboriginal communities Australia-wide received funding support for NRM projects. Determined to rectify this state of Indigenous marginalisation in what is arguably a multi-billion dollar, nation-wide experiment in environmental management and social change, Traditional Owners, government and non-government organisations in the Wet Tropics region attended numerous workshops, meetings and presentations to develop an Aboriginal Plan.

It has not been an easy task to develop this plan, and ensure acknowledgement of Indigenous perspectives and values in the broader Wet Tropics NRM planning process. Although there has been support from a number of individuals working within government departments (both State and Commonwealth) and FNQ NRM Ltd, the reality is that the framework for NHT 2 and the guidelines for the development of NRM plans do not adequately embrace and support Indigenous aspirations for caring for country. Thus, one of the major challenges encountered in developing the Aboriginal Plan was to broaden the focus and objectives of NHT at a regional, State and Commonwealth level. The promotion of a more holistic and integrated view of NRM is crucial if Indigenous aspirations are to be recognised in regional planning processes. Critical to this reformulation of current NRM models is the adoption of a whole-of-government approach to the articulation of NHT and the delivery of sustainable NRM outcomes. In this respect, in the process of developing the Aboriginal Plan, strategic partnership arrangements were developed between Traditional Owners, the Board of FNQ NRM Ltd, the Regional Group Collective, Commonwealth and State Government NRM teams and the Joint Steering Committee.

As the first plan of its kind to specifically address the many challenges of maintaining distinct and diverse cultures in a multi-tenured and rapidly changing landscape, it is important that the process of developing the Aboriginal Plan is documented to ensure that other NRM regions and Indigenous groups can benefit from the lessons learned within the Wet Tropics NRM region. This is not to say that what has occurred in the Wet Tropics should be used as a 'one-size-fits all' model for Indigenous engagement in other NRM regions. Rather, some of the issues and ways in which the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team (WTAPPT) attempted to shape the NHT framework and planning process to better reflect Indigenous people's values and priorities for natural and cultural resource management may be used as an inspiration and guide for other Indigenous groups in Australia. In addition to documenting the process leading to the launch of the Aboriginal Plan at Innisfail on 29 April 2005, this document also contains the proceedings of Aboriginal Plan development workshops

¹ **Editorial Comment:** The document *Sustaining the Wet Tropics. A Regional Plan for Natural Resource Management 2004-2008* is widely referred to as the *Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan*, or in short, the *NRM Plan*.

convened between March 2002 and December 2004. The content of these proceedings have been retained not just for the 'historical record', but also to illustrate the complexity and multi-processual nature of the Plan's development. While a recent review of the NHT program identified the Aboriginal Plan as a "case study of exemplary consultation with Indigenous communities", suggesting to the general public a process of clear and mutual understanding, the reality of the Plan's evolution is quite different. As evident in the proceedings in part two of this report, issues of cross-cultural interpretation, translation, and comprehension were encountered on a daily basis. It is incorrect to see these issues simply as one of the effects of imposing western ideas about planning and management upon Aboriginal peoples and landscapes. The NHT process brings together a number of different cultural systems, including Indigenous, Anglo-Australian, scientific and bureaucratic orders of meaning and value. In this culturally diverse context, misunderstanding and mis-recognition on the part of those involved were, at times, the unintended outcomes. As demonstrated in the proceedings, the Aboriginal Plan owes its 'success' to those people willing to recognise and reconcile differences in ideas, identities and ideals in this social experiment in multi-cultural, multi-sectoral planning.

PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

The Extension of Natural Heritage Trust – New Regional Arrangements for NRM

The State and Commonwealth Governments' support for community-based NRM has moved from a project-based approach to strategic investment at a regional scale. To oversee this investment, nearly sixty Regional NRM Bodies have been established across Australia (FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC 2004). These bodies are responsible for the implementation of the extension to the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) at a regional scale. The NHT program will provide \$2.7 billion through to 2007-2008 (Worth 2005), with funds to be delivered primarily through investments at a regional level. These investments are based upon an accredited NRM plan and a regional investment strategy developed by the regional NRM body.

The integrated delivery of the NHT program is intended to streamline planning and the implementation of NRM based on regional needs. Program implementation is through integrated regional plans, developed by local communities and supported by government and the best available science.

The overarching objectives of the second phase, also known as 'the extension' of the NHT program, or as 'NHT 2', are:

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** the conservation of Australia's biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals;
- **Sustainable Use of Natural Resources:** the sustainable use and management of Australia's land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and
- **Community Capacity-building and Institutional Change:** support for individuals, landholders, industry and communities with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use and management.

The ten key areas of activity for NHT 2 are:

1. Protecting and restoring the habitat of threatened species, ecological communities and migratory birds;
2. Reversing the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation;
3. Protecting and restoring significant freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems;
4. Preventing or controlling the introduction and spread of feral animals, aquatic pests, weeds and other biological threats to biodiversity;
5. Establishing and effectively managing a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas;
6. Improving the condition of natural resources that underpins the sustainability and productivity of resource-based industries;
7. Securing access to natural resources for productive purposes;
8. Encouraging the development of sustainable and profitable management systems for application by landholders and other natural resource managers and users;
9. Providing landholders, community groups and other natural resource managers with understanding and skills to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management; and

10. Establishing institutional and organisational frameworks that promote conservation and ecologically sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Indigenous Involvement in NHT 2 at a Regional Level

In 2004, as part of its *Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Regional Natural Resource Management* project, the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) developed a series of documents and booklets aimed at assisting Indigenous communities and individuals to achieve active and equitable participation in the NHT program². A year earlier, the Queensland Government had drafted Indigenous engagement guidelines³ to assist Regional Coordination Groups and Regional NRM Bodies. In many respects, the development of these 'engagement guidelines' was driven by the initiative taken by Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics to interpret and respond to NHT in their own terms. Notwithstanding the belated development of national and state 'Indigenous engagement protocols', the situation of Indigenous marginalisation in the NHT process doesn't appear to have significantly improved in the second tranche of funding for the program. As one commentator concludes, "[o]verall, the NHT... program has demonstrated little actual involvement with, or consultation of, Indigenous Australians" (Worth 2005).

² These documents included *Working with Indigenous Knowledge in Natural Resource Management: Guidelines for Regional Bodies* (2004), *Guidelines for Indigenous Participation in Natural Resource Management* (2004), *Working with Indigenous Knowledge in Natural Resource Management: Recommendations for Commonwealth Agencies* (2004), plus six 'best practice' case studies for Indigenous engagement in natural resource management case (Smyth, Szabo and George 2004).

³ *Guidelines for Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in: The Establishment of Natural Resource Management Bodies and the Development of the Regional Natural Resource Management Plan and Investment Strategy* (2003).

THE PLANNING REGION – THE WET TROPICS NRM REGION

The Wet Tropics NRM Region of North Queensland extends from just north of Townsville to just south of Cooktown and west to Mount Garnet, incorporating six river catchments draining eastward into the Coral Sea. Encompassing approximately 1,849,725 hectares – almost one percent of the area of Queensland – the region boasts some of the most spectacular and significant landscapes in the country, including the rainforests of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) (900,000 hectares) and the adjoining Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, the world's largest marine protected area (Weston and Goosem 2004).

This tropical biodiverse region contains the traditional country of seventeen Traditional Owner groups, *Bandjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gulnay, Gunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Yidindji, and Yirrganydji*. However, because the Wet Tropics NRM Region has been defined by catchments and other 'natural' values, its boundary cuts across the traditional lands of a number of Aboriginal groups, resulting in the need for them to engage in at least two NRM planning processes (Smyth 2004). A large portion of the new NRM region is included within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, which in turn is made up of numerous national parks, timber reserves and other tenures. Outside the protected area boundaries, the remaining land has largely been cleared of its native rainforests for sugar and banana cultivation, dairy farming, a range of other agriculture pursuits, plus urban development. Tourism associated with the rainforests, wild rivers and the Great Barrier Reef is the largest industry in North Queensland (FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC 2004; Smyth 2004).

Although Aboriginal people suffered many of the consequences of colonisation that occurred elsewhere in Australia – displacement, dispersal, massacres, introduced diseases, poisoning, discrimination and exploitation – many Aboriginal groups continue to live on or close to their traditional country. In the past, they maintained this connection to country through their employment on farms and cattle properties or by living on missions and reserves established on their land (Smyth 2004). As a result, many Aboriginal people have retained knowledge of their language, culture and country. Despite this continuing connection to country, so far very little land has been returned to Aboriginal owners across the region, either through land grants or through the recognition of Native Title rights and interests. While large areas of the region are held as freehold tenure, some commentators have suggested that Native Title rights and interests continue to exist in nearly eighty percent of the WTWHA (Smyth 2004).

Right:

Figure 1: The map 'Caring for Country and Culture' depicts the boundaries of the Wet Tropics NRM Region and identifies its Traditional Owner Groups (Map courtesy of the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Cairns, 2004).

CARING FOR COUNTRY AND CULTURE

The Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics NRM region include:

Banjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gulnay, Gunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Yidinji, Yirrganydji.

NOTE - There are also clan groups within many of the Traditional Owner groups. There can be variations in the spelling used for each Traditional Owner group.

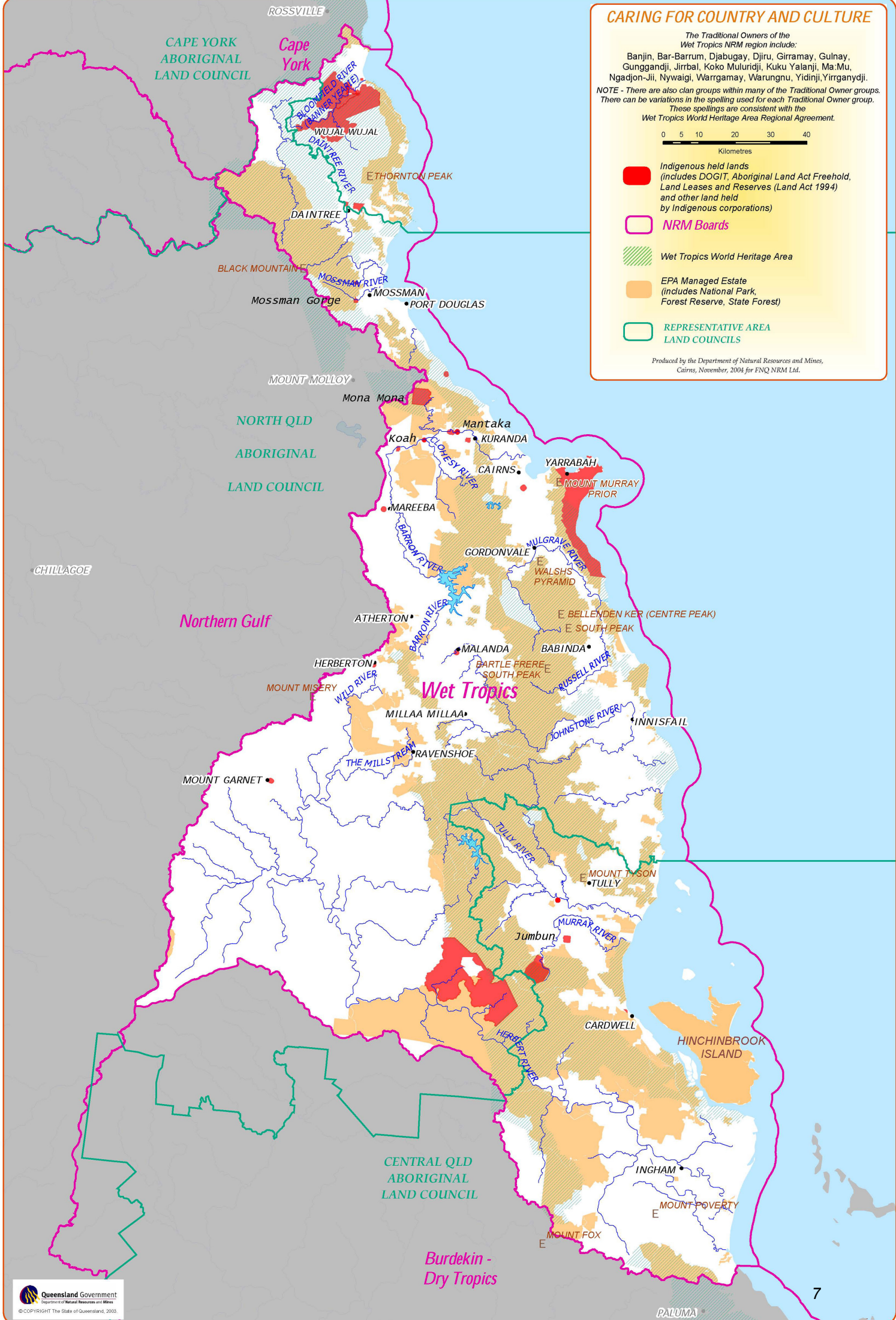
These spellings are consistent with the

Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement.



- Indigenous held lands (includes DOGIT, Aboriginal Land Act Freehold, Land Leases and Reserves (Land Act 1994) and other land held by Indigenous corporations)
- NRM Boards
- Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
- EPA Managed Estate (includes National Park, Forest Reserve, State Forest)
- REPRESENTATIVE AREA LAND COUNCILS

Produced by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Cairns, November, 2004 for FNQ NRM Ltd.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABORIGINAL PLAN AND THE WET TROPICS REGIONAL NRM PLAN

Figure 2 outlines some of the key stages in the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

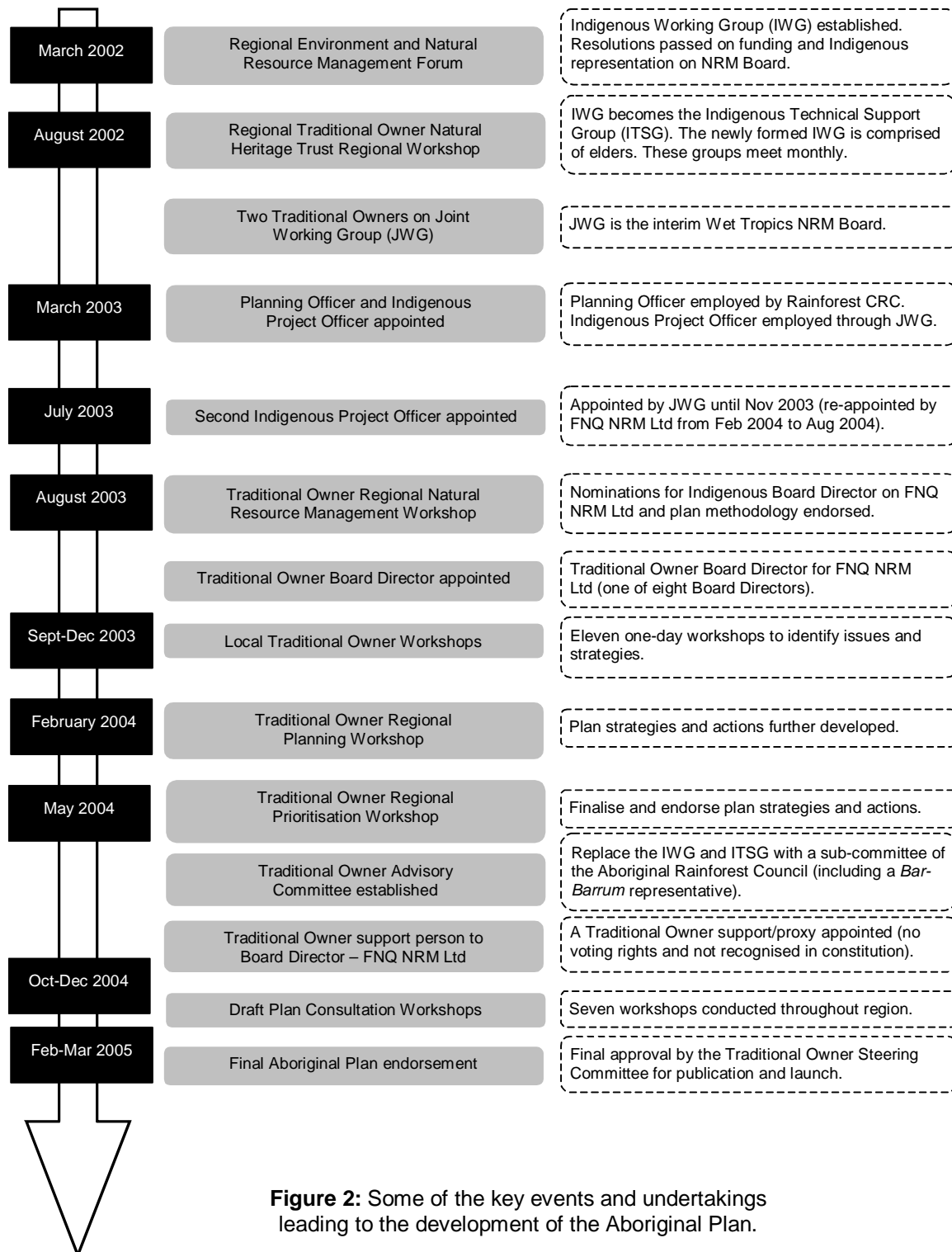


Figure 2: Some of the key events and undertakings leading to the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

As indicated in this figure, the development of the Aboriginal Plan was a multi-processual and multi-sectoral achievement. For some dimensions of this accomplishment, it is possible to provide clear dates and times for temporally-confined events, while other activities evolved from rather diffuse spatial and temporal origins and ran in a number of directions for extended periods. While history and hindsight tends to pull these happenings and processes together in a single coherent framework suggestive of a pre-determined structure and schedule, the reality over the course of the three years taken to develop the Plan was quite different. As the first plan of its kind, Traditional Owners and others involved generated their own, at times unique, reading of and responses to the NHT program and its planning guidelines. For the most part, this involved rejecting the imposition of inappropriate aspects of the NHT conceptual apparatus and governance structures, and replacing them with culturally sustainable alternatives. At other times, however, Traditional Owners worked with NHT categories and within the existing NHT framework to produce innovative interpretations suitable for local conditions, experiences and expectations.

ORIGINS OF THE ABORIGINAL PLAN

First Regional Traditional Owner Workshop

A two-day regional Traditional Owner workshop was held in Cairns in March 2002 to discuss issues relating to the new Wet Tropics-based funding arrangements for NHT. The workshop was organised by the Regional Bushcare Facilitator and the regional Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, and was supported by the NQLC, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, QPWS, the Bushcare Program, Indigenous Land Corporation, Cape York Development Corporation and the Rainforest CRC (WTAPPT 2005). The aims of the workshop were to:

- Explain NHT funding and the purpose of the various programs;
- Discuss the issues that limited Aboriginal involvement in the first phase of NHT;
- Highlight the changing backdrop for NRM processes within the region; and
- Discuss a way forward to increase Indigenous involvement at all levels during the planning and delivery of NHT 2.

Second Regional Traditional Owner Workshop

A second regional workshop for Traditional Owners was held in Cairns in August 2002 to consider several options for engaging Traditional Owners in the NRM planning process. At this workshop a decision was made to embark on the development of a separate plan (the Aboriginal Plan), which would address the full spectrum of Aboriginal NRM issues. It was agreed that this plan would then be integrated into the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. At this meeting, participants also passed a resolution to establish two Indigenous positions on the Joint Working Group (i.e. the Interim Wet Tropics NRM Board).

Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team

Indigenous Working Group and Indigenous Technical Support Group

At the first regional workshop, participants established the Indigenous Working Group (IWG). The IWG comprised Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with experience and expertise in the field of natural resource management and environmental governance. Members of the IWG occupied key positions in government environmental agencies (e.g. EPA, WTMA) and regional research institutions (JCU, Rainforest CRC). One of the aims of the IWG was to enhance Indigenous engagement in the current NRM planning process (Hill and Nursey-Bray 2002). At the second regional workshop a new IWG comprised of elders from a number of Traditional Owner groups was established to oversee the planning process. At this meeting, members of the original IWG formed the Indigenous Technical Support Group (ITSG). Among its many roles and responsibilities, members of the ITSG facilitated workshops, attended NRM meetings and provided support to the IWG (Smyth 2004).

Both the IWG and ITSG each played an important role in providing guidance to Aboriginal participants at regional workshops and meetings. In addition, both groups provided strategic direction and advice to the Indigenous Project Officers and Planning Officer involved in the development of the Aboriginal Plan. Monthly meetings between the ITSG, Planning Officer and Indigenous Project Officers were conducted during the first half of the Aboriginal Plan's development (that is, until the formation of the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee in mid 2004).

Planning Officer and Indigenous Project Officers

In March 2003, Traditional Owners, in conjunction with FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC, advertised and appointed a Planning Officer (Libby Larsen) to develop the separate Aboriginal Plan. Employed by and based at the Rainforest CRC in Cairns, Libby Larsen worked with planning researchers, Professor Geoff McDonald and Nigel Weston, to integrate the key issues identified in the Aboriginal Plan into the 'mainstream' Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. At the same time, the NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (NRM Board) appointed Indigenous Project Officer, Lyle Johnston. In July 2003, the NRM Board appointed an additional Indigenous Project Officer, Jean Fenton, initially for a three-month period until September 2003, and then for a further six-month period in 2004. While the Rainforest CRC and FNQ NRM Ltd funded the planning officer and two Indigenous project officer positions respectively, the initiative for the establishment of these positions came directly from the Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owner Advisory Committee

In September 2003, negotiations to develop a new Traditional Owner Advisory Committee (to replace the IWG and ITSG) began. As the Aboriginal Plan neared completion, members of the Aboriginal Plan Project Team saw the need to establish a new steering group that would play a critical role in the long-term implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

Around this time, and for some years previously, negotiations between Traditional Owners (through the Aboriginal Negotiating Team) and a number of government agencies (DNR&M, DEH, WTMA and EPA) were underway to develop a Regional Agreement, which would facilitate Indigenous input to the management of the WTWHA. The signing of the Regional Agreement by the interested parties would also bring into existence a new regional Aboriginal organisation, the Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC). As the peak Traditional Owner organisation for the region dealing with land management and cultural heritage, the ARC was well placed to play a key role in the future implementation and monitoring of the Aboriginal Plan.

In mid 2004, after several meetings and presentations to the newly formed ARC, a Traditional Owner Advisory Committee, comprising a sub-committee of the Aboriginal Rainforest Council, with a *Bar-Barrum* representative, was established (WTAPPT 2005).

THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

One of the key considerations driving the development of the Aboriginal Plan was that it would be undertaken in accordance with the priorities and desires of the Traditional Owners. The decision-making model for the Plan development process is highlighted below.

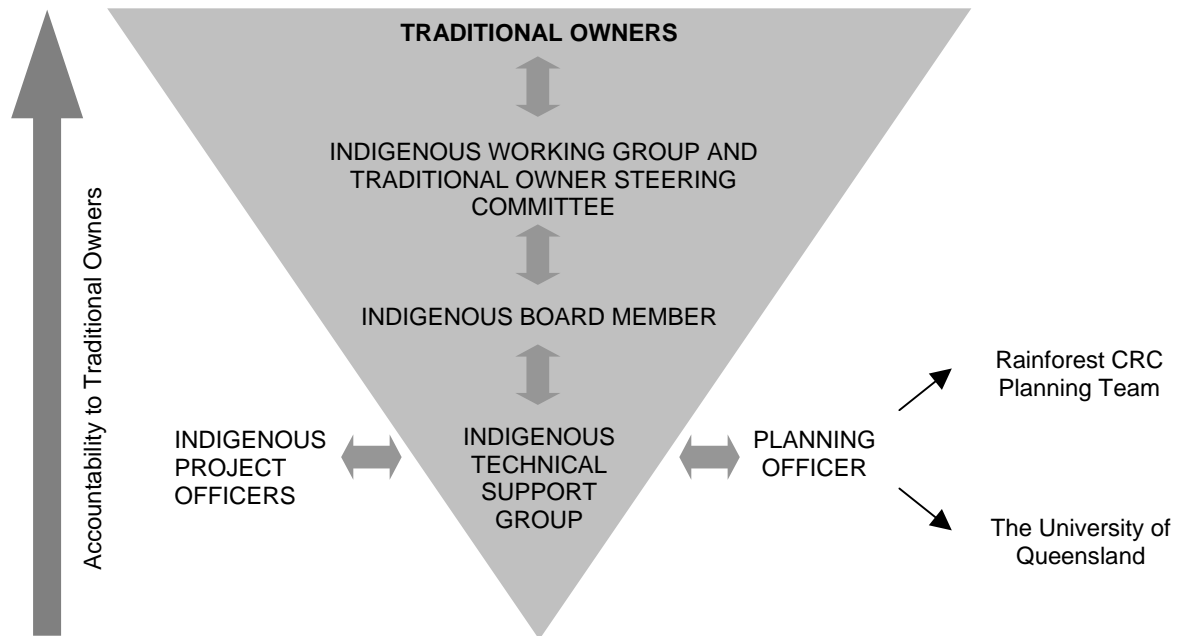


Figure 3: Decision-making model for the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

Plan Development Workshops

At the third regional two-day workshop held in Cairns in August 2003, Traditional Owners endorsed a methodology for researching and developing the Aboriginal Plan. The framework endorsed at the meeting included draft timelines, a detailed engagement process, guiding principles and protocols and suggestions for the Plan's format and structure.

At the August 2003 workshop, participants also identified and endorsed a selection process for the five Traditional Owners nominated for the position of Indigenous Director on the newly established Board of FNQ NRM Ltd. Through this Traditional Owner-driven selection process, *Warrgamay* man, Troy Wyles-Whelan, was appointed to this position.

As part of the engagement and Plan research process, eleven one-day workshops were undertaken with individual Traditional Owner groups between September 2003 and December 2003. These meetings, typically held *on country*, were organised and facilitated by the Indigenous Project Officers and the Planning Officer. Details of these local-level workshops are presented in Table 1. This table also provides summary information about the staging of regional workshops and meetings.

Table 1: Details of Regional Meetings and Traditional Owner workshops convened from March 2002 to December 2004.

Workshop	Venue	Date	Purpose
Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management Forum	Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	14-15 March 2002	– Discuss the extension of NHT (NHT 2) and new regional NRM arrangements.
Regional Natural Heritage Trust Workshop	Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	13 August 2002	– Discuss NHT 2 and new regional NRM arrangements.
Traditional Owner Regional Environmental and Natural Resource Management Workshop	Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	13-14 August 2003	– Nomination of Traditional Owner Board Directors for FNQ NRM Ltd. – Determine appropriate methodology for developing Aboriginal Plan (timeframes, consultation process, etc.).
One-day Local Workshops for Aboriginal Plan Development	Malanda Showground, Malanda	10 September 2003	– Determine issues in cultural and natural resource management at a local scale. – Identify strategies and actions to address issues. – Identify capacity-building issues.
	Kuranda Medical Centre, Kuranda	17 September 2003	
	Wet Tropics NRM Catchment Centre, Innisfail	18 September 2003	
	Wet Tropics NRM Catchment Centre, Innisfail	22 September 2003	
	Kowrowa Hall, Kowrowa	23 September 2003	
	Ingham Community Hall, Ingham	14 October 2003	
	Chowai Centre, Innisfail	16 October 2003	
	Jumbun Community Hall, Murray Upper	15 November 2003	
	CWA Hall, Atherton	28 November 2003	
	School of Distance Education, Cairns	29 November 2003	
	CWA Hall, Gordonvale	13 December 2003	
Regional Traditional Owner Planning Workshop	Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	12 February 2004	– Further develop strategies and actions developed at local level. – Endorsement of key themes for Aboriginal Plan.
Prioritisation Traditional Owner Regional Workshop	Cairns Student Lodge, Cairns	May 2004	– Finalise and endorse strategies and actions according to funding years. – Score each strategy against agreed criteria (healthy culture, healthy country and economic).

Workshop	Venue	Date	Purpose
Draft Aboriginal Plan Workshops	International Club, Atherton	7 October 2004	– Finalise and approve draft Aboriginal Plan.
	Chowai Centre, Innisfail	12 October 2004	
	Girringun Training Centre, Cardwell	15 October 2004	
	Community Hall, Wujal Wujal	19 October 2004	
	Mossman Gorge Training Centre, Mossman Gorge	21 October 2004	
	Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	29 October 2004	
	Community Hall, Yarrabah	10 December 2004	

The Planning Officer, together with the two Indigenous Project Officers, interviewed workshop participants and recorded their aspirations and concerns regarding their customary obligations to care for country and culture. A summary of the key information recorded at these Traditional Owner workshops is presented in Figure 4.

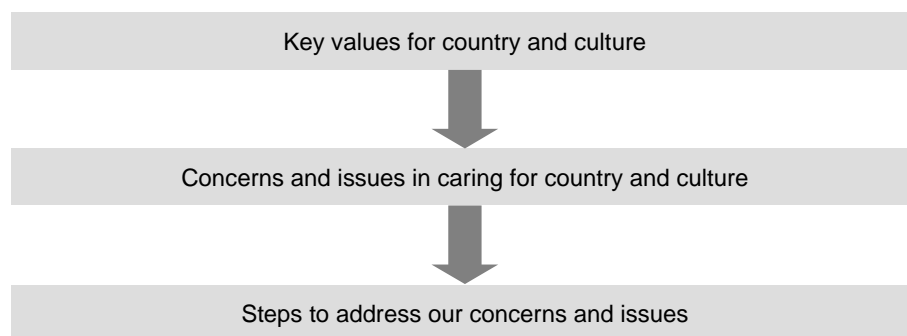


Figure 4: An indication of the kind of information recorded at Traditional Owner workshops.

Following the Traditional Owner workshops, a fourth regional forum was held in February 2004 in Cairns. The purpose of this meeting was to further develop the draft strategies and actions identified in the local-level workshops. At the regional forum, Aboriginal delegates endorsed a set of key themes, strategies and actions for inclusion in the Aboriginal Plan (WTAPPT 2005).

In May 2004, a fifth regional two-day Traditional Owner forum was again held in Cairns. The primary purpose of this meeting was threefold:

- To finalise previously endorsed strategies and actions;
- To sequence the strategies and actions according to funding years; and
- To score each of the strategies against the agreed-upon criteria of (1) healthy culture; (2) healthy country; and (3) economic development. Each of the three criteria was accorded a 'benefit rating' from 1 (high) to 3 (low). The strategies were then ranked as 'high priority', 'moderate priority' or 'low priority' strategies.

The prioritisation outcomes of the fifth regional forum were subsequently integrated into the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan for community consultation and the Draft Aboriginal Plan for consultation with Traditional Owners. The information generated at this forum also formed the basis of the Aboriginal component of the Regional Investment Strategy for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

In September 2004, Traditional Owners of the region were sent the Draft Aboriginal Plan and a draft Summary of the Aboriginal Plan containing a timetable of Traditional Owner workshops to be held during October and November 2004. Drafts of the Aboriginal Plan were also sent to key regional Indigenous organisations, including the ARC, Native Title Representative Bodies, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, ATSIC Regional Councils, Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit (IPLU), WTMA's Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARMP) and the EPA's Indigenous Engagement Unit (IEU). Informal feedback and written submissions were requested from all groups, who were also encouraged to attend the October-November 2004 workshops.

In addition to the series of workshops held late in 2004, several meetings were convened with key Indigenous bodies. Further, a workshop was staged in late November 2004 to discuss the Draft Aboriginal Plan. Held at the Rainforest CRC, this workshop involved members of the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd (and the proxy Indigenous Board Director), the Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, an Indigenous Project Officer, the Planning Officer and other members of the Aboriginal Plan Project Team. In late January 2005, the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee approved printing and publication of the final Aboriginal Plan (WTAPPT 2005).

On 29 April 2005 at Innisfail, Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics joined with government representatives and the wider community to celebrate the launch of *Caring for Country and Culture: The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan*. The launch of the Aboriginal Plan was staged in conjunction with the signing of the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement*. Representing one of the largest gatherings of Traditional Owners in recent times, the two events were attended by the Queensland Ministers for the Environment (The Hon. Desley Boyle MP), and for Natural Resources and Mines (The Hon. Stephen Robertson MP) and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage (The Hon. Greg Hunt MP). In addition to the attending government officials, Mr Steve Larkin, Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, participated as an invited guest speaker for the official launch of the Aboriginal Plan.

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS REGIONAL NRM PLAN AND THE ABORIGINAL PLAN

Meeting NRM / NHT Goals and Indigenous Aspirations for Caring for Country

For Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics, nature and culture are linked and regarded as inseparable. However, the framework and agenda for the extension of the NHT program (NHT 2) is still firmly entrenched within a standard scientific NRM model and thus does not recognise the holistic environmental perspective advocated by Indigenous people. Acknowledging and reconciling these fundamentally-different points of view is essential for the successful integration of Indigenous interests and aspirations within future NRM processes and paradigms. The holistic nature of Indigenous peoples' relationship to country is something that many non-Indigenous Australians find difficult to conceptualise and understand. According to the Traditional Owners consulted in the process of developing the Aboriginal Plan, cultural, spiritual, economic and social relationships are intertwined and interdependent in terms of their continued well-being and existence. If one part of this interconnected network of values, practices and beliefs is damaged or destroyed, all other dimensions are placed at risk.

For example, when speaking about their aspirations for environmental protection and conservation, Traditional Owners interspersed their conversations with stories about language maintenance, being on country with young people and elders, and looking after places of significance. For Traditional Owners, there are clear links between biodiversity protection, language maintenance and other activities, which are largely signposted as 'cultural projects' in the nature-based NHT / NRM framework. Realistically speaking, some of the key aspirations identified by Traditional Owners for looking after country will probably not be funded through the NHT program. The considerable challenges faced by Traditional Owners in their attempts to 'mainstream' a different cultural paradigm become more apparent when the various elements and key objectives of the NHT program are considered in more detail. For example it is difficult to reconcile the 'Matters for Targets' and 'Investment Strategy' guidelines that regional bodies must address in the preparation of their NRM plans with an Indigenous point of view. The issue is not just about a clash of cultures – bureaucratic culture and Indigenous cultures – but is also about a different way of imagining an *Umwelt* or life-world and the position of sentient beings in this world.

This issue came up time and time again throughout the Plan process and caused great frustration on the part of the Traditional Owners, as well for those responsible for preparing the actual Plan. In the course of researching and developing the Aboriginal Plan it became apparent that the much-heralded 'integrated' approach to NRM advocated by the NHT program has its limits. In this scenario, *integration* appears to Traditional Owners as a form of assimilation rather than as a true recognition and celebration of the connectedness of living things.

Developing Targets for Indigenous Issues

The Commonwealth Government has identified a number of 'Matters for Targets' that regional bodies are required to address in their NRM Plans (Table 2). These so-called 'targets' are clearly based on a biophysical NRM model, which appears at odds when contrasted with the 'Matters for Targets' identified by Traditional Owners. Table 2 succinctly illustrates this contrast in its comparison of the draft matters for targets by Traditional Owners in the planning process and those set by the Commonwealth Government for regional bodies to address. Reconciling the content of the two columns constitutes one of the major challenges that faced those involved in the preparation of the Aboriginal Plan.

Table 2: A comparison of government and Indigenous 'Matters for Targets'.

Commonwealth Guidelines Matters for which Regional Targets must be set	Draft 'Matters for Targets' Developed by Traditional Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land salinity - Soil condition - Native vegetation communities' integrity - Inland aquatic ecosystems integrity (rivers and other wetlands) - Estuarine, coastal and marine habitats integrity - Nutrients in aquatic environments - Turbidity / suspended particulate matter in aquatic environments - Surface water salinity in freshwater aquatic environments - Significant native species and ecological communities - Ecologically significant invasive species 	<p>Indigenous Cultural Knowledge and Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal Languages - Access and Use of Country - Knowledge of Country - Transmission of Cultural Knowledge - Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights <p>Sustainable Use of Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hunting and Gathering - Commercial Use of Resources - Cultural Tourism <p>Cultural Landscapes, Places and Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Places of Significance - Aboriginal Material Culture <p>Biodiversity Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plants and Animals of Cultural Significance - Weeds and Feral Animals <p>Wetlands and Waterways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Quality and Quantity - Cultural Significance <p>Sea Country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine Resource Use - Cultural Significance of Sea Country - Managing Sea Country

Lack of Awareness and Recognition

At both Commonwealth and State levels of government, there is a considerable lack of awareness of Indigenous issues, not just environmental, but also social-economic matters. When coupled with a lack of experience in working with Indigenous people and communities, this situation represents a serious 'capacity-building' challenge. As this suggests, and contrary to the usual Indigenous focus of capacity-building initiatives, the problem also lies within the walls of non-Indigenous organisations and at the feet of white Australia. Technically, this meant that a great deal of energy was spent ensuring Indigenous issues were at the forefront of the activities of FNQ NRM Ltd and were seriously addressed in the preparation of the 'mainstream' Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. In combating the apparent lack of non-Indigenous capacity, members of the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team also encountered some of the preconceptions and prejudices that form part of the racialised landscape of North Queensland. While highlighting the need for cross-cultural awareness programs as part of the delivery of NHT at a regional level, this experience demonstrated the historical and social distance that still needs to be covered for a truly integrated approach to NRM.

Increased Community Appreciation

Notwithstanding the challenges and obstacles identified in the previous section, it is also apparent that many of the individuals and organisations involved in developing the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan have developed a greater appreciation of the scope of Aboriginal interests in environmental management. This awareness has largely come about through attending Traditional Owner workshops and discussing ideas and issues in a face-to-face manner, receiving briefings from project officers involved in preparing the Aboriginal Plan, and participating in negotiations with members of the IWG and ITSG regarding funding and other resources needed for the Plan's development.

Indigenous people involved in the development of the Aboriginal Plan acknowledged that individuals associated with the wider NRM planning process had "come a long way" in their understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal issues and interests in cultural and natural resource management. However, the same people pointed out that this had at times been a painful and stressful process, sometimes involving heated exchanges. The implication here is that this experience of cross-cultural capacity-building can have a hidden, personal cost which should be acknowledged in what in reality is seen by many Aboriginal people as an Australia-wide attempt at reconciliation.

Culturally-Appropriate Planning Scales

One of the great challenges in developing the Aboriginal Plan involved coming to terms with the issue of what constitutes a culturally-appropriate planning scale for each Traditional Owner group. The Wet Tropics NRM planning region contains the traditional lands and waters of seventeen different Aboriginal tribal groups. For some of these groups, their country is divided by the boundaries of the planning region and, as such, they are involved in more than one NRM region and planning process. Discussions with Traditional Owners caught up in this bewildering bureaucratic situation, and with NRM personnel from other regions, indicates that while NRM regions may be contiguous, the planning processes are often quite different. For Aboriginal people this difference is particularly apparent in the way that each region engages with Traditional Owners. As the recent NNTT review of the NHT program observes, Indigenous engagement in the fifty-six NRM regions established Australia-wide varies considerably (Worth 2005:4).

The focus on regionalism and the delivery of the NHT program at this scale is in many ways at odds with Traditional Owners' notion of country and their responsibilities for it. Although there are many similar issues for each group in the region, there are also many differences in how these issues are prioritised by each group. Some Traditional Owners were of the opinion that the Aboriginal Plan should contain details about specific projects and priorities at the local level. However, the reality is that this proposition was far beyond the capacity of the planning process and, as such, future research is required to achieve these aspirations. Acknowledging the need to rethink the spatial focus of the current NHT program, 'country-based planning' has been identified as one of the funding priorities in the Wet Tropics Regional Investment Strategy. This new way of thinking about the delivery of the planning process will identify priorities at a local and, thus, more culturally-appropriate scale. The resulting plans, based on traditional spatial parameters, can then be used by Aboriginal landowners in future negotiations with non-Indigenous stakeholders regarding issues on their country.

Involvement, Real Engagement, and Then Getting Things Happening on the Ground

Indigenous engagement in the second tranche of NHT funding, or NHT 2, still seems to focus on and revolve around the idea of consultation. There is very little indication to suggest that *consultation* in this context actually involves the preparation of regional NRM plans to better

reflect Indigenous cultural perspectives or aspirations. The reality is that the national benchmark for serious Indigenous engagement in the new NRM arrangements is low and will depend on the commitment of NRM regional bodies, the capacity of Indigenous groups, and regional Indigenous organisations to ensure equitable participation in the process.

Although historically Indigenous peoples of the Wet Tropics have been largely left out of the plethora of planning processes undertaken to date, there has certainly been a dramatic improvement on the part of government and the private sector to consult with Indigenous peoples regarding land and sea management issues. At times, Indigenous concerns do not always conform to, nor can be addressed by, these consultative processes. Invariably, this disjuncture between bureaucratic objectives and Aboriginal aspirations leads to a notable lack of real outcomes for Indigenous peoples, and a healthy skepticism on their part about the benefits of being involved in these consultations in the first place. The experience of frustration and dissatisfaction with official structures and approaches was certainly identified by a number of Traditional Owners as a stumbling block to their ongoing and committed involvement in the planning process during the initial development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and Aboriginal Plan. The delivery of real outcomes and identifiable benefits is one of the many challenges facing everyone in the post-Aboriginal Plan period.

The Capacity of Indigenous Communities

The resources and time needed to effectively engage with Traditional Owners is often not taken into consideration in regional planning processes. As is the case in the rest of Aboriginal Australia, Wet Tropics Traditional Owners spend an inordinate amount of their time and energy attending meetings with various agencies and organisations to discuss issues affecting their lives and their traditional lands. All too often there is an expectation in the non-Indigenous community that the involvement of Traditional Owners in these externally-generated 'consultative' processes is based upon goodwill. Little consideration is given to meeting transport costs or providing payment for Indigenous advice and input. In this scenario, it is all too easy to account for the lack of Indigenous involvement in terms of Aboriginal apathy, rather than understanding the marginality or absence of Indigenous people as one of the effects of profound economic and social disadvantage. Mindful of this pressing issue, the Indigenous Technical Support Group played an important role in lobbying the parties and players involved in the NHT roll-out to secure sufficient resources to ensure effective Indigenous engagement. In this respect, gaining the support of the Rainforest CRC and FNQ NRM Ltd was a critical achievement and step forward in the planning process.

Real Indigenous Involvement in Decision-Making Structures at the Regional, State and National Levels

While the development of the Aboriginal Plan and the mainstream Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan have achieved substantial on-ground Indigenous engagement, it is apparent that Indigenous people are not involved in the higher-level administrative and governance structures of the NHT program. Yet it is at this level that strategic decisions affecting the viability of regional plans are made.

On the surface of things, it would appear that the stated NHT objectives of institutional change and capacity-building do not apply to the NHT framework itself. Linked to the realisation of these two objectives is the question of whether non-Indigenous notions of 'representation' necessarily constitute appropriate means for expressing Indigenous concerns and aspirations in NHT structures and frameworks. For example, although the Commonwealth Indigenous NRM Guidelines recommend that the newly-established regional NRM boards have a minimum of two Indigenous representatives, in reality, at least within the Wet Tropics, there is only one Indigenous Director out of the eight directors which comprise the Board. While Traditional Owners have voiced their dissatisfaction with this governance

arrangement on numerous occasions, the issue of increased Indigenous involvement on the Board for the Wet Tropics NRM Region remains unresolved.

The lessons from the Wet Tropics demonstrate that 'good' engagement occurs at several levels and is an ongoing process, rather than a singular event driven by an externally-generated agenda or timeframe. Like the concept of 'capacity-building', *engagement* is a term that is readily misunderstood and may mean different things to different people. For the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics, engagement is based on equity and mutual respect. It involves exchanging information, sharing responsibilities and equitably distributing all benefits. It cuts across all stages of the planning process, from high-level negotiations through to active involvement in on-ground projects. Developing a shared understanding of what 'engagement' should look like is a useful starting point, and will certainly avoid miscommunication later on.

Culturally-Appropriate Processes for Indigenous Involvement

Experience suggests that a 'one-size-fits-all' model of Indigenous engagement will not address or achieve the needs and aspirations of Traditional Owners regarding their involvement in the NRM process. In many ways, what occurred in the Wet Tropics came about because of the dissatisfaction experienced by Indigenous people with the way in which their interests were being considered in the development of the new regional arrangements.

Within the Wet Tropics, the way in which Traditional Owners wanted to be engaged in the roll-out of NHT 2 and the structures established to guide this process were determined by Traditional Owners. The pressure to work within government timeframes and meet pre-arranged deadlines while preparing the Aboriginal Plan was a considerable challenge for the Plan project team. However, from the very start of the planning process a methodology and a timeframe for the integration of the Indigenous targets and information into the mainstream Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan were identified and endorsed by Traditional Owners. The initial and ongoing involvement of Traditional Owners in all facets of the planning process has resulted in unanimous support for the Aboriginal Plan by the seventeen Traditional Owner groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region. In this region, ownership and control of the planning process both characterised and defined the nature of Indigenous engagement.

Indigenous Engagement is Everyone's Responsibility

The emergence of a strong Queensland-wide network of Indigenous Project Officers, employed by regional NRM bodies, and the appointment of an Indigenous State Network Coordinator, represent positive steps towards enhanced Indigenous participation in NRM. Developing a separate Aboriginal Plan illustrates the kind of demands and expectations placed upon these Indigenous Project Officers. In the Wet Tropics, only one Indigenous Project Officer has been appointed. This person is responsible for working with each and all of the seventeen Indigenous groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region. Economic and social disadvantage, coupled with a history of exclusion from planning processes, has meant that Aboriginal groups require considerable resources and support in order to effectively participate in the new regional NRM arrangements. All too often there is an expectation that the Indigenous Project Officer will deal with all things 'Indigenous', regardless of whether they directly relate to NRM / NHT issues. Some of the many activities and responsibilities of the Wet Tropics NRM Indigenous Project Officer are summarised below:

- Supporting Traditional Owner groups and Indigenous groups throughout the region;
- Supporting FNQ NRM Ltd staff members to increase their awareness of Aboriginal issues and to liaise with Aboriginal people;
- Communication of information to Aboriginal people;

- Coordination of transport to enable people to attend meetings;
- Supporting Aboriginal groups to develop project ideas and write funding applications;
- Facilitating the development partnerships between Aboriginal groups and NRM stakeholders;
- Liaising and networking with Aboriginal organisations;
- Supporting Aboriginal people to plan for and manage all aspects of projects;
- Provide advice for FNQ NRM Ltd policy relating to Traditional Owners issues; and
- Coordination of Indigenous Advisory groups for FNQ NRM Ltd.

Rather than 'black-boxing' Indigenous engagement, the lessons learned from the Wet Tropics experience highlights the need for all staff employed by regional NRM bodies to work with Indigenous groups within their catchment areas.

Challenges for the Future

So far, feedback from Traditional Owners and others involved in the planning process of the Aboriginal Plan suggests that the approach taken has been successful in providing a vehicle for developing and communicating Indigenous peoples' aspirations for resource management in the Wet Tropics. While key elements of the Aboriginal Plan have already been integrated into the 'mainstream' Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, the challenge of implementing the integrated Plan lies ahead. For the purposes of enhancing Indigenous engagement in NRM elsewhere in Australia, it will be important to monitor the effectiveness of how this and other Plan-related challenges are met in the future.

**PART TWO:
PROCEEDINGS OF ABORIGINAL PLAN
WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS**

Edited by Libby Larsen and Sandra Pannell

PREFACE TO THE PROCEEDINGS

In a recent review of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management (NRM) Region is identified as a “case study of exemplary consultation with Indigenous communities” (Worth 2005:4). While this observation is correct insofar as the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Plan represents the first plan of its kind in Australia, it incorrectly depicts the nature and agency of Indigenous engagement in the NHT process. As reported by Smyth, Szabo and George (2004), the Aboriginal Plan is the direct result of “Aboriginal people of the region taking control and ownership of their own planning process” (2004: 137). While government authorities and local NRM bodies belatedly develop national and state ‘Indigenous Engagement Protocols’, it is apparent that throughout Australia Traditional Owners have engaged with, and responded to, the planning process in a myriad of ways. In the push to peddle NHT success stories, particularly Indigenous ones, the steps taken by Aboriginal people as they strive to achieve their aspirations for country and culture, are often overlooked in the bureaucratic emphasis upon tangible outputs, such as a plan. Part Two of this report, Proceedings of Aboriginal Plan Workshops and Meetings (Workshop Proceedings), documents some of those steps, and the many challenges confronted by Traditional Owners in the process of redressing their marginalisation in the NHT / NRM planning process.

One of the key functions of Part Two is to stand as a historical record of ‘Indigenous engagement’ in the development of the Aboriginal Plan. As the following workshop proceedings indicate, the culmination of Indigenous aspirations and efforts in the form of the Aboriginal Plan was not a straightforward or brief process. For Traditional Owners, achieving recognition within the framework of NHT entailed a lot of hard work – talking to government people, working together with researchers, lobbying politicians, getting support from their ‘mob’. In this sense, the proceedings point to the determination and commitment of Traditional Owners in this part of Australia to play a key role in the multi-billion dollar, nation-wide experiment in environmental management and social change called NHT.

With an eye to history and the future value of these proceedings as a record of what ‘really’ happened, the original format and content of these documents has largely been retained. For publication purposes, minor typesetting changes have been instigated. While a number of presentations are narrated in the third person, in order to convey the sense of immediacy and topicality of proceedings presentations, the active tense is retained where possible.

**WET TROPICS REGIONAL
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FORUM**

PROCEEDINGS

14-15 March 2002

Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns

**Prepared by R. Hill and M. J. Nursey-Bray
with contributions from R. Foley, J. Fenton, L. Talbot,
M. George, R. Nobel and J. Epong**

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- Dr Rosemary Hill (Rainforest CRC) for taking notes throughout the Forum to enable the preparation of this report.

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The forum was held at the Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns. Thank you to all of the speakers and attendees.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management (NRM) Forum was held on 14-15 March 2002. It provided an opportunity for Rainforest Indigenous peoples to present and discuss ideas about land and sea management, biodiversity conservation, and in particular to address future options relating to Stage 2 of the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust program (NHT 2).

The Forum was hosted by the NHT Bushcare Program and organised with the support of North Queensland Land Council (NQLC), Giringun Elders and Reference Group, the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Rainforest CRC.

Forum presentations outlined new government policy and programs for sustainable land management and conservation. A number of case studies highlighted Indigenous approaches to land and sea management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics, Cape York Peninsula (CYP), the Queensland Murray Darling Commission (QMDC), the Green Corps at Badjuballa, and the Cairns TAFE Caring For Country program.

The Forum recognised that Indigenous people have major rights and interests in natural resources in the Wet Tropics. For example, Indigenous peoples' Native Title rights may extend over more than eighty percent of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA), and over other land outside of the WTWHA, with the exception of freehold lands. Indigenous people in the Wet Tropics region number approximately 18,000 and account for around twelve percent of the total regional population. Traditional Owners, governments and other stakeholders are currently negotiating the determination of Native Title through processes established under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* and associated Queensland legislation. Nevertheless, Native Title rights are afforded protection under Australia's common law regardless of whether they have been recognised through statutory law.

The Forum identified major deficiencies regarding Indigenous participation in the new regional natural resource management arrangements developed as part of the implementation of Stage 2 of the NHT in the Wet Tropics. Figures from the first funding round for the NHT program demonstrate that Indigenous peoples received only one percent of available funding, despite being major landholders. Workshops and discussions conducted during the Forum identified the key factors leading to the current deficiencies as:

- Inadequate consultation methods;
- Poor Indigenous representation in planning leading to poor mechanisms and structures to support project development and implementation in the current environment and natural resource management programs; and
- Deficient new NHT structures for the Wet Tropics Region that exclude Indigenous people from a decision-making role in relation to funding, planning, and other key issues.

The Forum agreed that the allocation of all Commonwealth and State natural resource management funds, including NHT 2 funds, needs to recognise and be complementary to current processes involving the recognition of Indigenous rights by State and Federal Governments, including:

- The Interim Negotiating Forum (INF), established to negotiate a Regional Framework Agreement (RFA) for WTWHA;
- The various claims for recognition of Native Title;
- Ongoing negotiations for the establishment of joint management of national parks; and

- Development of a cultural heritage re-listing proposal for the WTWHA.

The Forum strongly emphasised the need for greater input and participation by Wet Tropics *Bama*¹ in decision-making, and the need for equitable allocation of funds to manage country. Key factors that would enhance the management of country include:

- Active Indigenous participation in NHT 2;
- Recognition of and respect for existing traditional knowledge about Wet Tropics country;
- Effective representation of Indigenous people in any new regional board;
- Development of an Indigenous plan for natural resource management in the region;
- Renewal of the spiritual self and internal wisdom within Indigenous peoples; and
- A guaranteed percentage of NHT 2 funds for Indigenous projects.

At the conclusion of the Forum, and after consideration of several options, three resolutions were unanimously passed that represent a way forward. If adopted these resolutions would address some of the issues raised during this workshop. The resolutions were as follows:

Workshop Resolution 1:

That there be a 70:30 majority of Indigenous representation on the Steering Committee to develop the proposed Wet Tropics Regional Plan for NHT 2, and that the process be halted until there is seventy percent Indigenous representation.

Workshop Resolution 2:

That the Indigenous participants at the Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management (NRM) Forum endorse a majority membership on the proposed Wet Tropics Regional NRM Board, and a guaranteed percentage of fifty percent of the total funding for Indigenous projects.

Workshop Resolution 3:

That \$60,000 be made available for urgent and proper consultation with Indigenous landholders for the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. A regional workshop for all Rainforest *Bama* should be organised as soon as possible.

¹ **Editorial Comment:** In a number of Rainforest Aboriginal languages, the term *Bama* refers to an Aboriginal person.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY ONE

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Seith Fourmile

Traditional Owner, *Gimuy-walbu Yidinji*

Welcome here on behalf of the *Gimuy-walbu Yidinji*, I would like to say “welcome” on behalf of everyone. On behalf of my father and my people, I would like to welcome you here onto our country.

When we come here we are going to sit down and talk like before about business on country, like my great grandfather and our grandfather. Our name, Fourmile, came because our camp was four miles from town. That’s how we got our name. Some people don’t realise what’s in a name, especially because of dispossession. In our clan group we have Cannons as well, everyone knows Cannon farm. When you sit down here, all listen. Just like to say, “welcome you here”.

FORUM INTRODUCTION

Rowan Foley

North Queensland Land Council

I pay my respects to the Traditional Owners. My name is Rowan Foley and I come from the *Wondunna* Clan of the *Badtjala* people. I will be facilitating this workshop.

I am currently a Planning and Research Officer with the North Queensland Land Council. I am also a member of the State Assessment Panel for NHT Stage 1 and have worked on the Cape York Regional Assessment Panel. I am reliably informed that of all the NHT applications in Queensland only one percent has gone to Indigenous communities. We need to improve this in NHT Stage 2. In the Wet Tropics, Aboriginal groups are one of the largest land-holding groups. We need to become part of the political economy.

How are we the largest land-holding group? Seventy to eighty percent of land in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is currently under claim and will be going through consent determinations and handed back. In the next five to ten years land will come under the direct control of Aboriginal people through Native Title claims and also through the development of the Regional Agreement negotiated by the Interim Negotiating Forum (INF).

Currently, there is an Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT) for the INF elected through a meeting of 130 Wet Tropics Aboriginal people. We also have Sherry Marchand here who is a researcher who will be recording the negotiations. It will be wonderful to give the Inuit a copy of our negotiations and also to have been able to receive a copy of theirs to establish Nunavut².

² **Editorial Comment:** After years of struggle, the traditional rights and interests of Inuit people were legally recognised by the Canadian Government, and the Inuit territory and government of Nunavut was established on 1 April 1999.

Joint management of national parks are under negotiation and the cultural heritage re-listing of the Wet Tropics is currently being advanced through a research project. When it was listed for its natural heritage values the cultural heritage values were not on the agenda.

We are now engaged in four processes to establish our Aboriginal rights in the Wet Tropics region:

- Native Title;
- Regional Agreement;
- Joint management; and
- Cultural heritage listing.

Although these processes are taking place, people are still locked out of the political economy. According to Marx (1941) “no matter how greatly the systems of distribution may vary at different stages of society, it should be possible here, as in the case of production to discover the common features and to confound and eliminate all historical differences in formulating general human laws. For example, the slave, the serf, the wage-labourer – all receive a quantity of food, which enable them to exist as slave, serf and wage-labourers. The conqueror, the official, the landlord, the monk or the Levite, who respectively live on tribute, taxes, rent, alms, and the tithe – all receive a part of the social products which is determined by laws different from those which determine the part received by the slave... all production is the appropriation of nature by the individual within them and through a definite form of society”.

One percent of NHT funding has gone to Indigenous people in Queensland. If we accept one percent, it will continue. It is fair to say that as the majority land-holding group we should have a much larger share.

All production is appropriation of nature. People’s land has been appropriated – people’s land has been taken and turned into sugar cane farms and an economy developed. People are not part of that political economy even though it was their land taken in the first place.

People need to participate in regional fora, they must have effective representation on regional boards. Currently, consideration is being given to the establishment of a regional board for the NHT Stage 2. If Aboriginal people do not participate in this Board they will be locked out of the economy once again.

That’s all from me. Consultation is important. However, when it comes down to critical decisions Traditional Owners need to be actively managing and controlling those decisions.

TOWARDS STRONG INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

Allan Dale

General Manager Resource Policy, Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines

I would like to express my respect to the Traditional Owners and my best wishes in going into the INF process. When working with Traditional Owner (TO) groups to establish the negotiations for Regional Agreements, I recognised how hard it was to get going. So congratulations in getting this far – but I recognise there is still a long way to go. You are entering new territory for both Traditional Owners and government. Governments previously saw Traditional Owners as stakeholders rather than landowners and land managers. So this is the beginning of a completely different relationship. If you are seen as a stakeholder you are marginalised.

I'm not going to try and paint a rosy picture of what government can do. There are positive moves in the way government has changed its thinking but there are not going to be massive moves. A lot of work needs to go on in government. However, I'd like to talk about some of the things that are starting to happen now that might make it easier in the next ten to twenty years.

Queensland Government Policy Directions

We have seen a turn around at the George Street³ level in a bit of understanding that if Traditional Owners are landholders, then they are serious clients of government for land management support. We in government haven't previously seen this client – previously most of our services were directed towards agricultural user and miners. Government is starting to recognise at the highest level that Traditional Owners are major clients. I'm not suggesting a rosy future but things are starting to change.

An Emerging Policy

For the first time in Queensland all natural resource management departments are starting to understand the importance of supporting strong Indigenous land and sea management groups.

I am glad to be able to get some feedback from Traditional Owners on these changes. This is quite a recent discussion pushed on by some different pressures. It is quite a significant shift – even a year ago there was not an understanding of what an Indigenous Land and Sea Management Agency might be and look like, even though some have been going for ten to fifteen years.

Indigenous Land and Sea Management

Groups are emerging at:

- Local scale (e.g. Kowanyama);
- Sub-regional scale (e.g. Girringun); and
- Regional scale (e.g. Fitzroy Basin).

³ **Editorial Comment:** A colloquial term for Queensland Government and its bureaucracies, many of which are located in George Street, Brisbane.

These organisations really pulled themselves up from nothing with their own resources. These groups are saying that they want much more than to be at the table – they want a fundamental role in management.

Government's Historical Record

Our past record:

- We have not viewed Traditional Owners or groups of Traditional Owners as key clients;
- We have not supported groups to build their land and sea management issues in regional agreements / ILUA; and
- We do not have the best record at facilitating TO involvement in our planning processes.

For example, getting to the INF – it took the government nearly two years to respond to the review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and get the negotiations going. Partly this is because of 'silo' mentality – departments are broken up into groups. There is not much cross-department involvement in water plans, regional plans for vegetation management, and so forth.

Key Drivers for a Re-think on Dealing with Traditional Owners

There are a number of key drivers for a rethink on dealing with Traditional Owners. They include:

- Indigenous people are demanding it;
- Implications of the Native Title Act;
- 'Cape York Partnership' process;
- 'Ten Year Partnership' process; and
- National Ministerial Council seeking cohesive approach to reconciliation.

When all Ministers from the state get together at the Canberra level, more push for change.

Cape York Partnership and the Ten Year Partnership – Driving the Re-think

As a result of the Cape York and Ten Year Partnership initiatives there:

- Has been a land cultural and natural resources working group formed (State agency group at the State level);
- Broad dialogue undertaken as part of the Ten Year/Cape York Partnership process;
- Departments draw on this material to build some key directions;
- Upcoming discussions with Traditional Owner representative bodies, Queensland Indigenous Working Group, etc; and
- Can we draw in other delivery partners?

Principles Underpinning the Agreements

Key principles:

- Indigenous people are more than just stakeholders in land and sea management areas;
- Indigenous communities want to influence the State and national natural resource management agenda;

- Partnership is essential; and
- Monitoring our effort is critical.

NHT is a good example – the ‘one percent’ is a classical example of marginalisation of people’s interest. Partnership might sound a bit rosy and I know it will take a long time to get to a position where partnership is effective – this is not only a concern for Aboriginal people but also, for example, for pastoralists. Having figures like the one percent shows very bluntly that Aboriginal people are not influencing the policy.

Key Strategies

We want to really start to build up those existing land and sea management agencies, including:

- Support Traditional Owners to access and manage their land / resource interests;
- Strong negotiating involvement in planning and management; and
- Better quality service delivery.

This is quite a shift for government and it has taken a lot of work to get here. When forums are happening at the regional level for vegetation management – the question is how do we support negotiated involvement. This is not just about having a seat at the Board. Government has a lot of services, but the level of access by Traditional Owners is very low, for example the Department of Primary Industries’ (DPI) extension services are not used by Aboriginal people at all.

Supporting Traditional Owners to Manage Resources

Investing in the needs of Traditional Owner-based land and sea management groups is not about just little bits of money here and there. We want to move to long term core funding and not just a bit of program here or a bit of program there. But it is hard work to shift this debate.

Whole-of-government support is necessary – bringing DNR&M and EPA together to do the same thing – a common approach to supporting the agencies. Regional approaches to the resolution of land access and management needs are important but we haven’t previously had a policy where we can support regional stuff – this has hindered government’s ability to get to the Wet Tropics INF.

Reform in the *Aboriginal Land Act* is gradually happening.

Building a research and development base for Indigenous needs is important – from their point of view rather than having people come and do a little bit and nick off again.

Role of Indigenous Groups

It is important that Indigenous Natural Resource Groups can:

- Build a mandate from their Traditional Owners;
- Build their technical administrative and management capacities; and
- Work closely with representatives and partner potential support partners (e.g. Universities).

Very critical when going into government is that you can keep that one voice approach, constantly working with your people and telling them what's going on. You need to make sure you have all the technical information you need when you come to the negotiating table, given the vast resources that government has. Most Traditional Owner groups know it is difficult to work by themselves, so government needs to support you. You need to build partners with potential support players, where they are a support service.

In *Bama* Country

'Management' means more focus on supporting Traditional Owners to be involved in regional negotiations. There could eventually be a common, cross-government approach to building long term support for regional and local *Bama* groups. However, I need to emphasise that change is slow – it is hard getting shifts at the top level to flow down through the organisations. I want to stress that some of the lead up to getting the INF going was stressing the need for the Aboriginal groups to put the work into getting the mandate from the Aboriginal groups – government needs to support Traditional Owners group to get this mandate.

These changes might lead to a more cohesive government response via the INF. We are starting to get a more cohesive approach between agencies like DNR&M and the EPA – so far there has been a bit of a silo approach, the hardest approach for government is 'corralling' everyone up so government is actually speaking with one voice. I don't want to paint a picture that is overall rosy, just saying that some cracks are starting to appear. We need to get some feedback from people about whether this is the right direction – we are absolutely looking at getting some feedback.

Questions and Comments

Question: How receptive are the local people in Cairns and also local government compared to George Street⁴ – it is local government that has to give up a lot of control – how receptive are they at letting go?

Comment: There are a lot of individuals out there who already think this way. But that is not the overall culture [...] starting to try to change local government. At the local government office in Brisbane they are interested in trying to start buying into this change but recognise that this will be hard. Currently there is a positive start to discussing it.

Question: When family services started handing back, even with Main Roads, they gave some back but didn't give a lot – like QBuild. Will they do the same with QPWS? They will start to lose control if management goes back to Aboriginal people. How receptive are they to letting go of that?

Comment: That's the thing that hits at the heart of agencies – changing the feeling of "can I actually let go of control of this" is definitely a cultural issue with government – but I'm really saying for the first time (we are using George Street), saying we should definitely be handing this back to the Aboriginal people but we have to get the change in thinking both at George Street and locally to get this happening. This thinking has never been at the George Street level historically before so ultimately locals have to report up so it will eventually change – but we won't change the world overnight. But we are starting to look at that sort of devolution. However, there is still going to be head bashing for you guys for years to come.

⁴ **Editorial Comment:** This refers to George Street, Brisbane.

- Question:** Have to say that some continuity in government should help – given the current government mandate would have to say they will be there for six to eight years – so if you can get that mind set changing from the top, it will be hard for the coalition to change it back.
- Comment:** We all know there are cycles but if we can get some of this real cultural change inside the agencies and more importantly build the capacity of groups on the ground it will be impossible for groups to go back.
- Question:** But what about people losing their jobs as jobs go over to Aboriginal people? For example, when the government left Yarrabah they took the ambulance and fire station with them, they're only coming back now. I'm concerned that this could happen again.
- Question:** It is good to hear a change in culture, fundamentally changed by the *Native Title Act* – what frustrates representative bodies is the unwillingness of government to engage through the Native Title process on these very issues – a number of parallel process occurring on water resource management, INF – government is unwilling to engage through Native Title on simple things like national park management – lots of Traditional Owner groups are asking why aren't we dealing with this through the Native Title process – rather than through your process? Why can't we engage through the Native Title process?
- Comment:** There are lots of pressures on government – not just Native Title, but international agreements, biodiversity, so can use some of that pressure – needs to be an integrated response, but part of the real barriers – one is the 'silo' one, the control of budgets.
- Question:** Observation that Magnetic Island meeting – met with QPWS regional directors and managers for the first time to speak about joint management – previously Native Title. Had to get them there to talk about connections report, Native Title consent determinations – first real discussions on many of these issues. They were also briefed on Native Title processes. This was the first time that the Native Title Representative Body had an opportunity to speak to QPWS about connection reports and consent determinations. It was the first real discussion that had taken place on many of these issues, despite more than twenty years of concerns.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST STAGE 2

Sarah Chalkley

NHT 2 Taskforce, Environment Australia

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and thank them for welcoming us here today. I am here to talk to you about the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and the processes involved and the resources it will provide to help the broader community to manage country.

I have been in Canberra for three years where I have been running the Coastcare Program – we have been proud to include Indigenous people and we are happy to fund a Coastcare facilitator who is dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities in Queensland. As part of my involvement in Coastcare, I was invited to join a task force to consider issues associated with the extension of the NHT. I have been working on the Trust extension [NHT 2] now for about six months.

Six years ago there was a decision to sell Telstra and use some of that money to establish the NHT, with \$1.25 billion funding to ‘help conserve, repair and replenish Australia’s natural capital infrastructure’. Another \$1 billion has been allocated for the next five years. So we have been looking at how that money will be allocated and delivered. The NHT extension is only one small part of where Indigenous people can get involved in land and sea management. I am personally really keen to see Indigenous involvement in the Trust extension be improved and the Indigenous involvement be made easier and more accepted by the general community.

Strategic Framework of the Extension to the NHT (NHT 2)

In 2002/2003 to 2006/2007:

- There is \$1.032 billion in new funding; and
- This brings the total NHT funding from 1996/1997 to \$2.5 billion.

The goal of the Trust is to “conserve, repair and replenish Australia’s natural capital infrastructure” (*Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997*).

Four Trust Programs

Under the Trust extension, the existing 23 programs will be simplified into four programs:

- Landcare – will invest in activities that will contribute to reversing land degradation and promoting sustainable agriculture;
- Bushcare – will invest in activities that will contribute to conserving and restoring habitat for our unique flora and fauna;
- Rivercare – will invest in activities that will contribute to improved water quality and environmental condition in our river systems and wetlands; and
- Coastcare – will invest in activities that will contribute to protecting our coastal catchments, ecosystems and the marine environment.

Three Objectives of NHT 2

The Natural Heritage Trust in Stage 2 [NHT 2] will have three objectives:

1. Biodiversity conservation – the conservation of Australia's biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems for native plants and animals;
2. Sustainable use of natural resources – the sustainable use and management of Australia's land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and
3. Building capacity and institutional change – support for individuals, landholders, industry and communities with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use and management.

Building the capacity of you as Indigenous people to get involved and be key players in the Trust extensions is important but equally important is the need to raise the awareness of regional organisations, government and others so that Indigenous issues are recognised and included in all levels of the Trust and environmental management.

Areas of Activity

Long term objectives are to be achieved over a thirty to forty year period, and areas of activity are being established (interim outcomes) against which investment will be made over the five year period from 2002/2003 to 2006/2007. These follow:

Biodiversity Conservation

1. Protecting and restoring the habitat of threatened species threatened ecological communities and migratory birds;
2. Reversing the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation;
3. Protecting and restoring significant freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems;
4. Preventing or controlling the introduction and spread of feral animals, aquatic pests, weeds and other biological threats to biodiversity; and
5. Establishing and effectively managing a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas.

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

6. Improving the condition of natural resources that underpins the sustainability and productivity of resource based industries;
7. Securing access to natural resources for productive purposes; and
8. Encouraging the development of sustainable and profitable management systems for application by landholders and other natural resource managers and users.

Community Capacity Building and Institutional Change

9. Providing landholders, community groups and other natural resource managers with understanding and skills to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management;
10. Establishing institutional and organisational frameworks that promote conservation and ecologically sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Funding Will Be Delivered at Three Levels

So why make changes to the NHT? There have been many reviews done of the Trust including the NHT Mid-term Review and individual program evaluations, there has also been some criticism of the way in which Trust funding under the first phase has been allocated and spent. Comments have been made that the money has been frittered away and is un-strategic. As part of the Trust extension, the money will be invested at the national, regional, and local level and will be more strategic in the way it is allocated and used.

National / State Investment level

Matching State / Territory funding will be sought on a case-by case basis in relation to Australia-wide policy and planning for protected areas, threatened species, introduced weeds and pests, World Heritage, capacity building, resource condition assessments and research.

National funding will be for:

- Commonwealth activities, e.g. International wetland obligations, international water issues;
- Joint Commonwealth and State / Territory activities include cross jurisdictional activities, identified and agreed jointly by the Commonwealth and the States / Territories; and
- Statewide and within-State activities that have been identified and agreed to jointly.

Regional Level

The regional level will become the principal investment pathway and:

- Matching state/territory funding is being sought;
- Will require the development and accreditation of integrated NRM plans;
- Will require the development of an investment strategy;
- Community-based regional bodies will develop and implement the plans; and
- Needs to be integrated with the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Country is being broken into about sixty regions. Each region will be expected to develop an integrated natural resource management plan. Plan development needs to include the whole community and not be developed in isolation by the regional body or consultants without adequate input from the community. The Commonwealth won't accredit a plan and give money for the implementation of the plan unless all the community has been involved. That plan has to cover all natural resource management issues including agriculture issues and environment issues. The plan has to be 'owned' by the whole region and is to help the region with planning ahead into the future – not just to get Trust money.

The region will also be expected to develop an investment strategy for the implementation of the plan upon which Trust funding will be provided. The investment strategy will include priorities, and also the people who we are approaching for money – NHT and the private sector. The boundaries for the sixty or so regions around Australia are currently under development – it will be reasonably consistent with the existing NHT and NRM regions for Australia.

Brad Dorrington commented on the consultation and regional planning process regarding the boundaries – there are so many different boundaries and none of them match up – so will there be more consultation on proposed regional boundaries, to allow people in the region to decide on what is in the regions?

Regional NRM Plans

Regional plans must:

- Be accredited, based on agreed Commonwealth criteria;
- Identify all the NRM issues;
- Develop and then prioritise actions to address these issues; and
- Set resource conditions and management action targets based on agreed national standards.

A key question is what happens before a regional organisation and regional plans are in place. This will take a long time in some regions and it may never happen if there are too many factions in a region or if capacity and / or the population is too low.

Proposed Interim Arrangements

- Foundation funding – for plan development; and
- Priority action funding – to fund priority projects in a region prior to the development of integrated natural resource management plans.

There will be only one interim round unless circumstances justify further interim rounds. Bids will be sought from the regions but could be assessed and prioritised by States and Territories. Commonwealth and States / Territories are to consider acting as joint investors. This proposed interim phase could be similar in some ways to the processes under NHT Stage 1. The timing for the interim proposal has not yet been decided as it is still being discussed between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Regional Investment Issues for Consideration

In developing the regional strategies, matters for consideration include:

- Identification of regional boundaries;
- Based on integrated natural resource management considerations;
- Reflect where possible regional arrangements;
- Where relevant incorporate coast and adjacent waters;
- How to manage regions where capacity is slow to develop;
- Local government engagement;
- Access to funding for Indigenous Australians; and
- Indigenous involvement in regional planning.

Local Investment Level = Local Action Grants

Local action grants will assist groups to undertake small on-ground projects tackling local problems, or to develop projects where there is no regional plan or the project has recognised importance.

Projects:

- To be consistent with the Trust, but not necessarily a priority in the regional strategy;
- Grants of less than \$30,000;
- Predicted release, mid March 2002; and
- Doesn't have to be in a regional plan but has to be consistent with the regional plan.

One of the things I'd really like to make sure of is that the regional bodies have 'real' community representation. We need to make sure that the local land managers (including Traditional Owners) and local government continue to be represented and involved. In some ways it comes down to marketing, marketing to keep the Indigenous issues on the agenda.

Integration with the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

Trust investment will be integrated with the NAP in the 21 priority regions:

- A single accredited plan to target all NRM investment within a region;
- Integrated processes, including delivery of funds and the monitoring and evaluation of performance, and data management;
- Other integration opportunities being explored;
- Capacity building;
- Common accreditation criteria for regional NRM plans;
- Linking investment to changes in institutional arrangements to facilitate sustainable NRM practices and use; and communication activities, particularly at the regional level; and
- Structures for community advice to government.

Questions and Comments

Question: Does the task force have Indigenous representation or involvement with ATSIC?

Comment: No, but we work closely with Indigenous Policy unit of EA [Environment Australia], although not ATSIC.

Question: Are there any mechanisms from Canberra to ensure Indigenous participation? For example, the Burdekin Catchment has no Indigenous involvement.

Comment: There are no strict guidelines about who is going to be on a regional body but it will be outlined in negotiations between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Question: It is fair to say that the State will be doing most of the effort, but the State is not yet clear about its policy.

Comment: There could be an opportunity through this meeting to get some input into some of those government processes.

Question: With the wetlands development, there was a feasibility study undertaken on Trust funding, from NHT money – how can we access that money? Lots of people are gearing towards building wetlands. Cairns has a 2010 Regional Plan, how can we change the mindset to get an Indigenous Plan and not just a Regional Plan in regard to government authorities – we always finish up with just one or two pages. But we actually are the biggest landowners within those regions. What about an Indigenous Plan?

Comment: Under the Trust extension, the Commonwealth will be looking for an integrated natural resource management plan, we don't want 'silo-ed' plans. The whole idea is to ensure the Regional Plan is the best it can possibly be – with all the right people involved. It won't be funded unless all the right people have been included in the development of the Plan. This is not a prescriptive process – there are no rules about who can and can't be involved.

Question: Now who decides who gets grants?

Comment: Local action grants are proposed to be assessed by a State Assessment Panel and then the Natural Heritage Ministerial Board, made up of Ministers Kemp and Truss will make the final decisions.

Question: How are natural resources defined and how will the process cope with the Aboriginal cultural values of those natural resources?

Comment: The integrated natural resource management plans must be inclusive of ALL environment and sustainable agriculture issues in line with the three objectives of the Trust and the ten areas of activity. It is my understanding that cultural heritage issues need to be considered in the context of environmental management and where there are associated environmental outcomes.

Comment: The sort of questions Sarah is getting highlights the fact that people don't understand what happened in [NHT] Stage 1. From my understanding natural and cultural are hard to separate, so I guess it is up to the region to try and reflect that in the Regional Plan.

MOVING TOWARDS REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Brad Dorrington

Executive Officer, Natural Resource Management Board (Wet Tropics) Inc.

I am the Executive Officer with the Natural Resource Management Board for the Wet Tropics (NRM Board). This Board was established under NHT Stage 1 – it is one of thirteen such boards in Queensland, one for each region. Our job was to develop a Strategy for our Region and then to facilitate NHT Stage 1, to make recommendations about which plans and projects fitted our Strategy. Our recommendations then went to a Regional Assessment Panel (RAP) in Townsville for the whole of North Queensland. They ticked some, but not others. Then the rest went to a State RAP before finally going to Canberra.

There was a lag time of about eighteen months between submission and funding, which caused trouble – sometimes people didn't even want to do the project any more. We saw the devolved grant as a way of making some progress. Around this time last year the issue of Indigenous involvement in NHT was identified: one percent of funding is around about right. So we convened a workshop, Traditional Owners got together through the Facilitator and Coordinators network and asked how we could address the problem of such a poor proportion of funding. We came up with a devolved grant that would fund smaller projects on the ground, around \$15,000 each. We put it into our bid and much to our surprise it was not funded. The proposal was from Girringun.

Board Membership

Membership of the previous NRM Board includes:

- Five Agencies – NR&M, DPI, EPA, GBRMPA, WTMA;
- Seven catchment representatives – Herbert, Tully-Murray, Johnstone, Russell-Mulgrave, Barron, Trinity, Mossman;
- Two Local Government representatives – both from FNQ ROC; and
- One [member] each, [representing] community conservation, Indigenous interests and NQRTA. [The] Indigenous representative is the Girringun Elders and Reference Group. They were proponents for the devolved grant in partnership with North Queensland Land Council.

Core Business

Our focus is:

- To develop and maintain a regional strategy for NRM;
- To facilitate the cooperative integration of the NRM effort;
- Strategic investment of NRM funds at a regional scale; and
- Communication of accurate and relevant information.

In terms of administrative arrangements, Queensland has lagged behind New South Wales and Victoria. In the southern states the regional bodies are statutory, effectively a fourth level of government that manages resources at a regional scale, but this is not the case in Queensland.

The Wet Tropics Regional NRM Forum

In August 2001, we called together a Regional NRM Forum. We invited 156 stakeholder groups – 130 attended, but this included only eight Indigenous groups. The outcomes from this meeting were:

- The NRM Board and NQAA [North Queensland Afforestation Association] should form an interim board;
- This group should commence development of a new regional NRM plan; and
- The group should report back to stakeholders with a model of the proposed new Body for consultation.

The Regional Plan is being developed by the Rainforest CRC, and funded by various local governments and the Queensland state government.

Roles of the Regional Body

The proposed roles for the new Regional Body are to:

- Develop and monitor the Regional NRM Plan;
- Liaise with agencies, authorities and other bodies in order to promote integrated and sustainable NRM;
- Attract and leverage investment and provide financial accountability;
- Provide adequate public access to information and effectively communicate decisions made by the body; and
- Select and use appropriate NRM tools such as incentive mechanisms and education.

The Commonwealth and State wanted a small Body, but stakeholders wanted it large. Many support functions will be sourced out, such as to the Rainforest CRC and others. There will be regional planning workshops.

Regional Arrangements – Indigenous Involvement

Indigenous representatives will be nominated and elected by Indigenous groups in the region and may include representatives from Land Councils, Aboriginal Corporations, Community Councils and Reference Groups. A consultative process led by Indigenous groups will determine this membership and mechanisms for participation. This large group is a stakeholder group but it has been driven home to me this morning that Traditional Owners believe that they are landowners and land managers rather than stakeholders.

What we meant by regional arrangements was not just representation. At a regional strategy workshop in Brisbane we were actually workshopping how to engage Traditional Owners in regional structures. In a lot of cases it was difficult to identify who the groups are, so we are now trying to develop a data base of who we would be talking to that could help to foster relationships. We are not prescribing numbers⁵.

⁵ **Editorial Comment:** Mr Dorrington's presentation at the Forum included a proposed model and Board Structure for the NHT 2 funded NRM Body. This proposed model and Board Structure formed the basis of much of the discussion for the remainder of the Forum. However, the material has been withdrawn from the report at Mr Dorrington's request. Other changes to the substance of the paper as presented have also been made at Mr Dorrington's request.

Questions and Comments

Question: You should work through the NQLC to help find Traditional Owners very sensitive data.

Comment: The regional directory will be up on the web.

Question: You say it is not a numbers game – but we know it is a numbers game, the proposed structure that has marginalised Indigenous people. I wish you luck, but I can't see that structure fitting in with the aspirations of Indigenous people.

Comment: We have spent a lot of time over this structure – I would like to stress there is still hope for discussion.

Question: When you get all these Local Governments in, you should have the Traditional Owners for each of those Shires in as well⁶.

Comment: Most of the land that will become Traditional Owners' land is former state land. There seems to be a great perception that the state has been using big chunks of money to manage this land – I would like to point out that there is currently little money going into the management of this land.

Question: We are currently not involved through the local government – there is a problem with being seen as a percentage game.

Comment: I suggest that you need to rethink the whole model – once you have stacked it with this many people from local government, industry, etc. it cannot possibly work.

Comment: The main argument is getting the money. We have to look at representation, how our representatives can get the issues onto the table.

Comment: Board's decision-making process will be consensus.

Question: If Local government can't trust each other, and all want representation, how are we going to talk to them?

Comment: One suggestion is that they might have to look at the Board structure again based on the feedback to the consultation paper.

Comment: Consultation Paper has been developed by the Interim Regional Body between NRM Board and NQAA – combined Executives, four from each body including: Charley Loudon (farmer), Peter Gilbey (government man), Jax Bergersen (Envirocare), Tip Byrne (Mayor of Cardwell Shire), Mike Berwick (Mayor of Douglas Shire), Anne Portess (Mayor of Herberton Shire), Barry Moyle (Mayor of Johnstone Shire) and Sue Vize (NQAA).

Comment: Management decisions will be made at the Executive level – as far as projects go, the Regional Plan and the Investment Plan are critical. We are moving beyond the application mindset – the challenge now is to be involved in the planning process.

⁶ **Editorial Comment:** Discussion arose about the inequities inherent in the model and board structure proposed for the new NRM body.

CAPE YORK PARTNERSHIPS – LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT

Noel Pearson

Cape York Partnerships

Noel Pearson discussed a wide range of strategies for improving Indigenous engagement and representation with the Forum participants. At Noel's request, the Editorial Panel agreed that these discussions would not be included in the Report.

Other relevant information can be found online at www.balkanu.com and www.capecyorkpartnerships.com.

MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Josh Gibson

Manager, Area Conservation Program, Wet Tropics Management Authority

I head up a program at Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA), called the Area Conservation Program. We also have an Aboriginal Resource Management Section – we have Lisa, Dale, Margaret, and Chris from that section here today. I'm new to the WTMA and a lot of these processes. I worked up here in north Queensland for about twenty years, and studied here. I'm here today really for two reasons – to listen and to share some information about management agreements. Noel touched a little bit on management agreements and provided you with a snapshot about what Management Agreements actually are. They also do have a strategic role.

Wet Tropics Management Agreements

These are a special form of agreement under the *Wet Tropics [Management] Plan 1998*:

- Voluntary, negotiated cooperative agreements;
- Must add to the protection or better management of the [Wet Tropics] World Heritage Area;
- Reconciling people's rights and community development aspirations with Wet Tropics legal obligations;
- Recognising and protecting Native Title rights;
- A way to share the effort, costs and benefits of protecting the World Heritage Area;
- Each party needs to be completely happy with the terms of any proposed agreement before it is finalised; and
- Legally binding contracts that can cover any length of time.

'Wet Tropics' provides a blanket or layer over the rest of the tenures and land in that region. If I want to see whether I can do a road, I need to look to the Plan, the zones and the rules.

Why would someone want to enter into a Management Agreement? Firstly it is a very powerful tool in reconciling people's rights and community aspirations with Wet Tropics obligations – this includes Native Title holders.

Mona Mona Community Management Agreement

Lots of people in the room today have been involved in the Mona Mona Agreement, so I would like some input from those people. Basically it was two-stage process. Initially there was a request to build a rodeo ground. The proposed rodeo ground was inconsistent with Wet Tropics Plan [*Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (QLD)*] but it was agreed to proceed on the basis of rehabilitation providing a conservation benefit overall. This led on to a larger agreement that dealt with the community settlement.

Agreement outcomes included:

- Care for and repair the natural and cultural values of Mona Mona for present and future generations;
- Development of community facilities and infrastructure;
- Sustainable and culturally-appropriate economic development (grazing, plantation forestry);
- Use of resources; and
- Protection of Native Title rights in a way that benefits the World Heritage Area.

The Agreement also recognised the need for the development of other plans:

- Pest management plan (weed control);
- Fire management plan;
- Grazing management plan;
- Rehabilitation plan; and
- Fencing plan.

The Agreement also provides for resourcing:

- Information – expert advice on issues;
- Capacity building – training;
- Commission joint planning exercises;
- Assistance in preparing grant applications; and
- Funding (ranger wages and equipment) to contribute to the management of the land to World Heritage standards.

Now if we go back to the Wet Tropics Plan [*Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (QLD)*] itself and the zoning map, special provisions now exist that vary what was in the Plan for that section according to the Mona Mona agreement. The Mona Mona Management Agreement dealt with a lot of issues. But a management agreement can exist in a lot of different forms – it can be just one person or a neighbour and just focus for example on grazing. It can be very simple. Management agreements now can occur as a result of a tenure transfer or an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) like the *Yalanji* ILUA. It is an intention that the agreed outcomes will be formalised through a management agreement. That is how any changes will be formalised through the Plan itself.

Management agreements provide flexibility for recognising rights in a way that protects the World Heritage Area. I didn't want to go into more detail, just wanted to provide information about management agreements. At the end of the day it also comes down to resources. It can take years to negotiate an agreement but we need to be able to implement these on the ground. I look forward to workshopping these issues over the next couple of days.

Questions and Comments

Question: In regards to management plans, people accept this, can I put in a management plan for 100,000 ha of area near Cairns?

Comment: You can as a landholder, or through something out of Native Title like ILUA – it depends upon the basis for which the management agreement is being struck. It can be small or large.

Question: If we put a plan together over all the *Yidinji* lands in the World Heritage Area, 230,000 ha, how can we be resourced in the same way that they are resourced⁷?

⁷ **Editorial Comment:** No response to this question was recorded as part of these proceedings.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Melissa George

Aboriginal Traditional Owner Liaison Officer, Burdekin Dry Tropics Group

Burdekin Dry Tropics

Firstly, I would like to say that before I was asked to present here I had been talking up cultural resource management with Traditional Owners and ultimately running down the Burdekin Dry Tropics Group (BDTG) for their lack of Indigenous involvement. I am now working for the BDTG. There could be something here of use to others. The Burdekin Catchment is very large, and now has sub-regional and regional processes – there are at least thirty different Traditional Owner groups within, which have to date been excluded. I'm a bit over the concept of natural resource planning, I think it is about looking after culture.

Process to Date

In 1997 the Burdekin Dry Tropics Group developed a regional strategy and three sub-regional strategies for the Rangelands, the Bowen Floodplains and the Townsville-Thuringowa Coastal Plains.

Their vision of the future is “to provide a high quality of life for current and future generations through the maintenance of viable natural ecosystems and the development of economically sustainable production and urban systems.”

Their overall goal is “to facilitate sustainable natural resource management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics through the development of true partnerships.”

Issues to be Addressed

The main issues have been identified as:

- Catchment management and awareness;
- Water management and quality;
- Vegetation management;
- Habitat and biodiversity protection;
- Pest management;
- Soil conservation;
- Coastal and marine area management; and
- Social and economic issues.

How Did We Get Here?

Over the last three to four years, consultation has been undertaken with identified stakeholders and the wider community, including about six Traditional Owner groups, who were spoken to at broader community meetings.

Three sub-regional groups have formed. These now have their own community natural resource management strategies:

- Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG);
- Burdekin-Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC); and
- Townsville-Thuringowa Natural Resource and Environment Forum (NaREF)

The sub-regional plans have virtually no Indigenous content. Only one of thirty Traditional Owner groups had its aspirations expressed in the sub-regional strategy.

What is Happening Now?

Current points include:

- Appointment of Aboriginal Traditional Owner Liaison;
- What the Board expects is unrealistic – 56 days have been allocated to involve Traditional Owners; and
- What do Traditional Owners want? Each Traditional Owner group has its own aspirations.

Cultural resource management planning is poorly understood by the wider community. For example, key questions like "culture and nature, are they different?" have not been addressed. Managing a resource for cultural maintenance and sustainability and for ensuring intergenerational equity is not understood.

What is at Stake?

There are quite a lot of resources at stake:

- National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality has \$3.92 million for the Burdekin Catchment in 2002/2003; and
- NHT Stage 2 is \$1 billion over five years.

The key question is what size piece of pie will be ours? I guess the answer is up to us.

Structures of Involvement in the Burdekin

The membership of Burdekin Board consists of:

- Chair (pastoralist);
- Science / Academia (CSIRO / also social scientist);
- Local Government east and west;
- Burdekin Rangelands;
- Burdekin-Bowen;
- Townsville-Thuringowa Coastal Plains;
- ATSIC observer; and
- DNR&M advisory.

It is now my job to get Murriss involved in the Regional NRM process. In Queensland we have 'CCC' – cane, cotton and cows. If this is how it exists, how will we get involved? We need to consider whether we have our own structures / processes to ensure that Traditional Owners

within the region are included, and not as another stakeholder group, but as one that has a legitimate role to play in decision making.

I have been considering the structure being considered by the Queensland Murray Darling Committee (QDMC).

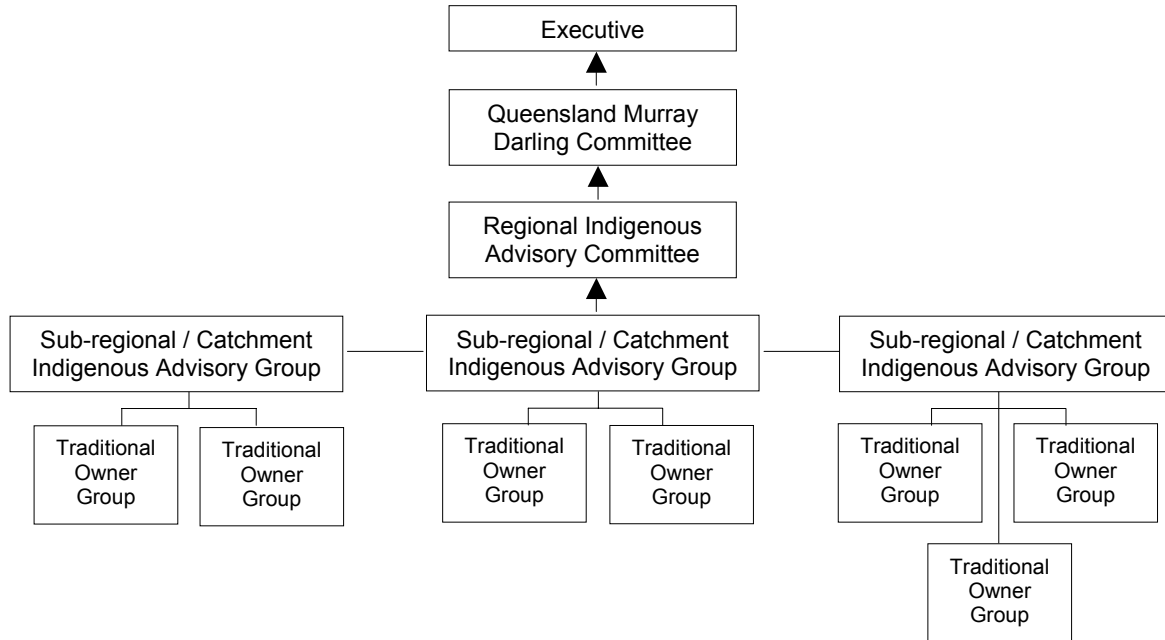


Figure 5: Management structure under consideration by the Queensland Murray Darling Committee.

Compared with the proposed structure that was on the board this morning for the Wet Tropics, the QDMC structure is more workable. We have been trying to get fifty percent of green corps teams to be made up of young Murri people. Work for the dole, to the best of my knowledge, will only consider Indigenous teams if the work is on culturally sensitive areas. Any work on our country is considered culturally sensitive. I'm quite sure they would be happy to see us all doing nothing. It is quite interesting talking to *migaloo*⁸ people who hold land on the Burdekin about country – it is news to them that Aboriginal groups have freehold title – Landcare groups are not aware of Indigenous landholding groups. It's going to take a long time for the groups there to get used to it. We usually only hear about the project when it's finished. That has to change – there has to be a turn around. We need to be actively involved.

One other thing that has been happening in the Burdekin Catchment is the WAMP [Water Allocation Management Planning] – I pulled it off the web about two weeks ago. Comments on 22 March said there would be a working group established outside the technical group for Indigenous community consultation. How are we going to respond if we don't know what the process is about? This is effectively signing away our rights to our water – so we need to be able to change this – need to establish our own structures at local, sub-regional and regional levels.

That's about it. Thanks.

⁸ In a number of Rainforest Aboriginal languages, the term *migaloo* refers to an Anglo-Australian.

Questions and Comments

- Comment:* Please don't kick us in the head for our structure – other structures like the BDT structure and the QMDC structure were voted down by the meeting in August. I think the structure you have put up is excellent – it might be that it is best for Indigenous groups to feed in on the side.
- Comment:* I think it has to be 50:50 so there is some equality. I'm just putting up some alternatives here.
- Comment:* The terminology is about an advisory group but I think it has to be more about an Indigenous board. I'm worried more about linkage down rather than negotiations between the Indigenous [Advisory] Group and the QMDC – perhaps these two groups should sit beside each other at the same level in the structure to enable negotiations. There needs to be investment in the Indigenous group. So there are my three worries with structures put up from the Murray Darling Commission [QMDC].
- Question:* Would a structure like that be funded through Wet Tropics Board?
- Comment:* Burdekin is tapping into NAP [the National Action Plan for Salinity], which is targeted to catchment with extreme risks. Our resourcing of Indigenous involvement is for the new board to consider, it would be presumptuous of me to do this.
- Question:* Could think about foundation funding – if you wanted to set yourself up as a group that was in partnership with the Board, in order to do an Indigenous Plan, could consider that option?
- Question:* Even two Plans? I think the State / Federal governments only want one Plan.
- Comment:* The Indigenous Plan could feed in eventually but it could still be developed separately.
- Comment:* Melissa is working in an area with a lot of salinity problems, but there is foundation funding for all other regions. So the floor is open, as nobody has made agreements yet.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT LAND MANAGEMENT

Steve McCann

Caring for Country Unit, Cairns TAFE

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners. I am the Program Manager at TAFE for the Natural and Cultural Resource Management Program. I have left some information at the back including a document put together by students.

Today has been very interesting. I wanted to go a little bit further back. I'm a *Gurinja* person from the Northern Territory but my adopted family is from east Arnhem Land. I brought this painting here, that I got my brother to do.

The painting is called *Yirritja Dhuawa*. These are the two moieties from the country – the boss is pouring the land to the old man, but the old man is pouring the spirit of the land back to the boss as a way of changing that. I also am going to play one song. My own song. I call it old man song. When I travel with people in country before, old people start singing for country.

That song was to give your spirit more energy to continue to fight, and this picture of the old man and that song "from little things big things grow". We have to keep going to make that change.

That *Yirritja Dhuawa* is the moiety from the Arnhem Land. When I was living there I was adopted into the *Mungu* clan, they gave me a name and everything and told me the creation story. Wherever I see the creation story, about how the ancestral being came in and created the land, in Arnhem Land they came out of the sea with different marks on their body giving different pattern to the land either *Yirritja* or *Dhuawa* – we only marry opposite. I am talking out of country and I say these things to put it back in perspective. Too much is getting dragged out of our eyeballs through these meetings; we have to come back inside and put something in talking to ourselves inside, talking to ourselves inside. We are getting dragged out and getting exhausted from all this paper business and the fight for this paper. There was not paper business happening when we lost our country, there was not paper, just gun massacre and then they just take our country. That's the only true part about *terra nullius* – after they finished up there was no one left.

They talk about country, them creation beings, the country is broken up and there is different clan group's name, and all that. There are different pockets of *Yirritja Dhuawa* – all is broken up, the land, the fish, the sugar bag bee, like yin and yang, but in between here is that neutral point, and that neutral point is where that spirit power comes when you have that balance. That balance has been maintained for thousands and thousands of years. There is proof. When Anglo Saxons came here, it looked like that country hadn't been touched. When the old people came here they put that land down, in the law, that law was about how they created this country and the sacred sites were where they stopped. I've been to that place where they landed in that big canoe, and that beach is just that biggest bay and in behind is that biggest sand dune and where the sisters and brothers walked between the sand dune, there is still that biggest hollow. In that law there were behaviours to follow – man look after kid, look after nature, animal and nature, to live in harmony with that, with respect. If you didn't abide by the law, maybe you get a spear, finish.

So when Anglo-Saxon people came here, they seen that pristine condition, they saw fires. They must have known *Bama* been here, proof of that balance being maintained. What happened since then? All our countrymen being moved around, me myself, still trying to

work out which way my grandfather came, from Kimberley or Daly River, still researching that. All because of people coming here and trying to destroy us so that they could take our land. 'Stealing' is not even a strong enough word for what happened here. All that law has been broken by non-Indigenous people, and by taking over, all that has taken our language, our ceremonies, and our spiritual association. And here we are still fighting for a few dollars to fix up something that was done by other people. We get land back and it has been destroyed not to say the *Bama*. There has been no counselling and there is transgenerational trauma that goes from one generation to the next and it cannot be healed.

On moieties, on a parallel somewhere else in the Northern Hemisphere there is Genesis, okay. But at the same time the spiritual ancestors of all of us are God beings. But they lived out day to day, can't just do it on Sunday.

With that Anglo Saxon belief that God created Mother Earth how can you go and do the things you do to your fellow man? Later on we find, we know why it was, been driven all that wrong reasons for action. It is based on selfishness, greed, but inside that silent one is sitting there, which brings us to another question. In them teachings you talk about dominion over flora and fauna, maybe its true. It must be true, look at country, it's definitely true that you have dominion. But what about respect; respect for land, fellow humans and to maintain that balance? I think that was lost a long time ago. How come if *Bama* have perfect harmony for thousands and thousand of years, how come it had to happen? Is this some divine plan here?

I guess there is some divine plan here, and it is about being connected spiritually to country. The opposing polarity, be it like *Yirritja*, this one is proper negative, this one is positive, they had to come together, they had an attraction to each other. Which was the perfect opportunity for our brothers from the north that had only lived by their own teaching. They had a perfect opportunity to sit down, learn, yarn might have been a good opportunity to come back to wisdom self. But that negative drove them, and that negative and positive is in all of us. For the wrong reasons, they did what they did and caused all the hardship and suffering. Why all the suffering and all the pain? Whatever that plan is from the creation force, but we here now in this country are more advanced in our differences when you look around at what is going on, on the planet. I think that has maintained our connection to our ancestral beings. Not everyone has lost ceremony. But some of those old people in Arnhem Land, the Cape have still got that business strong.

With this dominion over this flora and fauna: the difference between us and flora and fauna is that they have no freedom of choice. We have freedom of choice. When you put your thought into verbal and action, you manifest it from inside, so if you are going to do that manifesting, do it right way or you can have freedom of choice going wrong way. And that dominion over nature is why we are here talking about flora and fauna. Too much pain, everything, but pain is part of pleasure, love is part of hate always these polarities.

We are talking about healing country, we have to fight, everyone fighting for that piece of paper. We know it's a lie for people who administer that paper to say, yes this is yours now, what has always been yours. How can Aboriginal people believe in white man's law? When our silent wisdom self is feeling run down we need to come back, walk bare foot, sit down in the soil, father mother, give you the energy back, make you strong again. Re-harmonise, and pull out of white brothers the wrong reason for action. We are becoming a slave to money, so you are locked in. Can't sleep if you are a millionaire.

In our struggle we are going to pull your mob this way back to the middle. Not only are we getting our country back, but also we are finding ourselves, white Australia got to find itself too. If you go for confession on Sunday and say I did this, this and this, and then walk out and do it again, its not good. 'Cause when we die we're going back to our creation ancestors

or to the God we believe are here. White-fellas tied up with this much money, millions here and there – it shouldn't be about money, it should be about human values, based on these decisions. Never a word mentioned in parliament about wisdom. They don't understand the complexities of taking information back into country, back to elders, sit down and have that yarn, purposely put out there two weeks before the closing date. I didn't really want to talk about this to *Bama*, 'cause *Bama* know this, it was to try and impress on the hearts and minds of some people that don't understand, think about it where are you at knowing your wisdom self? Are you doing the right thing or the wrong thing? You know when you are doing bad. That time has finished there happened when the Law was set down.

I had some stuff here talking about all these government departments and stuff. Why do you want to stop *Bama* progressing and getting further. [A] couple of years ago I did flag-raising at the Council, right there at the school, first day back doing Year 12 – what's wrong with paints, wrong colour. Wrote stiff letter. Just gammon. All those people, have they got the right attitude? They sitting there pulling the string. About how we can recover the country from their actions, not fair, they used gun, poison, flour and still try to control us. Social studies at school. All these Aborigines were savages – so all these black faces staring back, had to argue, get flogged. What happened when you came in, you were the mob who were savages. That's why when people are in the wrong, they try to put the blame. That is why Johnny won't say sorry. Couple of years ago, getting up the Japanese for wartime atrocities and not having it in your education system.

I really wanted to share this today, put it out there. Can't give out money on dislikes and prejudices, issue here is a lot better than that. I've seen what is happening in the world, and some places are a lot worse off, and we are well on the way down that path. We got to look at this land management as our boat, and that boat is going to sink. We have to look it not as a black and white issue. It's about Mother Earth, and we should treat Mother Earth the same way we treat mother, and father. Mother Earth is the solid polarity between mother and earth, Mother Earth, Father Sky, the unseen side of those two polarities. We can experience the good or the bad; it is up to us as individuals. We need to come back to harmony. Same from traditional perspective. Law broken, sacred sites desecrated, man's obligations to one another not met. Time to repair relationships with one another.

Caring For Country Program

To come back to Caring for Country program about natural and cultural resource management. We have a lot of students, starting again this week. Some in Kuranda, fifteen people in remote communities, lots of people want to come in. We have a [Rainforest] CRC project going next month, with thirteen people, also others, seven are going to finish the Diploma. So if we can bring about this balance, maybe a job will come for these younger ones coming through these programs.

Questions and Comments

Comment: We don't need money to manage country, it's more to fix up the damage that has been done to country.

MONA MONA FLORA AND FAUNA PROJECT

Barry J. Hunter

Aboriginal Consultant

We got money from NRM Board to conduct flora and fauna surveys at Mona Mona, a reserve north-west of Kuranda. The funding was from the NRM Board to conduct surveys. The project was about getting that information going back into the community. Leah Talbot from the Rainforest CRC and JCU is working with us.

Also Rhonda Brim and Lisle and Reg Brim are working with us. This is another part of the project. Instead of looking after our sites, we are getting dollars to understand the birds we have in our area, their trees and the animals. I want to talk about this and also reply to some of what Josh said earlier about the Mona Mona Agreement.

The money was used to get us out on country. We were able to pay four fellows to be part of this team. We undertook surveys – flora survey, ground proofing information identified in the Mona Mona vegetation survey – that was about just getting out there.

The fauna survey was about looking at different types of small animals at Mona Mona, exciting stuff, in the morning we are wondering what is in the traps, having a good talk. We got to know many of the small animals – got to know the differences between melomys and other rats – even studied their tucker. We are learning more about the species, its biology, we went through a key. Biological information, and bird surveys are a chance for sitting down quietly looking for birds. The work was good because Darren has worked for National Parks for a long time and is really clued up on scientific information. When we was young we used to go out with our shanghai and knock this bird over – we had our names – so we shared and tied this together with scientific name. It is about a chance to develop new skills.

That's in short our project. It's pretty exciting, we would like to do it again soon, we have some more funding coming in. It's about getting out there to build capacity, not just capacity, also that mob saying they can do that – and learning how to tie it to the *migaloo* system.

In regards to the Management Agreement, we are the community; we have obligations that we have to respect. We have to do the fire management plan, but we have no planners, no fire ecologists, we have a lot of people who have been out on country, at the moment it is about trying to get it to a stage where we can get out and do it. At the same time we are not trying to shirk our responsibility. When the planning process was under way, we had CAT [Centre for Appropriate Technology Inc.] and a whole host of people – now we only meet once every three months. Community now has to fend for itself – and it is not easy to meet those responsibilities. We could throw a lot of money at our agency and they would still not be able to do all that. It's about setting up simple processes and getting people on the ground.

BADJUBALLA GREEN CORPS EXPERIENCE

Chris Kennedy

Badjubulla, Girringun Elders and Reference Group

We have been successful in getting country back and looking at ways to care for country. The country was formerly known as Kirrima Station. My grandfather Tommy Murray is from there. We signed two pieces of paper, Kirrima station is coming back – thought that it was gone – but signed the two papers to get country back, it finally did happen. Uncle Hector, old people grass roots people. Thanks to old people for allowing me to talk.

Old people sat down and talked about how to get country back. I couldn't see it when my grandfather kept saying it, that the country (station) was coming back, I could only see walls. When the old people from the different tribal groups sat down in unity to try to get country back – coming from elders at the grass roots level. Nine groups united going around the wall, over it, put a door in it – talking to government on a local and face-to-face level. How can you help to get the key to open the door? Questions were asked. Tree planting, water quality, natural trees from the place back there. Looking after the animals and plants, replacing bush tucker so that animals and bush tucker come back, and looking after the water systems. Over the years, fish been harder to find, bush tucker hard to find, chemicals running off, killing. Culture – old people correct to go on here, to talk in language, want to tell python stories. I have heard stories of pythons coming down being sung there.

If we find him we kill him, but if we don't find him what happens is this. He knows when we come here, he start to cry. Like a little baby my Nan would say, "I'm sorry I have to do this, but you have to sustain my family and me, I have to kill you snake". It's like at funerals they say, 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust', if you look at the natural environment, spirituality is connected; when people die they go back to country.

Green Corps

When the Green Corps happened, it was an adventure that was embarked on with our eyes wide shut. We didn't know when we started what we were getting into. We were under an illusion about how Green Corps worked. We have since opened our eyes and would want some changes before taking on such a group again. There were always deadlines, things we were supposed to have done [...] if you can get in and talk to government departments. All people involved got something out of it so I think we can go on and improve it. So all involved in the Green Corps project would like to thank you for your support. This six months, lots of training, skills. On the ground, young people learnt how to plant a tree, how to recognise the right tree to plant, it wasn't an easy road, but it had to be recognised. Being a culturally significant place, we asked to have to look at the young people. What would be better than to have Aboriginal people as our superiors? We did get the right people and then we moved on to the next one, Green Corps got another person – didn't liaise with us about putting on a Traditional Owner, they said the person didn't have certificates etc. It was a joke. The bloke that they did employ didn't know anything about it.

But the fellow we wanted as supervisor was an uncle of these kids, he could have supervised. Old people lead by example, they would let you know if they are doing the wrong thing. Simple things they taught me, no matter whose land you are on, you should respect it. The old people taught me things like Steve touched on, that was respect, you can't just get respect over a day, or over a week of training, it comes with the life experience, you know, my uncle told me how to earn respect. I can make my worst enemy my best friend, that's how my uncle taught me.

On that note of caring for country, at Giringun we put up plaques on the old people's graves and the massacre sites that are up there, all that helped with the process of getting country back. We go there today. On the coast you have the little brown wallaby, and I used to say how come he's not up there. They say when the range was built it was too high for them to climb over – but go to that station today, there are about thirty wallabies there and that's saying to me, old people are happy that they have got the country back.

Questions and Comments

Question: Were the Green Corps Traditional Owners?

Comment: Nine of them were, but only one wasn't.

Question: Could you use those nine young people now as Work for the Dole or Green Corps supervisors or national parks supervisors?

Comment: That is one of the main ideas. For national parks would they need a bit more training?

Question: What didn't the kids like about working on Green Corps?

Comment: Things like curfew hours, shouldn't that be on a sort of system like lights out.

SUB-REGIONAL INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT

Jim Davis

Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation

I am an Indigenous Land Management Facilitator hosted by Balkanu.

Firstly, my respects to the Traditional Owners of the country. Thank you all for allowing me to work here and to come to this workshop.

My name is Jim Davis and I have been asked to talk about sub-regional land and sea management in Cape York Peninsula and how working with Aboriginal Traditional Owners has brought over \$10 million since 1999 in NHT funding directly to Aboriginal organisations in Cape York Peninsula (CYP). This funding has gone towards enhancing land and sea management by Aboriginal people across CYP.

I hope by doing this the Cape York experience:

- Shows that representation on assessment panels and Regional Strategy groups as they are being called now can be more than the tokenistic one or two seats that we usually cop. The big factor here is that there has to be some willingness and backbone shown by people in government agencies to listen to you fellas and to help advocate equitable representation;
- Sparks ideas on how you fellas can become real partners for the Wet Tropics region to create realistic opportunities in land and sea management, something more than just tree planting; and
- Generates improvements in the level of consultation and cooperation between all of the people and agencies that have an interest in managing the natural and cultural resources within the Wet Tropics region. Something, which we still have to admit, and putting it very kindly, is still poor. Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics are not obstacles like speed bumps nor are you voices in the wilderness. In fact I think that Aboriginal people are the biggest landholder group in the Wet Tropics region apart from the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Cape York Peninsula

So here are some points about the Cape York Peninsula, and you can ask me questions after.

CYP has an allocated \$40 million, it is the only separate NHT Regional Strategy operating at present. How did this plan come about?

Two main factors:

1. Cape York Heads of Agreement (CYHOA); and
2. The CYPLUS Stage One and Stage Two Reports.

CYHOA is essentially a signed document recognising the rights of Aboriginal people, the cattle industry and the conservation groups, the major interest groups to operate in the Cape York Peninsula. [Paul] Keating when he was PM [Prime Minister] committed \$40 million in direct support for the outcomes of CYHOA, which [John] Howard matched. Outcomes from the election resulted in the partial sale of Telstra and the Howard Government kept their promise and allocated \$40 million specifically to Cape York. However the focus of the

CYNHT Plan changed to include a lot more stakeholders and it was linked directly towards supporting the outcomes of the CYPLUS strategies. The Plan has been operating since 1998. Incorporated within the Plan are ten strategies.

Initially, in 1996, the Commonwealth proposed two seats for Aboriginal representation on the CYRAP. This was rejected and significant lobbying from Cape York Aboriginal leaders increased the number of Aboriginal seats on the Panel. The Assessment Panel is made up of fourteen representatives, an independent Chair (who has the balance of power), and Deputy Chair (an ex-Cook Shire Mayor) with no voting powers. There are six representatives for *Murris* – Gerhardt Pearson (Balkanu), Richie Ahmat (CYLC), Allan Creek (Coen), Christopher Dean (Lockhart River), Dick Namai (Napranum), and Allison Woola from Aurukun, as the ATSIC representative. Six non-Indigenous peoples are also on the panel, two from Cook Shire, two from the pastoral industry, one from Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and one from the peak industry representative body being the Cape York Peninsula Development Association.

While we are always looking to be involved as project leaders or partners in other areas of the plan, the most important strategy as far as building sub-regional land and sea management structures is Strategy 1, Element Three. CYP has been broken up into thirteen sub-regions. We have established a series of sub-regional land and sea management units taking the day to day responsibility away from Councils who are swamped and inundated with issues such as community health, housing, justice, roads, and sewage (among other things).

Each Land and Sea Management Unit is made up of a Steering Committee of Elders and other senior people from each language group in the sub-region. This Steering Committee is responsible for identifying projects, prioritising project activities, and advocating and lobbying government agencies for their funding submissions and recommending policy change.

Below that we have a land and sea management coordinator who is responsible for implementing the visions of the Steering Committee. Essentially the land and sea management coordinator has to plug the issues into the various agencies to produce outcomes. This means collaborative outcomes that meet the needs of the community and the policy objectives of the agency. For too long consultation has been *ad hoc*, sometimes outsiders talk to the first Murri they come across, or call meetings where there is only one black face in the crowd and call that consultation. If we are going to be fair dinkum about this, consultation has to take time, trust needs to be built. It really is a two-way street. Our old people are pretty good at judging the qualities of people.

Out of the thirteen sub-regional land and sea management coordinators, nine positions have been with Kaurareg and the NPA [Northern Peninsula Area] region. My area of focus now is on the *Yalanji* and Laura sub-regions. It must be noted also we have three Traditional Owners as Land and Sea Management Coordinators within their respective areas. Rangers and other staff such as horticulturists come underneath to complete on ground projects as required either as project leaders or as part of a partnership.

On-going maintenance post-NHT of these positions should be subsidised but economic enterprise such as ecotourism, commercial utilisation of natural resources, e.g. selective harvesting of native timber species, grant funds, and percentages from project brought in from outside agencies. To date, over \$30 million has been funded, committed, or recommended from the CYNHT Plan. Of that over \$10 million has gone to Aboriginal groups in Cape York Peninsula.

We are slowly and surely turning the triangle around to make our directions and decisions come from the ground up. The one size fits all solutions that are dreamed up in Brisbane or

Cairns do not fit all. It is important to learn from our mistakes just as much as our successes. I'm certainly not saying that all are roses in the garden; there are some issues that we have to work through. But it's up to all of us to work together in the spirit of partnership, true collaboration.

Thank you.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO

SUMMARY OF FIRST DAY OUTCOMES

Tracey Kluck

Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, Indigenous Land Corporation

People might have heard for the first time a lot of the information about what is going on with NHT and community resource management, which demonstrates that community resource management has not at this stage been able to engage Wet Tropics *Bama*.

Just to recap – over the last six and a bit years, about \$1.5 billion has been spent on community land management and about \$7 million in the Wet Tropics. You would have heard yesterday about the RAPS (Regional Assessment Panels) and the process. During that phase the Commonwealth had a large bucket of money that went to States, then to regions, then groups in the region could apply for money.

This process didn't necessarily give the most strategic results which is why changes are being made to the way NHT Stage 2 operates. Analogy is that money leaves Canberra in a fire hose and gets to the people in a trickle. That stage is now over and those projects will be finished by September [2002].

For the new phase of NHT, \$1 billion will be spent over five years but with a new structure. Government wants to give the money to the region directly – straight line from Commonwealth to the Wet Tropics. That Board that was presented yesterday are lining themselves up to be the recipient of that funding and to develop that regional plan. The first Wet Tropics Strategy was done in 1997. The Plan that is in existence already, that is not a Plan that looks hard at the need and the support base that *Bama* would like for the land management. It is a good time now to get organised because between now and the middle of next year all the groups are getting organised to go to the government and say we are the regional group who will do the plan and receive the money.

Nothing is signed, sealed and delivered – so this is a really good opportunity to address the question – do we want to be part of the Regional Board, or do we want to sit beside it and directly receive some of that money? It is really up to people at the regional level to work out what you want. It's all about what are the actual outcomes – Murray Darling people said it has to mean something for our people on ground and on country. Maybe don't get too concerned about structures and participation first up but think about what needs to happen at that community level, and then think about what structures are needed to enable that to happen.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Comment: We need to look at the structures and how they will be pushed out into the community. We need to overcome those blockages where we can't get our programs because the values are different and so forth. We know what we want, we just need to figure out how to access these funds on an equitable basis so we can pick up these funds and start running these programs. Remember we have eighty percent under Native Title so it is very important for us.

Comment: You mentioned it starts from Canberra as a fire hose and ends up as a trickle. We've got to turn that around so that the same volume is coming out this end as it started out in Canberra.

Comment: The regional divestment of funds – there are two parts to that, the Regional Board and the actual Plan itself. There is not necessarily going to be enough money to fix the place. The Plan will address everything that is an environmental problem in the wet tropics – the Commonwealth wants a cohesive plan. When the bucket of money arrives, it will be attached to the Investment Plan that is part of the environment Plan. The operating of the Plan is not really clear yet – will the decisions about spending the money be made by the Board? If it is the Board, then there needs to be a strong link between you and the Board – could be that you decide a certain amount should go to you. Have current arrangements but really not appropriate – could try to make this come out more. I know the frustration that you feel about this.

Question: Have the regional priority issues been identified in mainstream?

Comment: We have been talking to the converted. People have been working on the same issues for forty-five years. What Melissa put up yesterday was good. But what we should be doing now is putting up a committee and looking at the modules and working out what comes up next.

Comment: Scientific knowledge that white-fellas got and the scientific knowledge that Bama got – people come and steal that knowledge. That has been stolen by a pat on the back and now they come and get all that knowledge. We can tell you about cassowaries more than what you fellas know. We dance with them. We fellas know the snake, you are still learning about the snake – you fellas still studying them. If the Board is going to be responsible for distributing funds, then we will match it up, put fellas up there. All the *Bama* here got knowledge of country. We got to bring those two things together.

Comment: What you have just said is absolutely right. The reason we tried to get the speakers yesterday was to get some discussion going. Our responsibility is to help you carry whatever comes out of today – what we are here for is to carry whatever comes out of today.

Question: How do we do it, to look after country – talk about joint management, you give us the money and we manage it?

Comment: For this region, there was a plan done about four or five years ago, about this place. People may decide they want to have their own planning and management board for the Wet Tropics.

Question: How does it all fit together?

Comment: A couple of days ago we drew up a list of thirty organisations that are currently involved in land and sea management in the Wet Tropics. So the lists are already there, the organisations are there to fund. If you don't have your hands on the purse strings you will not get the money. The second thing is that Plan. NQLC has been asked for one seat out of seven on a Steering Committee to put together that Plan. The steering committee should be 50:50, equal numbers. Nigel Weston⁹ is just there to do what we tell them – we say we want equal numbers, if they don't agree, we just don't participate. So if they go to Canberra and say *Bama* are involved and we have written letters, and we're not there, then they won't get their money.

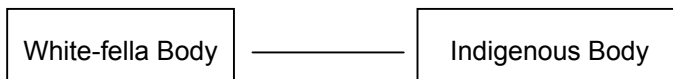
Comment: The QMDC Regional Board of Traditional Owners could run parallel to the mainstream – that would be up to *Bama* in the Wet Tropics to decide. But we also have the local, sub-regional groups and then all get together at the regional level to share information and agendas. But pretty much based on what Jim was talking about yesterday.

Options for Governance

Four options emerged from the discussion:

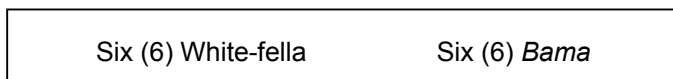
Option 1

Two bodies side by side for negotiations.



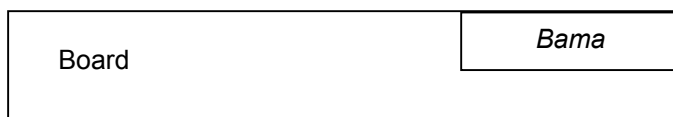
Option 2

At Cape York they set it up as one body with six representatives each.



Option 3

Current model proposed by the Interim Wet Tropics NRM Board.



Option 4

Guaranteed percentage of the money.

⁹ **Editorial Comment:** Nigel Weston was part of the team that prepared the 'mainstream' Wet Tropics NRM Plan.

Discussion of Options

Comment: In some circumstances the ten percent Indigenous funding goal of Coastcare was realised, but in other places (Victoria) there were not sufficient applications from around the country to get that ten percent.

Question: Was that a resourcing issue about getting submissions?

Comment: Could have been, but in Victoria they are very well resourced so I'm not sure.

Comment: Have had Indigenous organisations with Coastcare applications rejected?

Comment: Queensland is the only State that has an Indigenous Coastcare Officer.

Comment: If we go for Option 4, then we would need to have money to be able to do an Indigenous Regional Plan.

Current arrangements for development of the Regional Plan for the Wet Tropics are:

- Steering Committee – seven people with one Indigenous person;
- Rainforest CRC is preparing the Plan;
- Proper consultation; and
- A community plan.

Regional Plan Assessment Panel (Commonwealth) has one Indigenous representative from ATSIC / ILC.

Comment: Rainforest CRC have been commissioned by this Interim Board [the Interim Wet Tropics NRM Board] to do this – some funding from Local Government and private investors.

Comment: Consultation process needs to be fixed up so that we can take this back to our mob and get some feedback.

Comment: If the current process isn't working, should say start again.

Comment: Only way that reconciliation is going to come about is if there is proper respect, if that respect is not given than you can't go ahead. So let's do it jointly so that this process of looking after this country and healing it can start again. Can we just get *Bama* mob in here?

Question: If we reject that model and come up with another structure – what is going to happen?

Comment: You do need to be careful about the way in which you manage it – not to be so negative that you are cut out of the process. So you need to be quite sensitive in the way you approach it. From my point of view, this process is started that is not inclusive with the whole community – people want to be involved but there is a major problem. Also have to remember that those people have the purse strings.

Comment: Talk about sensitivity – but we have been to these people, scraped and apologised and so on. But we would be going there again, crawling and going back to them. We have a mandate at this meeting to put forward our own structure. But I don't think we should go cap in hand and be sensitive. We are at the stage where we have a mandate to say what sort of structure we want. I went to a meeting at [the Rainforest] CRC and there was something

like seventy-six things driven by the white man – and there was about nine or ten Aboriginals employed. Seventy-six and we've got nine! Sounds fair to me if you have a gun in your hand. Shove number four, that's gone, it's a shot duck as far as I'm concerned. If those white people want to sit on it they can.

Question: Coastcare on a national level – where have Indigenous issues been prioritised?

Comment: They haven't been. There are ten priority activity areas and they have been set.

Question: I have a document that fell off the back of a truck, a document that includes securing access for production purposes, understanding and appreciation of coastal communities including the Indigenous communities on the operation of biodiversity on the coast. No Indigenous input from the top level, despite the ATSIC sea rights, land and environment portfolio. So how can we work it out on the ground if our mob that we have elected at the national level, don't have any input? Where does that leave us on the ground? Whole process of NHT 2 is going to be crap. So we might need to be parallel.

Comment: Commonwealth and State will have to sign off, but we don't know how. There are currently criteria about the content of the Plan, but no criteria about the process for involving the community – but there will be.

Comment: Should take a bit of all options except Option 3.

Comment: Should start with the population – if it is twenty percent of the region, should not fall below that, then can go higher according to land ownership.

Comment: Top argument land holding interest, bottom argument population numbers.

CLOSED *BAMA* MEETING

The closed session began with an explanation of the process under NHT 1 and how it was administered by Environment Australia. As part of NHT 2, regional NRM plans will be accredited at State level (DNR&M, DPI, ILC, EPA). Industry have three votes, Environment (EPA) have one. Effectively Aboriginal interests are represented through one vote.

Discussion Points (relating to Motion 1):

- Make our own recommendations;
- Investigate options to form our own structure;
- Consider class issues;
- Need to factor in more time to consider options;
- Need for wide knowledge of what is in the Plan;
- Concern that the plan is already being drafted without the *Bama*;
- We need to get some submissions and requests and input into the Plan;
- Our aspirations currently not recognised;
- Membership of steering committee needs to be looked at;
- We need equal representation on [the NRM] Board;
- Need to consider ways to delay the planning process until *Bama* represented;
- Concern that current proposed membership is seven non-Indigenous people to one Indigenous person; and
- Need for the membership to reflect the land owning status of the *Bama* – since *Bama* own more than eighty percent of the Wet Tropics, and are the largest landholder group, they should be the majority on the Steering Committee, say seventy percent.

Discussion Points (Relating to Motion 2):

- Need for funds for process whereby we can elect our representatives;
- We need to decide on how we are going to get representation;
- A list of duties for Steering Committee is needed;
- A level of technical and cultural understanding is required – not just skills like literacy;
- Need to put in place from the beginning what the role of ATSIC and Native Title Representative Bodies and other groups involved in land management are;
- Rainforest CRC commissioned to develop Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan;
- Proper consultation required;
- Development of an Indigenous community plan should be considered;
- Regional plan assessment panel – Indigenous involvement needs to be increased; and
- Indigenous consultation forum.

Proposed Board Structure

After some discussion five options were looked at:

- Option 1: Two separate boards – one Indigenous board, one non-Indigenous board;
- Option 2: One board with fifty percent Indigenous and fifty percent non-Indigenous representation;
- Option 3: Mainstream structure as currently proposed;
- Option 4: Guaranteed percentage of the dollars to Indigenous management; and
- Option 5: Ask for majority on the Board in first instance. If they don't agree, then not below fifty percent.

Discussion Points Relating to the Options

- Role of Ministerial Council;
- Need for forum to make recommendations about a structure; and
- Need to brief all *Bama* not here about what happened at this meeting, and the options that were discussed.

Voting on the Five Options

- Option 1: For 0 (No support for this option)
- Option 2: For 0 (No support for this option)
- Option 3: For 0 (No support for this option)
- Option 4: For 0 (No support for this option)
- Option 5: For 27 (Unanimous vote)

Discussion Points in Relation to Motion 3

- Need funding to get the process of consultation started; and
- \$60,000 is to run a workshop; the amount is based on the funding of the Clump Mountain workshops.

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

After much discussion three resolutions were unanimously agreed to:

Workshop Resolution 1:

“That there be a 70% : 30% majority Indigenous representation on the steering committee to develop the proposed Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan for NHT 2, and the process be halted until there is 70% Indigenous representation.”

Moved: Charles Morganson
Seconded: Bruce Butler
Carried unanimously.

Workshop Resolution 2:

“That the Indigenous participants at the Regional Environment and NRM Forum endorse a majority membership on the proposed Wet Tropics Regional NRM Board, and a guaranteed percentage of 50% funding for Indigenous projects.”

Moved: Elsie Go-Sam
Seconded: Connie Stewart
Carried unanimously.

Workshop Resolution 3:

“That \$60,000 be made available for urgent and proper consultation with Indigenous landholders for the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. A regional workshop for all Rainforest *Bama* should be organised as soon as possible.”

Moved: Connie Stewart
Seconded: Victor Maund
Carried unanimously.

A working group was established, consisting of Phil Rist, Jean Fenton, Leah Talbot, Victor Maund, Melissa George and Ricko Noble.

**NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST
TRADITIONAL OWNER WORKSHOP**

FACILITATOR'S REPORT

**13 August 2002
Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns**

Prepared by Jim Petrich, Northern Perspectives Pty Ltd

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NHT Traditional Owner Workshop was the culmination of a successful project application to the Natural Resource Management Board (Wet Tropics) Inc., funded through the Natural Heritage Trust. The application was a determination of the Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management Forum held at the same location on 14-15 March 2002.

The workshop brought together more than forty Traditional Owners from across the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and had incorporated a number of objectives in the project application, including:

- To raise awareness of Traditional Owner interests in NRM in the Wet Tropics region;
- To ensure Traditional Owners understand the process of developing a regional NRM plan and how they may have effective input into this process; and
- To ensure effective Traditional Owner participation is incorporated in the [Wet Tropics] Regional NRM Plan and the regional NRM management body.

Additionally, the workshop aimed to achieve a number of outcomes, including:

- Clarification of Traditional Owner NRM interests;
- Traditional Owner participation in the NRM Regional Plan Steering Group; and
- Traditional Owner participation in the NRM regional body.

My brief as facilitator for Day One was to revisit, discuss and workshop Traditional Owner participation on the proposed Wet Tropics NRM Board.

Two motions carried unanimously at the previous forum held in March were included in the pre-reading material for participants in order to maximise use of the time available and minimise confusion in the revisiting process:

Motion 1

That there be a seventy percent majority Traditional Owner representation on the steering committee to develop the proposed Wet Tropics Regional [NRM] Plan for NHT 2, and the process be halted until there is seventy percent Traditional Owner representation.

Motion 2

That the Traditional Owner participants at the Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management Forum endorse a majority membership on the proposed Wet Tropics Regional NRM Board, and a guaranteed percentage of fifty percent funding for Traditional Owner projects.

Four primary speakers were invited to address the workshop in the morning, with afternoon sessions quarantined for open discussion and the development of Traditional Owner strategies.

PROCEEDINGS

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST OVERVIEW

Allan Dale

Queensland Government, Brisbane

Allan gave an overview of NHT 1, highlighting the acknowledged deficiencies of the program which included the administrative and logistical nightmare that eventuated and the lack of representation by Traditional Owners along with the poor appropriation of funds for Traditional Owner projects nationally, with the exception of Cape York Peninsula.

A Queensland Planning Evaluation Committee has been established for NHT 2 to ensure:

1. Any support invested in Traditional Owner planning is to address critical issues;
2. Traditional Owner representation is on each and every board and there is an appropriate structure for negotiation; and
3. There is protection of cultural heritage and Traditional Owner knowledge and the opportunity to explore joint investment possibilities e.g. WTMA, GBRMPA, DNR&M, etc.

Allan emphasised the importance of learning from NHT 1 and the WTMA planning process by establishing at the outset a board structure and style that would work best for NHT 2. If this was not resolved positively now then the impact on Traditional Owner interests might result in continued lost opportunities, ongoing conflict and a negative impact on Traditional Owner rights.

INDIGENOUS OVERVIEW

Rowan Foley

North Queensland Land Council

Rowan gave participants an overview of the March forum and highlighted the main elements of a report prepared by a working group that was established after the forum took place. A frequently asked question was, “why do *Bama* want to be involved in this process anyway?”

Rowan detailed a plethora of reasons including:

- Consent determinations;
- Cultural heritage re-listing;
- Interim Negotiating Forum;
- Joint management of National Parks;
- QIWG recommendations for joint management;
- ATFI;
- USL / VSL;
- Reserves;
- Pastoral leases;
- State Forests;
- National Parks;
- DOGITs;
- ILC land purchases; and
- Cultural heritage rights on freehold land.

It is obvious that Traditional Owners have a major role, a heavy responsibility and a major influence in the future of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

REGIONAL STRATEGY GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

Mike Berwick

Mayor, Douglas Shire Council

Mike stated that NHT 1 suffered because it had no strategic focus and essentially the best-prepared applications got the money. Indigenous people missed out in NHT 1. There is agreement that Traditional Owner representation must be increased. Any application for an increase in representation needs to be backed up with solid argument.

The Wet Tropics NRM Board for NHT 1 consisted of eighteen members of which one seat was allocated for a Traditional Owner representative. Another group, North Queensland Afforestation Association, had been formed some ten years ago with nine members, all local government members. This association was also active during NHT 1. At the NRM Forum held in August 2001, a determination was made to rationalise the two into one body. Two major actions are now underway:

1. A regional plan is being developed for accreditation by July 2003 (Nigel Weston to elaborate); and
2. A Joint Working Group of five members would draft a proposal for a new NRM board. No Traditional Owner representation currently.

Mike Berwick concluded that the environment is badly degraded, the task ahead is huge, and the money appropriated for NHT 2 is totally insufficient. The old Board acknowledged that Traditional Owner representation was miniscule and there is a willingness to address that previous shortcoming.

WET TROPICS REGIONAL NRM PLAN

Nigel Weston

Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC

Nigel overviewed the proposed development of a draft regional NRM plan and displayed an example of a possible governance process. Although there was some shape to the flow chart, Nigel acknowledged that Traditional Owner involvement was yet to be resolved and the final form of governance could look decidedly different, but they had to start somewhere.

A consultation plan had been completed and comprised:

- Notification letter – to be mailed out that week [16 August 2002];
- Information kit – mailed out by the end of August 2002; and
- Collating submissions – by the end of October 2002.

Nigel explained that the goals set for the consultation team were to ensure the process was:

1. Genuine,
2. Engaging; and
3. Transparent.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Each of the speakers answered questions during their individual addresses and adequate time was given for participants to ask general questions, make statements, and have any matter clarified.

Questions and statements invariably centred on:

Poor Consultation to Date

- Indigenous Assessment Panel (IAP) – members selected by government and no prior consultation with Traditional Owners;
- Previous NRM Board – little if any consultation with Indigenous people; and
- Joint Working Group – no consultation.

Lack of Real Representation on NHT

- Previous NRM Board – eighteen members, but only one Indigenous person;
- Joint Working Group – five members, no Indigenous representatives.

Respect for Traditional Owner Rights

- Over eighty percent of the Wet Tropics area is subject to claim;
- Indigenous people make up a significant percentage of the population in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area; and
- They have a major role to play in the area's future and they have a major responsibility to protect their country for their ancestors, their children, and those who follow.

Condensed Time Frame for Appropriate Consultation

- Always the tight time frame. Always running to meet Canberra or Brisbane's needs;
- If there had been appropriate representation in NHT 1 it would have generated better results;
- A time frame should have been planned last year in consultation with Traditional Owner people; and
- If there had been appropriate representation on the Joint Working Group a proper consultation program could have been developed to ensure the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan represented the needs and desires of ALL Traditional Owners and stakeholders.

GROUP SESSION

Participants broke into four groups and were supplied with butcher's paper and marking pens. Each group was asked to develop their preferred model that represented the most appropriate and effective structure for the Wet Tropics NRM Board.

Participants reassembled and each group selected a spokesperson to explain their preferred model. There were some obvious variations for a preferred delivery mechanism, e.g. Group C developed a totally separate structure to operate in parallel with an executive committee of twelve to fifteen people and funds quarantined specifically for Traditional Owner projects.

All four groups were unanimous that Traditional Owner representation must be not less than fifty percent on any future NRM Board structure for the Wet Tropics NRM Region.

A minimum of two Traditional Owner members be invited to join the Joint Working Group / Interim Planning Group forthwith.

CONCLUSIONS

The workshop brought together a broad cross-section of Traditional Owners and can be defended as an appropriate representation of Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

It is evident and acknowledged that there has been little consultation with, or representation of Traditional Owner people with regard to the NHT to date. There has been a level of frustration and disappointment also by some non-Indigenous people, that invitations to Indigenous constituencies for inclusion in the NHT 2 process had been ignored to date. This rejection by Traditional Owner interests may have been predicated on an assessment that it was 'too little, too late', and tokenism at best. Also, any engagement with the former process, however tenuous, might be construed as endorsement of that process. Notwithstanding the above, there is:

1. A determination by Traditional Owner people that they enjoy a moral right, have considerable influence, and owe a responsibility to their people to be involved.
2. There is a willingness expressed by invited speakers at the workshop to work with Traditional Owner interests in order to build a regional NRM governance structure that is truly representative and effective, and
3. A strong desire by Traditional Owners to work in partnership with non-Indigenous stakeholders in relation to land degradation issues and the development of sustainable land management practices for the future.

Given that the workshop determined Traditional Owner representation on the proposed Wet Tropics Regional NRM Board shall be NOT LESS THAN fifty percent of the positions available, a strong argument justifying the reasons for that determination will need to be articulated if the goodwill and cooperative attitude generated recently is to be maintained.

If the argument for equal representation is sustained, the quality of that representation will be critical, particularly during the initial period of the Board's term. The planned review of the process (as detailed by Mike Berwick at the workshop) should be a most appropriate confirmation of Traditional Owner commitment, involvement and influence that is achieving a cooperative and successful NHT process.

Thank you for the opportunity to facilitate the first day. I was impressed with the passion and resolve displayed by *Bama* on the day and I trust my contribution was considered effective.

**REGIONAL TRADITIONAL OWNER
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**

PROCEEDINGS

13-14 August 2003

Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns

Prepared by Libby Larsen and Rob Burdon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to:

- The Traditional Owners the Wet Tropics region.
- Elsie Go-Sam (*Ngadjon-Jii*) and Victor Maund (*Ma:Mu*) as the Traditional Owner representatives on the Interim Joint Working Group for their guidance and support in preparing for the workshop.
- The members of the Indigenous Technical Support Group: Jean Fenton (NRM Board Wet Tropics Inc.); Tracey Kluck (Indigenous Land Corporation); Melissa George (Burdekin Dry Tropics Board); Paul Durante (North Queensland Land Council); Phil Rist (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation); Leah Talbot (Australian Conservation Foundation); Peta Standley (Environmental Protection Agency); Sandra Pannell (Rainforest CRC) and, Rowan Foley (Department of Natural Resources and Mines).
- Lyle Johnson, Indigenous Project Officer based at the NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc., for his assistance in preparing the workshop.
- Rowan Foley for assisting with facilitating the forum and in its organisation.
- North Queensland Land Council for administrative support, as well as Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and Cape York Land Council for their assistance.
- NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. for funding the workshop.
- Rachel Wicks, Communications and Capacity-Building Project Officer, NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc., for note-taking and media promotion of the workshop.
- Thank you also to all of the speakers and attendees.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation
Abe Muriata	<i>Girramay / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
Alfred Hooligan	<i>Girramay</i>
Allan Cassady	<i>Nywaigi / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
Allan J Buller (Jnr)	<i>Gugu Badhun</i>
Allen Buller (Snr)	Goreng Goreng
Allison Halliday	<i>Mandigalbay Yidindji / Aboriginal Negotiating Team</i>
Arthur Budden	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Arthur Murray	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Basel Vanhoren	The University of Queensland
Beryl Buller	<i>Gugu Badhun</i>
Bessie Herbert	Ravenshoe
Betty Cashmere	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Bill Morgenson	Giringun Elders and Reference Group
Brad Dorrington	NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (Executive Officer)
Bruce Butler	<i>Bandjin / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
C. Joseph	Atherton
Catherine Joseph	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Cedric Friday	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Charity Ryan	<i>Djiru</i>
Charlie Morganson	<i>Warungnu / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
Christopher Kennedy	<i>Girramay / Jirrbal</i>
Claire Heath	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Claude Beeron	<i>Girramay / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
Con Stewart	<i>Yidinji</i>
Dale Mundraby	<i>Mandigalbay Yidindji / Wet Tropics Management Authority / North Queensland Land Council</i>
Doris Fred	<i>Warungnu</i>
Edward Turpin	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Elsie Go-Sam	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Enoch Tranby	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Geoff Dyne	Commonwealth NHT Taskforce
Geoff McDonald	Rainforest CRC (Program 1 Leader, Bioregional Planning)
George Riley	<i>Muluridji</i>
Henrietta Fourmile	<i>Yidinji</i>
J. Morganson	<i>Warungnu</i>

Name	Affiliation
Jacky Ball	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
James Epong	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
James Moran	<i>Jirrbal / Ma:Mu</i>
Jason Fred	<i>Warungnu (Badjuballa)</i>
Jean Fenton	NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (Indigenous Capacity Building Project Officer)
Jean Rosas	<i>Bar-Barrum</i>
Jim Petrich	Facilitator – Interim Negotiating Forum
Josh Henry	<i>Jirrbal / Girramay</i>
Keith Henry	<i>Jirrbal / Girramay</i>
Leah Talbot	Indigenous Technical Support Group / Australian Conservation Foundation
Libby Larsen	Rainforest CRC (Planning Officer)
Lillian Freeman	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Lisa Stagol	Wet Tropics Management Authority
Lorraine Davidson	<i>Warungnu</i>
Lyle Johnson	NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (Indigenous Project Officer)
Margaret Freeman	<i>Jirrbal / Aboriginal Negotiating Team</i>
Margaret Go-Sam	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Maria Noah	Yarrabah
Marita Budden	<i>Jirrbal / North Queensland Land Council</i>
Mary Lou Riley	Mareeba
Melissa George	<i>Wulgurukaba / Burdekin Dry Tropics (Project Officer)</i>
Michael Bradby	Queensland Government NHT Taskforce
Mick Morgan	Goldsborough Valley, Tjapanbara
Mike Berwick	Douglas Shire Council (Mayor)
Nigel Weston	Rainforest CRC (Planning Officer)
Nina Dawson	Girringun Elders and Reference Group (Planning Officer)
Noel Gertz	<i>Gugu Badhun / Burdekin Dry Tropics</i>
Nola Joseph	North Queensland Land Council
Paul Durante	Indigenous Technical Support Group / North Queensland Land Council
Pauline Sullivan (Morganson)	<i>Warungnu</i>
Peta Standley	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service / Bushcare
Peter Gilbey	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Peter Hyde	<i>Yidindji</i>

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

Name	Affiliation
Peter Wallace	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Philip Rist	<i>Nywaigi</i> / Girringun Elders and Reference Group
Rachel Wicks	NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (Project Officer)
Rebecca Ambrose	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Regina Morganson	<i>Warungnu</i>
Ricco Noble	<i>Gunggandji</i>
Rita Turpin	<i>Bar Barrum</i>
Robert Smallwood	<i>Yidinji</i>
Rod Owens	James Cook University (PhD Student)
Rodney Riley	Mareeba
Rowan Foley	Indigenous Technical Support Group (Convener) / Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Sandra Pannell	Rainforest CRC (Leader Program 7)
Sandra Rosas	<i>Yidinji (Bar Barrum)</i>
Seith Fourmile	<i>Gimuy Yidinji</i>
Sherry Marchand	James Cook University (PhD Student) / Interim Negotiating Forum
Tracey Kluck	Indigenous Technical Support Group / Indigenous Land Corporation
Victor Bong	Lower Coastal <i>Yidinji</i>
Victor Maund	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
Vince Mundraby	<i>Mandagalby Yidinji</i>
Warrick Newbury	<i>Djabugay</i>
Wayne LeGrande	<i>Warungnu</i>
William Boslem	<i>Girramay</i> / Girringun Elders and Reference Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third regional workshop was held at the Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre in Cairns from 13-14 August 2003. The workshop was attended by Traditional Owners from the Wet Tropics NRM region and other interested individuals (see List of Participants).

BACKGROUND

The first two Traditional Owner workshops on the new regional arrangements for NHT led to the formation of the Indigenous Technical Support Group (ITSG) and the Indigenous Working Group (IWG), as well as two Traditional Owners being appointed to the Joint Working Group which was the interim Wet Tropics NRM Board. These workshops also led to the decision to develop a separate Aboriginal Plan. Following these workshops, a Planning Officer (employed by the Rainforest CRC) and an Indigenous Project Officer (employed by the Interim Wet Tropics NRM Board) were appointed in March 2003 to develop the Aboriginal Plan.

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

The main purpose of the workshop was to:

- Provide an overview and update on the structure of the proposed new NRM Board and regional body;
- Nominate Traditional Owner representatives for the new Wet Tropics Board (FNQ NRM Ltd), and;
- Provide an update on the Aboriginal Plan and to determine the most appropriate methodology for future consultations with Traditional Owners to develop the Aboriginal Plan.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY ONE

WELCOME AND OPENING

Seith Fourmile

Traditional Owner, *Gimuy-Walbu Yidinji*

Seith Fourmile officially welcomed all participants to country on behalf of the elders of *Gimuy-Walbu Yidinji* in language and opened the workshop. He wished all participants well and that the workshop would progress the work undertaken over the years by many people.

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Elsie Go-Sam and Victor Maund

Traditional Owner Representatives on the Interim Joint Working Group

An overview of progress over the last year was provided by Elsie Go-Sam (*Ngadjon-Jii*) and Victor Maund (*Ma:Mu*). Elsie welcomed all and highlighted the fact that significant progress had been made. She said that getting Aboriginal people involved with the new regional arrangements has been a long and ongoing process. Victor said that getting Aboriginal people involved in the new regional arrangements for the extension of NHT had not always been smooth or easy. He acknowledged that negotiations have been progressive and positive. He also stated that there has been significant support from many parties, particularly Brad Dorrington and Rowan Foley.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Rowan Foley

Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Rowan Foley thanked everyone for coming and acknowledged the Traditional Owners. Rowan said that this was the third regional meeting held in relation to NHT 2 and that we have gone from the point of no acknowledgement of Traditional Owners to a point of actual engagement. Rowan talked about successes to date (and acknowledged that there was still a long way to go). Achievements to date include:

1. An acknowledgement by the Regional Body that Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics region need to be engaged in a proper manner;
2. The development of an Aboriginal Plan; and
3. The employment of a Planning Officer, a Project Officer and an Aboriginal Capacity-Building Officer to progress the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

Rowan stated that over the next two days workshop delegates would talk about the Aboriginal Plan and the consultation process, and decide on the selection and interview process for the new NRM Board. Rowan said that there are fifteen NRM regions in Queensland and each region differs as to the extent of Traditional Owner involvement. He said that the Wet Tropics NRM region is different in that it is developing a separate Aboriginal Plan. He stated that Indigenous people are looking for some genuine Indigenous leadership and the development of the Aboriginal Plan had set this region apart.

The Role of the Indigenous Working Group and Technical Support Group

Rowan talked about the Indigenous Working Group (IWG), which was formed to progress negotiations, make decisions on behalf of the Indigenous community, and support the development of the Aboriginal Plan and the new regional arrangements. Working Group members included Elsie Go-Sam, George Riley, Enoch Tranby, Betty Cashmere, Connie Stewart, Rodney Riley, Charlie Morganson, Claude Beeron and Victor Maund.

Table 3: Members of the Indigenous Technical Support Group.

ITSG-Member	Affiliation of Member
Rowan Foley	Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Manager Northern Region)
Jean Fenton	Indigenous Coastcare Facilitator
Sandra Pannell	Rainforest CRC (Leader Program 7 <i>Aboriginal Collaboration and Capacity Building</i>)
Paul Durante	North Queensland Land Council (Project Coordinator)
Peta Standley	Regional Bushcare Facilitator
Phil Rist	Girringun Elders and Reference Group
Leah Talbot	Australian Conservation Foundation (Cape York Program Officer)
Tracey Kluck	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator
Melissa George	Burdekin Dry Tropics (Indigenous Land Management Facilitator)

He also talked about the Indigenous Technical Support Group (ITSG), which assists the IWG and provides guidance and support to the Aboriginal Planning Officer and Indigenous Project Officer. Monthly meetings were held with the IWG and ITSG, the Aboriginal Planning Officer, and the Indigenous Project Officer to progress the development of the Aboriginal Plan and Indigenous involvement in the regional NRM process.

Rowan observed that those people already involved in the process who could offer further support for the development of the Aboriginal Plan included Nigel Weston and Geoff McDonald, who were working on the overall Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, Peter Gilbey (NR&M), Sandra Pannell (Rainforest CRC), Rod Owens (James Cook University), Paul Durante (North Queensland Land Council), Leah Talbot (Australian Conservation Foundation), Basil Van Horen (planning advice, The University of Queensland), Brad Dorrington (CEO Regional Body), Mike Bradby (Queensland Government), and Melissa George (Burdekin Dry Tropics Board).

New Board for the Wet Tropics NRM Region

Rowan talked about the history of the NRM Board and how initially there had been two boards in the region, the North Queensland Afforestation Association (NQAA) (an incorporated association of local government in the region) and the NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc. (established in 1998 under the Natural Heritage Trust arrangements in Queensland). These groups amalgamated to form the Joint Working Group (Interim NRM Board) which comprises two people from the NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc., two people from North Queensland Afforestation (NQAA), and two Traditional Owners (Elsie Go-Sam and Victor Maund). This group meets every two months. Peter Gilbey (Department of Natural Resources and Mines) chairs the Joint Working Group.

Rowan said that the initial structures proposed for the new NRM Board did not include Traditional Owners. Rowan emphasised that strong representation of Traditional Owners on the new NRM Board is essential. He also said that the new regional arrangements and the development of the Aboriginal Plan is not the only process currently happening in the region. Other important processes include the Interim Negotiating Forum (INF) and Native Title. Rowan acknowledged the complexity of the situation but also pointed out that there is a lot of support. According to Rowan, "We can advise, help and support, but it is up to the Traditional Owners to set the direction. Then we can help with processes, we cannot make decisions".

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST 2

Mike Bradby

Queensland State Government Natural Heritage Trust Taskforce

Mike Bradby introduced himself to the workshop participants. He also introduced Geoff Dyne, representative for the Commonwealth NHT Taskforce for the Wet Tropics region. He emphasised that they were both at the workshop to offer support, whether it be from the State or from the Commonwealth.

Mike said that there are fifteen NRM regions in Queensland (including a new one in the Torres Strait) and thirteen regional bodies in Queensland. He said that the National Action Plan (NAP) for Salinity and NHT 2 are the two main federal directions. There are only six NAP regions in Queensland and that the Wet Tropics NRM region is not a NAP region. The NHT bilateral agreement is about how the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments do business on NHT. He said that the bilateral agreement for NHT 2 has been held up because of the vegetation clearing issue. It has not been signed and it was now up to the Premier of Queensland and the Commonwealth. Mike said that there is \$16 million to be spent this financial year on NHT. The Facilitators and Coordinators bid amounted to \$9.3 million, which left \$6.7 million. He said that some positive things came out of the Facilitator and Coordinator's Bid, which included more Indigenous Land Management Facilitators.

Queensland Government 'Ten Year Partnership' Program

Mike said that there was a Queensland Government initiative being undertaken called Ten Year Partnerships. He stressed that this should link into NHT 2. The Ten Year Partnerships framework is part of a suite of government actions aimed at addressing issues of relevance to Indigenous people. Some of the areas addressed are land, heritage and natural resources. The government, in consultation with Indigenous groups, has developed a discussion paper titled 'Looking After Country Together'. He said that the outcomes and proposed strategies were up for discussion, and if necessary, amendment. Mike maintained that the discussion paper is an indication of the direction that the government thinks is appropriate to develop partnerships with Indigenous people. The government agencies involved in developing the 'Looking After Country Together' discussion paper are those, which have primary responsibility or a significant interest in the management of the State's natural resources.

'Looking After Country Together' sets out three main things that need to be done over the next ten years. These include:

1. Better Indigenous access to land and sea country;
2. Better Indigenous involvement in planning and management of sea country; and
3. Better Indigenous involvement in and impact on natural resource planning and policy-making.

The integration of the Aboriginal Plan with Ten Year Partnerships may open up more Government support and resources.

The New Regional Body and NRM Plans

Mike emphasised that every NRM Region must develop an NRM plan and this plan must include a Natural Resource Investment Strategy outlining what the priorities are, who will do it and how much investment will be required. He also said that every NRM Region has to establish regional bodies that are community driven. He also mentioned that from a Queensland statewide perspective, there are only four regions that have regional bodies established so far. Mike stated that the NHT 2 process is a community-driven process and the government's role is to provide advice and support. He further stated that where the government has a position on an issue it would come through in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. He also stressed that the government, through NHT funding, is not the only source of funding for the actions identified in the NRM plans and that regional bodies should look to industry and other sources for providing funding and in-kind support as well.

He said that the purpose of Foundation Funding for NHT 2 is for regional bodies to establish new NRM boards and to develop the NRM plans. Currently, all regional bodies are required to develop a Foundation Funding Bid to establish the new regional arrangements and to identify what has to be done to develop the NRM plans, such as what kind of consultation is required.

Questions and Comments

Question: Concerns about funding were raised and the issue of one NRM Board position for an Indigenous person when there are many Traditional Owner groups. There was mention that it is a government strategy to 'bamboozle' people and to make it all 'too complex'.

Comment: Yes, it can be a complex process.

Question: At Wujal Wujal we want to graze cattle and we wish to establish outstations, these are the things we want supported.

Comment: The Government supports people to get back on country, and there is a policy framework in place to assist in this. There need to be processes developed to cater for differing land uses.

Question: Local government and developers have already developed plans of their own; won't these also direct investment strategies? What guarantee do we have that these plans will not over ride the investment strategy? All the plans are made before our Plan.

Comment: They will have to go through the same process. That is one reason why it is important to engage in the process.

Comment: These groups have the jump on all of us, so it is not a level playing field.

Question: Does the Aboriginal Plan get accredited?

Comment: The Regional [Wet Tropics Regional] NRM Plan is to be informed by the Aboriginal Plan. Each local government is now doing their own strategic planning. NRM planning needs to inform other planning processes, including local government strategic planning.

Question: Is this funding for communities or the same old process of just getting our opinion? How different is this going to be?

Comment: There is more commitment. There have been three positions created so far in the process.

Question: What is the NHT money for?

Comment: There are ten key areas of investment that have been identified for NHT 2 which are natural-resource related but there are other outcomes too that are socio-economic/capacity building outcomes.

Comment: Other plans have been developed such as the Coastal Management Plans, are we putting the cart before the horse, it's already been decided?

Comment: The structures under and around the Board are crucial. We are under-represented from the perspective of area of country.

Comment: People on boards get burnt out as Indigenous people you have to take account of many things.

Comment: Linking all these different Government processes is very complex. From a recent workshop in Brisbane the Government set up a 'Red Tape Reduction Task Force' to attempt to reduce 'red tape'!

WET TROPICS NRM BOARD AND SELECTION PROCESS

Peter Gilbey

Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Convener, Interim Joint Working Group

Peter acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the area and stated that it had been a privilege and pleasure to work with Victor Maund and Elsie Go-Sam on the Joint Working Group. Peter highlighted the point that it is the Traditional Owners' choice as to how they are represented and what the most appropriate internal processes are, including election / selection processes. We have to outline:

- Processes used to date so that future formal processes follow Aboriginal processes; and
- Skills and experience available so as to identify needs and, where possible, processes capitalise on existing skills.

The Regional Body and Regional Board

The nomination and selection process for the Regional Body and Board membership must be transparent, open, impartial and conducted in a way, which has broad community support and confidence. The membership of a Regional Body must:

- Have majority community membership, balancing production and conservation interests, and seek effective participation / representation by relevant stakeholders including Indigenous interests, and local government, without compromising merit;
- Include effective representation for coastal and marine stakeholders, where relevant, and can effectively address coastal and marine interests; and
- Engage Indigenous people in the region to ensure that the use of their traditional biological knowledge in the scientific, commercial and public domains for Natural Heritage Trust purposes proceeds only with their cooperation and control.

The NRM Board structure was endorsed by the community and the Joint Working Group (JWG), plus an independent Chair. Peter Gilbey said the NRM Board must be skills-based; have majority community membership, balance production and conservation interests, include coastal and marine stakeholders, include Indigenous interests; and include local government.

Proposed Refinements to Membership Body and Decision-making Processes from Feedback

- That the Membership to the Regional Body is open to any bone fide NRM interest group in the Wet Tropics;
- Three community-centred 'open' Board meetings per annum, one each in the Northern, Central and Southern sub-regions, with one being the Annual General Meeting;
- Annual calling for expressions of interest for projects and / or initiatives supporting the implementation of the strategic NRM plan;
- Major regional forum after approximately the first six months, to review operation of the Regional Body; and
- Constitution to contain membership categorisation and voting system based on a requirement for a clear two-third of votes to constitute a majority.

Other matters that may help:

- Ability to communicate traditional knowledge in natural resource management concepts;
- Involvement in and influence on policy development;
- Understanding of partnerships and processes; and
- Experience in working with the community to achieve fundamental change.

Questions and Comments

Question: Is there a guarantee to the Traditional Owners that joint management will happen?

Comment: Indigenous Land Use Agreements need to be brokered between the Traditional Owners and the Local Government and other groups including or through the Wet Tropics.

Question: What support will the Indigenous Board member get?

Comment: The ITSG and IWG will need to support the Board member and decide what other structures will be needed to provide support. The Foundation Funding Bid will include funding for this support.

Comment: We want our ITSG support unit to continue to be supported and be funded. This is very important. We want fifty-fifty representation or one representative from each of the seven catchment areas. We pick three people, they then go before a selection panel, the panel will select the most suitable applicant. We need to think carefully to pick the best persons. We need to clarify that there are two Wet Tropics Boards, one is with the Wet Tropics Management Authority and the other is the new NRM Board, which is what we are talking about today. We need to understand this so we don't get confused.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BOARD AND NEW REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Brad Dorrington

Chief Executive Officer, NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc.

Brad reported that this process commenced on 10 August 2001, two years and three days ago! Whilst it has been a long road, the model for the new NRM Board had changed quite a bit from the model that he presented at the last Traditional Owner Regional Workshop. He identified that there had been lots of changes, including the development of the Aboriginal Plan – with Libby being employed as the Planning Officer, Lyle Johnson as the Project Officer and Jean Fenton as the Capacity Building Project Officer. The preparation of the Plan has assisted in helping to respond to gaps. Large gaps included knowing who the correct Traditional Owners are, who speaks for what country, and lack of awareness of what is happening and how to be involved.

Brad talked about the fact that the Wet Tropics NRM boundary had implications for Traditional Owners. Certain groups, such as *KuKu Yalanji*, have country in both the Wet Tropics NRM region and the Cape York NRM region. He said that a Memorandum of Understanding is being developed for *KuKu Yalanji* in the cross-region area.

Brad identified some of the challenges ahead, such as trying to get a plan together and accredited as soon as possible, so that the Aboriginal Plan keeps up with the timeline for completion of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan; the importance of communication with all stakeholders in the region and effective communication with Traditional Owners.

Questions and Comments

Question: Will the positions be paid?

Comment: The Chair will receive a stipend, while the directors will receive sitting fees (between \$240 and \$300 / day), plus expenses.

TRADITIONAL OWNER INVOLVEMENT IN THE BURDEKIN DRY TROPICS NRM REGION

Melissa George

Project Officer, Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Board

Melissa focused on genuine participation and empowerment of Traditional Owners in the regional NRM process. She talked about how Traditional Owners can engage after ten years of not being engaged, and she emphasised that this called for a paradigm shift acknowledging culture difference, not cultural deficit. Melissa gave an outline of the work they are doing in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Region with a focus on:

- Ways of engagement with Traditional Owners on the ground, from the grass roots level through to the Board level; and
- Regional continuous planning processes, and monitoring and developing of cultural resources.

Melissa talked about the engagement of Traditional Owners within the Burdekin Dry Tropics Region in regional planning. She pointed out that:

- Traditional Owners occupied and practiced cultural and natural resource management on land and marine estates within the Burdekin Dry Tropics region from time immemorial;
- From the late 1800s to the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of political, economic and social policy impacts, many relocated to regional and urban centres, in addition to government settlements, such as Palm Island;
- Traditional Owners maintained informal arrangements to access traditional lands and waters; and
- There is a perception created that engagement can only occur through the Native Title process.

Principles for Engagement

- Involvement of Traditional Owners in board planning and decision-making activities;
- Equitable access to services and programs;
- Relevant outcomes and milestones; and
- Embrace paradigm of culture difference, not culture deficit.

Why Form Partnerships?

Melissa showed a graph, which indicated the engagement of Traditional Owners in 2003 and how their vision was that this would steadily increase until 2007.

Strategies at a Practical and Local Level

- Access to country;
- Site protection and management;
- Genuine involvement in management, not just advising;
- Employment beyond CDEP;
- Training with accreditation and certificates;
- Working together with others on a mutually-respectful basis;
- Country and culture being related to health and well-being;
- Recognising that there are regional issues and local issues and both may need different strategies; and
- Representation on boards and good communication between the grass roots and the Board.

Catalysts for Formal Engagement of Traditional Owners

Melissa talked about different types of catalysts for engaging Traditional Owners, including:

Cultural Heritage and Native Title Legislation

- Infrastructure Development.

Government Initiatives (Legislative)

- Local – *Integrated Planning Act* and pest management;
- State – lease renewal and mineral development; and
- Federal – Great Barrier Reef protection planning.

Traditional Owner Initiatives (Proactive)

- Cultural practices and management;
- Traditional Owner initiated research and development;
- Traditional Owner initiated economic diversification; and
- Tourism, bush food and medicine.

Project 6 ‘Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Region’

Melissa said that the project (Project 6) she was working on for the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Board was a four-year program and that she hoped it would be ongoing. The components of Project 6 are:

Engaging Traditional Owners

Development of an engagement framework at regional and sub-regional levels entails a series of forums.

Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

The *Gugu Badhun* Traditional Owner group is working closely with a number of local agencies and groups to formulate and implement NRM plans in the Greenvale and Paluma areas.

Social and Economic Analysis of the State of the Catchment, NRM Plan and by Traditional Owners

This activity will examine the social and economic issues affecting Traditional Owners with regards to various plans that are linked to the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Cultural Resource Management Information Systems

This activity will establish a regional Traditional Owner cultural heritage GIS for the Burdekin Dry Tropics and develop the protocols and procedures within which it would operate.

THE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE WET TROPICS NRM REGION

Geoff McDonald

Program 1 Leader, Bioregional Planning, Rainforest CRC

Geoff acknowledged that there are so many plans. He said that the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan is required to meet the Government guidelines to ensure funding under NHT 2, and that this is a fairly complex process. Historically, funding was looked at on a project-by-project basis, now it is looked at from a holistic and strategic perspective.

Issues

The Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan needs to address the following issues:

- Indigenous issues and priorities;
- Biodiversity;
- Sustainable use;
- Water; and
- Pests and weeds.

Elements

Important elements are:

- Links;
- Condition Reports;
- Where do we want to go? (By December 2003);
- What do we want to do? (By February 2004); and
- How do we get there? (Investment Strategy).

Geoff said that setting targets for where we want to get to is a key part of the planning process, then we have measurable outcomes. Another important part of the process is developing an investment plan. He then presented a diagram showing the process and all the relevant links, legislation, stakeholders and the planning process.

Targets

Geoff pointed out that guidelines for developing regional NRM plans have been established by the Queensland Government in which regional bodies are required to set targets as a core element of integrated regional NRM plans. Geoff explained that a target is a fixed goal or objective. There are three types of targets, which need to be addressed in the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Aspiration Targets

These are statements about the desired condition of natural resources in the longer term (i.e. twenty to fifty years). They represent the vision or goal for regional NRM and are used to guide planning.

Resource Condition Targets

These are specific time-bound and measurable targets relating largely to the condition of natural resources in the medium term (i.e. ten to twenty years).

Management Action Targets

Short Term Targets relating to management action or capacity building that contributes to progress towards resource condition targets. They are short term (i.e. one to five years).

THE CONDITION REPORT FOR THE WET TROPICS NRM REGION

Nigel Weston

Planning Officer, Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, Rainforest CRC

Nigel introduced himself and acknowledged the Traditional Owners. He said that it is a busy and diverse region, and that there is a lot going on, with two World Heritage Areas and six catchment regions. Nigel said that NHT 2 has three overarching objectives that guide funding decisions. These are:

- Biodiversity conservation;
- Sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Community capacity building and institutional change.

Natural Heritage Trust funding will be directed towards activities that deliver outcomes against ten areas of activity. The ten key areas of investment are:

1. Protecting and restoring the habitat of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and migratory birds;
2. Reversing the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation; Protecting and restoring significant freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems;
3. Preventing or controlling the introduction and spread of feral animals, aquatic pests, weeds and other biological threats to biodiversity;
4. Establishing and effectively managing a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas;
5. Improving the condition of natural resources that underpins the sustainability and productivity of resource based industries;
6. Securing access to natural resources for productive purposes;
7. Encouraging the development of sustainable and profitable management systems for application by land-holders and other natural resource managers and users;
8. Providing land-holders, community groups and other natural resource managers with understanding and skills to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management;
9. Establishing institutional and organisational frameworks that promote conservation; and
10. Ecologically sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Nigel then showed a diagram that outlined how Traditional Owners and key stakeholders are involved in the process of developing the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

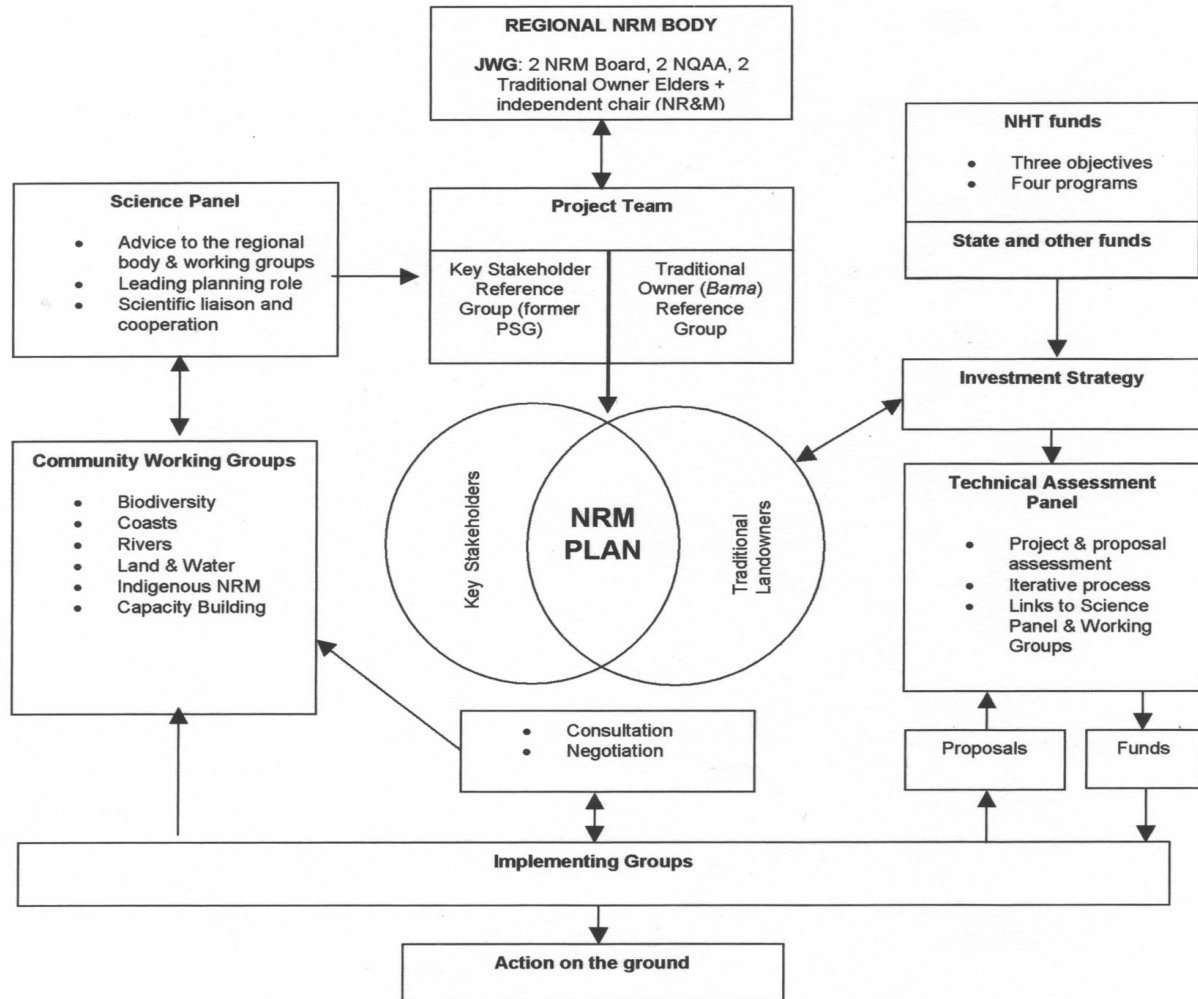


Figure 6: Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan Organisational Arrangements (Source: McDonald and Weston 2003).

THE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Libby Larsen

Planning Officer Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan, Rainforest CRC

Libby introduced herself and acknowledged the Traditional Owners and the work that the ITSG and IWG have done to date in this process, as well as the Planning Team at the Rainforest CRC (Sandra Pannell, Geoff McDonald and Nigel Weston). Libby talked about her role as the Planner for the Aboriginal Plan and how she commenced work on the Plan in April 2003. She said that the Rainforest CRC is funding her position until the end of June 2004 and presented an overview of the morning's presentations and acknowledged that NHT can get quite confusing.

Libby said that she had prepared a framework for the development of the Aboriginal Plan that had been endorsed by the ITSG and IWG. She had also put together two brochures on the process. Lyle Johnson and herself have been busy meeting with different Traditional Owner Groups. Additionally, she was in the process of establishing links with key institutions and organisations. Libby said that this workshop is crucial in gaining some key directions from Traditional Owners for the next phase of the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

A Holistic Focus for Natural Resource Management

Libby talked about the fact that the overarching objectives and the ten key areas of activity for NHT 2 focused on biophysical values of the region and she stressed that the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan must recognise that natural and cultural values are inseparable for Aboriginal people. Hence, a holistic approach to NRM – recognised in the Aboriginal Plan, the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and by the new NRM Board – is crucial in acknowledging the way that Traditional Owners view and manage country. Libby said that this approach will provide benefits for both people and the environment. She highlighted the links between healthy people and healthy country and the importance of pushing the boundaries of NHT 2 to ensure that the Aboriginal Plan meets the needs of Traditional Owners.

Libby referred to the overarching objectives of NHT 2 as:

- Biodiversity conservation;
- Sustainable land use;
- Capacity building; and
- Institutional change.

Libby talked about what these objectives might mean for Traditional Owners and stressed that, essentially, the objectives of NHT 2 are about looking after country. She said that the Aboriginal Plan should make sure that the link between the objectives of NHT 2 and people and culture is an integral part of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. Libby stressed that it is crucial that we acknowledge the objectives of NHT 2 (because this will guide NHT 2 funding for the region), but that Traditional Owners should not be restricted to these themes for the Aboriginal Plan. She said that Traditional Owners need to define what their priorities are in Caring for Country.

Libby talked about the fact that to achieve the NHT 2 objectives, it was crucial that there is understanding of, and participation in the process by Traditional Owners. However, for this

to occur she stressed that Traditional Owners' cultural and social issues need to be acknowledged. Libby talked about the types of projects that could be funded by NHT 2 and how they related to the themes presented earlier. To give people an idea of the scope of the funding, she showed photographs of Aboriginal people undertaking natural and cultural resource management projects in Australia from within Indigenous Protected Areas. These included photographs of tree planting, looking after waterholes, turtle monitoring and fauna surveys. One of the examples that she used was from the Mona Mona Wildlife Management Project that had been funded by NHT 1 for the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation (DTAC). She said that this was a cooperative project between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and DTAC.

What Will The Aboriginal Plan Look Like?

Libby said the Aboriginal Plan will be developed initially as a separate plan from the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, while taking into account all of the issues and processes identified in the NRM Plan. She said that it is essentially an action plan and that the main themes, issues and priorities within the Aboriginal Plan will be incorporated into the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. She stressed that this step is crucial so that other stakeholders recognise Traditional Owners' concerns and aspirations.

Libby stressed that support from Traditional Owners and input into the process of developing the Plan is crucial because it is their Plan. She explained that her role is to 'put on paper' what Traditional Owners want to see happen on country in relation to natural and cultural resource management.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Jean Fenton

Capacity Building and Project Officer, NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc.

Jean introduced herself and acknowledged the Traditional Owners. She said that she had just commenced in her role as Aboriginal Capacity Building Officer and that she was looking for direction from the Traditional Owners about her work in this role. Jean briefly talked about the fact that she would be working closely with Lyle Johnson to identify where capacity needed to be built within communities over the next few months. She said that her position was currently funded until the end of September 2003.

INDIGENOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Rod Owens

Researcher, Indigenous Socio-Economic Profile, Rainforest CRC

Rod Owens, a PhD candidate at James Cook University (Sociology), talked briefly about a component of work he would be undertaking for the Aboriginal Plan. He said that there is a requirement for NRM Plans to provide information on demographics and socio-economic information for the region to assist in determining where funds should be allocated to increase capacity to undertake NRM activities. He mentioned that he had just started his project and that the types of things he may address are:

- A brief history of selected communities;
- General statistical overview;
- Education;
- Demographics;
- Income streams;
- Health profile; and
- Land tenure.

He said that initially this would involve a detailed desktop study primarily using Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data and working with the project officers on the ground to gather other information.

Major Issues Raised

Various concerns were raised by workshop participants about the scope of the work that Rod may undertake. These included the use of traditional knowledge in the Plan, the lack of Traditional Owner control in setting frameworks for gathering information and control over its use.

This was discussed at length, the main issues being:

- Obtaining informed consent prior to undertaking research;
- Privacy;
- Ownership of information;
- Who uses information and what for;
- Secure storage of information;
- Appropriate access to information; and
- Development of an agreement or license.

Rowan Foley suggested that maybe the focus of the work that Rod would undertake could be a review of agencies and where funding is allocated. Rowan put the following comments onto the whiteboard during this session:

Agencies – 3 month Project	Community – 12 month Project
ATSI Local Government CDEP Njiku Jowan Legal Service	Project Prior Informed Consent Who Controls – signed agreement Storage and access

There was also discussion about the options for jointly-funded projects, as identified in the Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan, with existing agencies through the NRM investment strategy.

Questions and Comments

- Comment:* A desktop study with data from ABS will not differentiate between Traditional Owners and other Indigenous peoples so how will this relate to the Plan?
- Comment:* Other people said that this type of information is a key element of the Aboriginal Plan.
- Comment:* Someone said that Lyle is going to the communities and getting information about what people want and that this will be included into the Aboriginal Plan.
- Comment:* Someone said that this type of socio-economic research is offensive and has already been done, and asked how does this relates to the Plan?
- Comment:* It was said that it is important to get this type of information about communities to determine how they need to be supported (capacity building) in relation to facilities needed to undertake NRM projects.
- Comment:* It was said that it has taken ten months to collect this type of information in the Burdekin region.
- Comment:* It was said that the research has not started yet and its in the development stage so that was why it was put to the group, as a proposal.
- Comment:* Someone said that there was a lot of confusion about this.
- Comment:* One person mentioned that it is important to get a snap shot of where people are at so that when funding goes through you can show whether there has been change or not. It helps to demonstrate that there has or has not been change from the provision of funding.
- Comment:* Someone mentioned that this was a good point, and that it's a way to show whether change has occurred.
- Comment:* It was also mentioned that it is normal protocol and that each community should do what they want to do with the information.

TRADITIONAL OWNER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS OPTIONS

Lyle Johnson

Indigenous Project Officer, NRM Board (Wet Tropics) Inc.

Lyle introduced himself and talked about his role as the Project Officer. He presented some options for engagement with Traditional Owners in the development of the Aboriginal Plan (see below). He also said that if people thought there are better ways to engage with Traditional Owners, that these should be put forward to the group. Lyle acknowledged that there are various Traditional Owner groups within the region and that it is a difficult task to consult effectively with everyone in the development of the Aboriginal Plan. Lyle explained that the project officers and planning officer would hold additional informal information-gathering meetings with key people or groups, if and when necessary.

Option 1

- Part A – One-day Regional Workshops: Regional workshops within the Wet Tropics NRM Region to be held between September and December 2003. This would be followed up in March and April 2004, with a further seven or eight one-day workshops.
- Part B – Informal Process: Project Officers to gather information for the Aboriginal Plan through informal means (meetings, interviews, telephone calls, emails, etc).

This option could be supplemented by targeted workshops with key sectors, such as health, housing and education, if necessary.

Option 2

- Part A – One-day Local Workshops: Workshops with all Traditional Owner groups in the region to be held between September and December 2003. This would be followed up in March and April 2004, with a further seven or eight one-day workshops.
- Part B – Informal Process: Project Officers to gather information for the Aboriginal Plan through informal means (meetings, interviews, telephone calls, emails, etc).

This option could be supplemented by targeted workshops with key sectors such as health, housing and education if necessary.

Workshop Resolution 1: Traditional Owner Engagement in Aboriginal Plan Development

Option 1 was agreed to by the participants as the best method to engage Traditional Owners in the Development of the Aboriginal Plan.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO

THE WET TROPICS REGIONAL AGREEMENT – INTERIM NEGOTIATION FORUM (INF)

Margaret Freeman and Allison Halliday

Aboriginal Negotiating Team, Co-Chairs and Rainforest Aboriginal Representatives

Margaret and Allison introduced themselves and acknowledged the Traditional Owners. They then talked about the March 2003 Clump Mountain Rainforest Aboriginal Regional Workshop for the Interim Negotiating Forum (INF) where Rainforest Aboriginal representatives appointed an Interim Reference Group (IRG).

One of the key activities of the IRG is to develop a proposal with the Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT) to establish an Interim Advisory Committee to the Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority under Section 40 of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 (QLD)*.

The Interim Advisory Committee is the first stage in the development of an independent, decision-making organisation to represent the strategic interests of Rainforest Aboriginal people in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Rainforest Aboriginal People talked about establishing the Section 40 Aboriginal Committee with legislative powers and about what it would address.

What is the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement?

After ongoing lobbying by Rainforest Aboriginal People, a review of Aboriginal involvement in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area was commissioned by the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council in 1995. Work on the Review started in 1996 and was completed in April 1998. The Review was titled 'Which Way Our Cultural Survival?'

A key recommendation of the review was to negotiate a regional Wet Tropics agreement. An agreement is seen as the best way to resolve all the issues highlighted in the review. The agreement would be between Rainforest Aboriginal People from throughout the World Heritage Area, and the government departments with the management responsibilities for the World Heritage Area.

The Wet Tropics Ministerial Council agreed with a key recommendation to establish an Interim negotiating Forum (INF) to facilitate a regional agreement process and to negotiate solutions to difficult management issues identified in the review.

The INF is seen as a starting point to a regional agreement between Rainforest Aboriginal People and the government management agencies. The INF is made up of an Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT) and a Government Negotiating Team (GNT).

Source: The Interim Negotiating Forum (INF) Update # 2 The Wet Tropics Negotiating Table.

Initial questions for the group to address include:

- Roles and responsibilities of the Committee;
- What is the Committee responsible for;
- How big or how small should the Committee be;
- Representation;
- Budget;
- Capacity, skills;
- Chair, and how to select;
- Staffing; and
- Corporate relationships, strategic links, etc.

They talked about having a 'one stop shop' for Rainforest Aboriginal People to go to for working with rainforest country and about a workshop on 18-19 August in Innisfail for the IRG. They also said that eleven people have been nominated for the Committee.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Jim Petrich

Chairperson of the Interim Negotiating Forum

Jim Petrich presented a brief summary of the team's activities highlighting the following points. He said that:

- Designing a governance model will be critical and we are confident that the leaders have the full support of the Traditional Owners;
- The big workshop to develop the model will be in December [2003];
- Full support and faith in the Traditional Owners is necessary to drive this process;
- Recognition of Aboriginal people will deliver responsibility and authority to them; and
- Joint management is the main aim.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ABORIGINAL PLANNING PROCESS

Libby Larsen¹ and Rob Burdon²

¹Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC; and

²Consultant, Burdon Torzillo and Associates Pty, Alice Springs

Libby Larsen and Rob Burdon highlighted a number of issues regarding the development of the Aboriginal Plan, which required input from the workshop participants. These included Draft Guiding Principles, Plan time-frames, structure of the Plan and nominations of Indigenous Board positions, as listed below.

Draft Guiding Principles

A set of Draft Guiding Principles was presented to the workshop for comment:

- The legal and customary rights of Indigenous people to use and manage their lands and resources shall be recognised and respected;
- NRM projects shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, Indigenous cultural values, including Native Title rights;
- Acknowledgement that Traditional Owners are the original owners of the land in the Wet Tropics NRM region;
- Acknowledgement that Traditional Owners have custodial rights and responsibilities according to their Law for the management of their Traditional Country;
- Traditional Owners' values and priorities for natural and cultural resource management must be seen to be legitimate in their own right;
- For effective regional natural resource management there must be respect for Indigenous culture, traditions, knowledge and values;
- There must be Traditional Owner involvement in all aspects of managing cultural heritage;
- Aboriginal people must be involved at the beginning of the planning project; and
- Intellectual property protocols should be developed to ensure best practice.

It was explained that these principles were in a very early phase of development but that it was important to have these to guide the operation of the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. Attendees agreed in principle to these as a starting point for the Plan and acknowledged that they could be worked through at a later stage.

Workshop Resolution 2: Draft Guiding Principles

The Draft Guiding Principles for the Aboriginal Plan were endorsed as the basis for ongoing discussions with Traditional Owners, and would be finalised at the end of the consultation phase.

Time Frames for Development of the Aboriginal Plan

Libby Larsen presented a draft timeframe for the development of the Aboriginal Plan, which highlighted how and when this would link with the development of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. She said that the integration of the two plans could occur in the next year between March and June 2004, depending upon Traditional Owner satisfaction and their agreement on the content of the Draft Aboriginal Plan.

Table 4: Draft timeframe for the development of the Aboriginal Plan.

September 2003	Final Biophysical Condition Report
December 2003	Initial consultation for the Draft Aboriginal Plan completed
to	Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan (including interim Aboriginal goals from consultation)
February 2004	Draft Aboriginal Plan completed
to	Consultation on Draft Aboriginal Plan and Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan (including interim Aboriginal goals from consultation)
March-June 2004	Integration of Draft Plans
June 2004	Final Aboriginal Plan / Final Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan

Libby also suggested the development of draft targets for Traditional Owners by the end of 2003, so that they could be incorporated into the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. There was no definite resolution on this issue and workshop participants maintained that this should be on a case-by-case basis for each group.

Workshop Resolution 3: Time Frames

The proposed time frames for the development of the draft Aboriginal Plan (by June 2004), including how and when this will be integrated into the [Wet Tropics] Regional NRM Plan, were endorsed.

Structure of the Aboriginal Plan

The basic structure of the Aboriginal Plan was presented. Participants endorsed the overall framework / structure of the Aboriginal Plan as presented below.

Introduction

- Why we need the Plan?
- What is the Plan?

The Region

- Who are we dealing with (Traditional Owner groups, etc.)?
- Institutional arrangements / Policy / Planning and Legislation?
- Socio-economic overview of Aboriginal communities and people in the region.

The Planning Process

- Methodology, guidelines, etc.

Strategic Framework

- Vision, goals, strategies, actions; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Workshop Resolution 4: Aboriginal Plan Structure

The Traditional Owners endorsed the general structure of the Aboriginal Plan.

Wet Tropics NRM Board, Nominations for Indigenous Position

Discussion took place about the process to identify the three nominees for the Indigenous Board member position. Traditional Owners present at the workshop would vote on this issue.

All Traditional Owners agreed that the meeting had been adequately publicised through the newspapers and mails-outs undertaken by Giringun Aboriginal Corporation and North Queensland Land Council (500 letters). This conclusion was indicated by a show of hands. It was also agreed by the participants that people were able to make decisions on behalf of their respective groups.

The Traditional Owners were asked whether they felt comfortable about voting for three nominees from the five nominations. This was answered in the negative and therefore all five nominees were supported to go before an interview panel to select the Indigenous Board member. Nominations were received from Troy Wyles-Whelan, Elsie Go-Sam, Mick Morgan, Peter Wallace and Chris Kennedy. All nominations were accepted.

Workshop Resolution 5: Nomination of Traditional Owner Board Representatives

Five nominees would be supported to go before an interview panel to select the Indigenous NRM Board member: Troy Wyles-Whelan, Elsie Go-Sam, Mick Morgan, Peter Wallace and Chris Kennedy.

**DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**LOCAL WORKSHOPS
PROCEEDINGS**

September to December 2003, Cairns

**Facilitators: Lyle Johnson, Jean Fenton and Libby Larsen
Prepared by Libby Larsen**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This report documents the main outcomes of the one-day workshops that were undertaken between September and December 2003 with Traditional Owner groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region for the development of the Aboriginal Plan. The report identifies:

- The natural and cultural resource management issues that were raised by Traditional Owners in workshops;
- Aspirations for caring for country and culture;
- Strategies and actions to address these issues and aspirations; and
- Recommendations for the delivery of the extension of NHT [NHT 2].

The information from these workshops was used to develop a number of key themes featured in the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. The strategies and actions identified in these workshops were also used as the basis for developing the targets in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan (aspirational, resource condition and management action), as required by Commonwealth and State Government Guidelines for developing regional NRM plans.

The workshops were facilitated by Lyle Johnson (Indigenous Project Officer, NRM Board Wet Tropics), Jean Fenton (Capacity Building Project Officer, NRM Board Wet Tropics), and Libby Larsen (Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC).

Table 5: Venues and dates of one-day workshops between September and December 2003.

Venue	Date
Malanda Showground, Malanda	10 September 2003
Kuranda Medical Centre, Kuranda	17 September 2003
Wet Tropics NRM Catchment Centre, Innisfail	18 September 2003
Wet Tropics NRM Catchment Centre, Innisfail	22 September 2003
Kowrowa Hall, Kowrowa	23 September 2003
Ingham Community Hall, Ingham	14 October 2003
Chowai Centre, Innisfail	16 October 2003
Jumbun Community Hall, Murray Upper	15 November 2003
CWA Hall, Atherton	28 November 2003
School of Distance Education, Cairns	29 November 2003
CWA Hall, Gordonvale	13 December 2003

METHODOLOGY OF ROUND 1 WORKSHOPS

Figure 7 shows the methodology used in the first round of local workshops with Traditional Owners. The structure of the workshops generally involved:

- An overview of the new arrangements for the delivery of NHT 2 funding including the development of the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan;
- An overview of the overarching objectives of NHT 2 and the ten key areas of activity;
- Identification of aspirations for caring for country;
- Discussion about concerns and issues in caring for country;
- The identification of strategies and actions to address these concerns;
- Determination of the capacity-building requirements to implement actions; and
- Discussion of the current capacity of each Traditional Owner group.

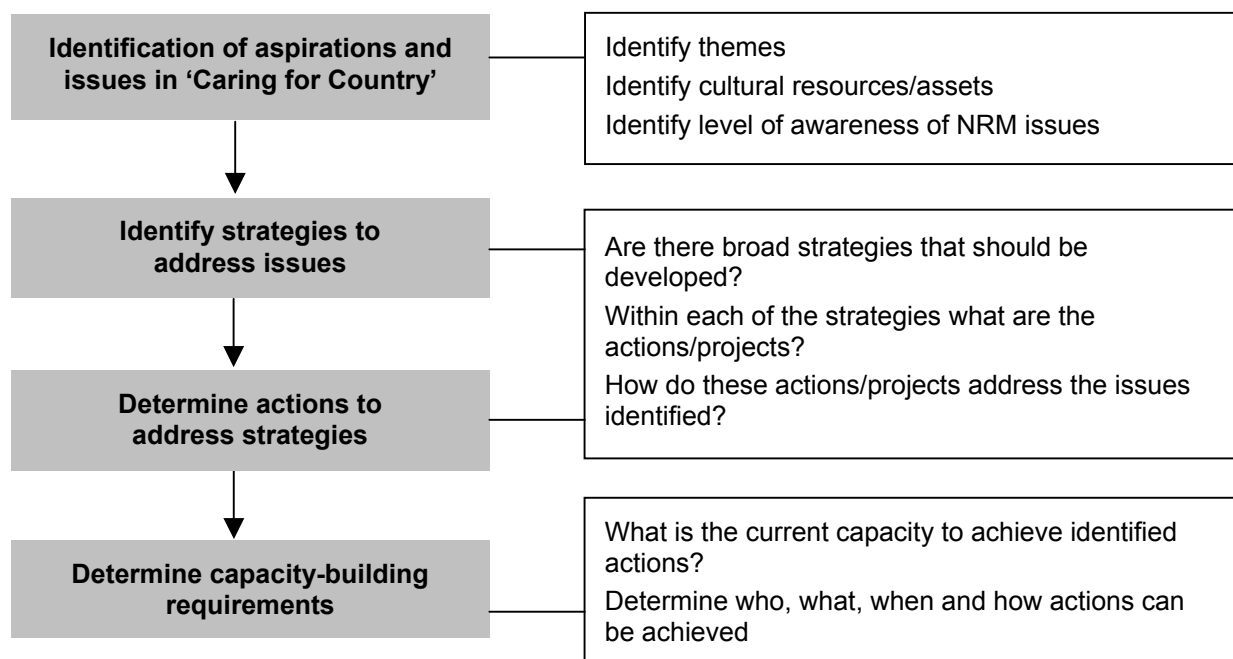


Figure 7: Format of Traditional Owner one-day workshops – Round 1.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The workshops highlighted the fact that Traditional Owners want to become more involved with the management of their country in a variety of ways:

- Involvement in planning and policy;
- Involvement at a management level;
- Through their own land and sea management organisations;
- In an advisory role;
- Being contracted to do on-ground works;
- Entering joint management arrangements and partnerships; and
- Sole management of areas (such as in Indigenous Protected Areas).

Confusion of Management Arrangements, Legislation and Policy

Despite previous regional workshops many Traditional Owners were not aware of the new regional arrangements (plans, objectives and new NRM Board) for the extension of NHT. There was also some confusion about how the Aboriginal Plan relates to other processes and bodies, such as the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement process, the Wet Tropics Management Authority, and other management arrangements.

It was evident from the workshops that the complexity of legislation, different government agencies with responsibilities for NRM, management arrangements, and policies relating to natural and cultural resource management, present a huge barrier for many Aboriginal people to participate effectively in NRM.

Relationships with Established NRM Networks

The workshops also highlighted the fact that some Traditional Owners are poorly connected with established NRM networks, such as catchment groups, Landcare and Bushcare networks, as well as research organisations, local government and Queensland Government NRM agencies. This has limited their opportunities to access funds and receive support to implement their aspirations for caring for country.

Many Traditional Owners clearly stated in the workshop that they would like to build better relationships and have better methods of communication with groups and organisations that have responsibilities and interests in land and sea management.

Capacity Building

The level of capacity to undertake natural and cultural resource management projects differs amongst Traditional Owner groups. Workshop participants highlighted a number of key issues, which need to be addressed as a priority:

- Lack of resources for local planning and infrastructure for NRM;
- Need for increased awareness about scientific issues regarding NRM;
- Need for training in areas;
- Lack of access to funding sources, lack of awareness of different funding sources, and lack of administrative support to gain funding because of overly complicated funding applications; and
- Need to develop partnerships with NRM stakeholders.

Employment

Long-term and youth unemployment, in particular the social and economic problems that this creates, were major issues raised in all of the workshops. There was considerable concern about the younger generation and the lack of employment opportunities for them. Workshop participants stated that the employment of young Traditional Owners in natural and cultural resource management agencies should be a priority. A further concern for many workshop participants related to the fact that once they have completed courses, such as the TAFE Caring for Country Program, there are very few employment opportunities and these people are then forced to work for CDEP. Attendees also stated that Aboriginal cultural knowledge and competencies should be incorporated into training approaches and recognised as a valuable skill by land and sea management agencies when Aboriginal people apply for positions.

Indigenous Land and Sea Management / Cultural Centres

Most tribal groups have their own governance structures at a local level, which address various issues, such as housing, Native Title, employment, etc. A number of them have developed specific organisations that address land and sea management issues, for example the *Djabugay* Ranger Agency and the *Kuku Yalanji* Marine Resource Centre. At a sub-regional level, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation plays an important role in supporting Traditional Owner groups in the southern part of the Wet Tropics NRM region in land and sea management issues. One of the proposed outcomes of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement is the establishment of a regional Aboriginal organisation that will address natural and cultural resource management issues in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Local Aboriginal organisations can play a critical role in achieving many of the aspirations identified by Traditional Owners in the workshops. One of the key issues raised in the workshops was the need for these organisations to have long-term and secure funding.

Local Level Planning

One of the issues highlighted in the workshops is the fact that although there are some similarities in the aspirations of different Traditional Owner groups, there are also many differences. It was also evident that while many groups have been involved in other government planning processes, few groups have developed their own management plans for their country. Strategies and actions developed in the workshops were fairly generic and to progress these to a finer country-based scale would require intensive work with each Traditional Owner group, which was beyond the capacity of the local workshops.

PROCEEDINGS

ASPIRATIONS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Lyle Johnson¹, Jean Fenton² and Libby Larsen³

Workshop Facilitator / ¹Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Workshop Facilitator / ²Capacity Building and Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Workshop Facilitator / ³Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC

The aspirations, issues, strategies, and actions identified in the workshops are outlined below. They have been grouped according to key themes.

Transmission of Cultural Knowledge and Practices to Younger Generations

Aspiration

That young people acquire knowledge and skills in cultural land management practices and also the knowledge of culturally important places so that this information is kept alive through its transmission to subsequent generations.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many Aboriginal people who have important cultural knowledge are old.• Limited documentation of cultural knowledge by Traditional Owners and the need to properly recognise intellectual and cultural property rights, and the appropriate use, access, storage and ownership of information.• Elders are very concerned that young people are not learning about culture. They are also concerned about issues facing young Indigenous people, such as high rates of unemployment, youth suicide and other social problems. The transmission of knowledge can help to ensure young people have strong cultural identity and pride.• Lack of funding to support cultural maintenance (such as for language programs, cultural camps).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of cultural revitalisation programs and camps, which will bring elders and young Indigenous people together on country. The focus of these programs would be on looking after the health of the country and the health of people together. These types of programs address environmental, social, cultural issues, as well as employment and training.• Develop educational material, such as books, databases, and videos that document Aboriginal knowledge.

Increased Access to Country

Aspiration

To be able to visit, spend time and stay on country, therefore looking after country. To be able to take elders and children there and to look after the special places on country.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop participants stressed that being able to visit, access, and undertake cultural practices on country is vital for maintaining cultural knowledge and therefore lack of access to country is a major barrier to maintaining and practicing culture. • Lack of understanding by the broader community of the importance of access to country in the maintenance and transmission of cultural knowledge and practices. • Lack of access and use on tenures, such as Unallocated State Land, national parks and areas under pastoral lease. • Restrictive guidelines, which do not allow for building infrastructure on country (which is important when taking elders to country or for cultural activities). • No road access to some areas where Native Title claims have been lodged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish living areas on country. • Develop commercial enterprises on country or for using country. • Traditional Owners to purchase land through government initiatives, such as the ILC. • Develop formal agreements with landholders about access. • Develop country-based management plans. • Instigate cultural revitalisation camps / programs. • Progress Native Title negotiations and develop ILUAs. • Education campaigns for non-Indigenous people about access issues and Native Title.

Maintenance of Aboriginal Languages

Aspiration

To maintain and revitalise the languages of the region so that young people can understand and speak their traditional language.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major loss of Aboriginal languages in the region, all regional languages are on the AIATSIS endangered list. • Many speakers are now elderly. The need to document language and for them to pass on language is therefore critical. • Lack of resources and political support to establish effective language programs. • Lack of recognition of the importance of Aboriginal languages and their benefit in environmental management of the region and the cultural survival of Traditional Owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document languages (according to appropriate intellectual and cultural protocols). • Develop language programs as part of school curriculum and community language programs. • Use Aboriginal language names (for rivers, places, etc on maps) for NRM activities and publications. • Cultural revitalisation programs.

Hunting and Gathering Practices

Many groups stressed that hunting turtle and dugong has been and still is a very important cultural practice and that they have rights to hunt that are recognised in international conventions. Some Traditional Owners said that they no longer hunt endangered species, such as dugong and turtle, because of declining numbers and that they are concerned about the future survival of these species.

Aspiration

Elders at the workshops stated that they want to continue to teach the younger generation about sustainable hunting and gathering, and the traditional law / lore surrounding these practices.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation and management arrangements of national parks and state forests that restricts Aboriginal people from hunting and gathering on country. • Concern about the impact of recreational and commercial watercraft on dugong and turtle. • Threats to species such as cassowary from habitat loss. • Lack of understanding by the wider community about the cultural importance of hunting and gathering. • Impact of chemicals and pollution from farming on bush tucker plants and animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Aboriginal land and sea management organisations. • Cultural awareness training for non-Aboriginal people. • Develop management plans for plants and animals that are used by Aboriginal people. • Develop agreements with government agencies and other relevant stakeholders regarding use of resources. • Employ Aboriginal people as rangers. • Develop and implement training programs to manage species of significance.

Protection of Places of Cultural Significance

The protection, management and monitoring of places of significance by Traditional Owners was raised at all of the workshops. Examples of places of significance included sacred sites, burial sites, places that are associated with stories and traditional law, archaeological places, rock art sites, ceremonial places, camps, and walking tracks.

Aspirations

Traditional Owners want to be involved in the management of places of cultural significance on country. They also want their ownership of cultural information regarding places of significance recognised in legislation and management arrangements. Elders explained that this fulfils their obligations under customary law and ensures the maintenance and transmission of knowledge and practices for managing these places.

All groups wanted to ensure that projects funded through FNQ NRM Ltd do not impact negatively on places of significance.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of recognition of Traditional Owners as the owners of their own cultural heritage in policy and legislation. • Lack of employment opportunities in government land and sea management agencies. • Limited funding to map and manage places of significance by Traditional Owners. • Concern about information on places of significance being stored and managed by government agencies. • Impact of urban development (and coastal development) on places of significance. • Potential impact of riverbank erosion and revegetation projects on cultural sites. • Impact of grazing on rock art sites. • Impact of tourists/tourism on places of significance. • Lack of access to sites for educational purposes and traditional management. • Impact of mining and resource extraction. • Lack of employment opportunities. • Lack of appropriate consultation with regard to NRM projects that impact on places of significance. • Inappropriate fire management regimes and controlled burns. • Impact of feral animals and weeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake cultural landscape mapping projects and establish Traditional Ecological Knowledge databases by Traditional Owners. • Re-nominate the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area for its Indigenous cultural values. • Development of country-based management plans and cultural site management plans. • Develop cultural protocols to ensure that NRM projects funded through FNQ NRM Ltd do not negatively impact upon places of cultural significance. • Support training programs in cultural site mapping, management and monitoring. • Training and cultural days for NRM stakeholders with Traditional Owners about cultural heritage management.

Protection of Material Culture

Material culture includes spears, shields, baskets and other artefacts used by Aboriginal people. It can also include the documentation of Aboriginal heritage (i.e. books, research reports, recordings and ancestral remains).

Aspirations

Many Traditional Owners feel that it is important that artefacts, which form part of their cultural heritage, are returned to and managed by Traditional Owners.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concern that artefacts that are found on farming properties are not returned to Traditional Owners.• Concern that non-Indigenous people do not reveal to Aboriginal people information about burial sites and areas with ancestral remains located on their properties.• Material culture is kept in museums and other institutions in Australia and overseas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource and support Yarrabah Museum and the Girringun Keeping Place.• Support Traditional Owners to undertake training on managing material culture in museums and keeping places.

Protection of Plants and Animals of Significance

Traditional Owners at workshops talked about the importance of the plants and animals of the Wet Tropics region for hunting and gathering, bush tucker, traditional law / lore, ceremony (song and dance), artefacts, shelters and tools, and in creation stories.

Aspirations

There was a strong interest from the majority of Traditional Owners to become more involved in the monitoring and management of plants and animals on their country.

Workshop participants stated that Traditional Owners have special knowledge of the environment and should be key partners in all research and management arrangements. Many groups identified that they would like to be involved with catchment groups, land management agencies and the coordination of weed management projects and revegetation work.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decline of cassowaries, tree kangaroos, scrub turkeys, possum species, emus, turtle and dugong was raised in most workshops. • Impact of feral animals such as cats, cane toads, pigs, dogs and rabbits. • Impact of pigs eating cassowary and scrub turkey eggs. • Threat to bush tucker species by pigs. • Lack of involvement in monitoring and managing plants and animals, and in weed and re-vegetation works. • Few employment opportunities for Traditional Owners in government land and sea management agencies. • Impact of weeds on bush tucker species and habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and resource Traditional Owners to undertake training on research techniques and scientific management approaches. • Monitor and map plant species of cultural significance, such as bush tucker species. • Develop database of ethno-ecological knowledge of flora and fauna. • Support research projects by Traditional Owners focussing on cultural land management practices. • Employ Aboriginal rangers in government agencies to look after plants and animals. • Document Aboriginal knowledge of plants and animals (with appropriate recognition of intellectual and cultural property). • Support and resource Aboriginal land and sea management organisations.

Wetlands and Waterways

Water quality was identified as an important issue for many groups. Clean and healthy waterways are essential for the maintenance of cultural resources (such as fish species) and practices. There are also sites of significance and creation stories associated with waterways in the region. Various groups also stated that clean water is essential for drinking, swimming and the general health of both Traditional Owners and the wider community.

Aspirations

Traditional Owners want their values and priorities for waterways to be recognised in policy, planning and management arrangements.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced species and pollution from agriculture has killed aquatic species. • Concern about shellfish and other species that people eat are not inedible because of polluted waterways. • Impact of mining in rivers and streams and the fish. • Concern that various native fish species have declined in the last twenty years. • Concern about weed species in creeks. • Concern about the impact of introduced fish species, such as Tilapia, and how this impacts on other species, which have traditionally been a resource for Aboriginal people. • Concern about tree clearing on riverbanks and the effect this has on stream ecology because of increased light. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Owners to undertake water quality monitoring projects. • Increased involvement of Traditional Owners in research and management.

Coastal Zone and Sea Country

Aspirations

Traditional Owners talked about the fact that there are sites of significance in coastal areas and in sea country. These are also important areas for fishing and hunting.

Traditional Owners want to protect, utilise and manage cultural resources and significant cultural sites within their traditional sea country. Workshop participants identified increased involvement in the management of sea country as a priority.

All of the Traditional Owners with sea country expressed interest in becoming more involved in the conservation and management of turtle and dugong populations.

Issues	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of commercial and recreational fishing vessels on fish stocks and breeding areas. • Impact of commercial tour operators on sites of significance in sea country. • Concern about the impact of trawlers on sea grass beds, injuries from fishing nets, boats strikes and habitat degradation in important dugong and turtle feeding areas. • Lack of understanding by wider community about Traditional Owners responsibilities for their sea country. • Concern about the impact of coastal development of sites of significance. • Impact of estuarine dredging on fish species. • Concern about proposed re-zoning of the Great Barrier Reef (i.e. Representative Areas). • Lack of protection for Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and resources within sea country. • Lack of involvement in the management of sea country. • Impact on mangroves, which act as breeding sites for fish stocks. • Concern about the development of marinas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop zoning system for marine areas, which would ensure the protection of Aboriginal cultural sites and ensure that the management of these zones is culturally-appropriate. • Develop turtle and dugong management plans. • Develop educational campaigns for broader community. • Support and resource Giringun Saltwater Ranger Program. • Resource Aboriginal land and / or sea management centres / organisations.

Protection of Intellectual and Cultural Property

Aspirations

Traditional Owners should control, own and manage all information with regard to their cultural heritage. Traditional Owners agreed that the NRM Board should develop protocols for protecting Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property.

Issues	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal knowledge is used in flora and fauna research. Traditional Owners do not have control of the use of this information. • Concern about bio-prospecting companies utilising Aboriginal peoples' knowledge of medicinal plants for profit without consultation with, and benefits flowing to, Aboriginal people. • Some Traditional Owner groups raised their concerns about the lack of control over their own cultural stories in relation to the tourism industry. Participants said that they are concerned about people telling the stories that belong to a particular Traditional Owner group when they do not have the right to do this. • Traditional Owners do not have any control over copyright, particularly in the case where photographs of people and children are being sold as postcards, CD covers, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies for best practice standards for the protection of intellectual and cultural property.

Commercial Use of Resources

Aspirations

Economic outcomes from sustainable resource management were highlighted as being extremely important for Traditional Owners. The development of income generating businesses was identified as a major priority for Traditional Owners in the region. Economic development opportunities include tourism, bush tucker enterprises, agroforestry and artefact manufacturing businesses.

Issues	Strategies and Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources and infrastructure is a major issue that hinders the development of economic opportunities. • Concern was voiced about various restrictions on resource utilisation for economic development opportunities, such as artefact manufacturing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for sustainable economic development activities such as tourism, agro-forestry and bush tucker businesses. • Resource Aboriginal land and sea management centres/organisations to operate as consultancies. • Develop cultural heritage walks. • Support and resource training programs for Aboriginal people in tour guiding, horticulture, artefact manufacturing, agroforestry and business administration.

Recommendations for the Delivery of NHT 2 Funds

There was considerable discussion about how NHT 2 would roll out and how people could apply for funding. The major points to emerge from these discussions are highlighted below.

Involvement of Traditional Owners in Projects Funded Through FNQ NRM Ltd

Workshop participants identified the need for appropriate mechanisms and triggers to ensure that the correct Traditional Owners are consulted about projects funded by FNQ NRM Ltd. They were adamant that involvement should occur at all stages from planning to implementation and monitoring. They identified various ways, in which people could be involved:

- Project design;
- Advice and liaison on cultural matters;
- Employment or contract work;
- Participation in project management through committees; and
- Responsibility for all or part of the project.

Participants stated that the resources required to facilitate Traditional Owner involvement in projects need to be considered in project planning and in grant applications. Some participants said that all too often non-Indigenous people rely on the goodwill of Aboriginal people and organisations, who are often under-resourced and have many other demands placed upon their time. They maintained that the involvement of Traditional Owners would be better facilitated if resources were made available for travel costs and employment as project liaison officers, or as part of the project team. Additionally, many people thought that all projects affecting Traditional Owners interests should make provision for reporting back to the appropriate Aboriginal people and organisations on the progress and outcomes of the project.

Application Process

Concerns were raised about the level of complexity required in submissions and applications for cultural heritage and environmental funding, such as Envirofund and other NHT funding programs. Groups stressed that without adequate support many Aboriginal groups are disadvantaged in being able to compete with other groups for funding. This was seen as a major reason for the poor track record for funding of Aboriginal NHT projects.

Workshop participants stated that application forms must be simple and straightforward. They also felt that application forms and packages developed by FNQ NRM Ltd should provide guidelines about consulting with the appropriate Aboriginal people and organisations in regards to project planning and implementation.

Matching Funds and In-kind Support

Concerns were raised about past NHT funding guidelines, which required applicants to match funds they were applying for from other sources or through in-kind contributions. These concerns were based on the fact that most Aboriginal organisations are under-resourced. Some workshop participants stated that there is not an 'level playing field' and that if this is a requirement for accessing funds for NHT 2 it will be another factor that will marginalise Aboriginal people from accessing NHT funding.

Allocation of a Percentage of Funding

There was discussion about how to ensure that there was a more equitable distribution of funds to Traditional Owners. An allocation of a set percentage annual regional NHT funding allocation was seen as a positive step of ensuring equity. Various percentages were discussed. However, participants felt that this should be discussed and agreed to at a later stage of the process.

Devolved Grants

There was also a lot of support for the idea of devolved grants to organisations such as Giringun Aboriginal Corporation and the Aboriginal Rainforest Council. Participants argued that these organisations could ensure that the projects funded meet targets identified in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and that these organisations have a better understanding of the Traditional Owner Groups of the region and can provide encouragement and support for them to access funds.

FNQ NRM Ltd Funding Approval Process

Workshop participants talked about the need to ensure that cultural values and Traditional Owners rights and interests are taken into account in the development of the Wet Tropics Regional Investment Strategy process and in projects that are funded through FNQ NRM Ltd. Workshop participants thought that FNQ NRM Ltd should only approve projects if Traditional Owners are consulted and cultural heritage values are protected. They also stated that FNQ NRM Ltd should give projects higher priority for funding if they have a high level of involvement with Traditional Owners. There were discussions about developing criteria that FNQ NRM Ltd could use when approving projects for funding.

Indigenous Project Officers

People thought that one method of ensuring that Traditional Owners are better supported to access funding through FNQ NRM Ltd would be via the employment of three Indigenous Project Officers (for the northern, central and southern regions). There were discussions about the fact that there is inequity in positions funded by FNQ NRM Ltd, with one Indigenous Project Officer to support all of the Traditional Owner groups, whilst there is a number of non-Indigenous catchment coordinators funded through FNQ NRM Ltd.

At one workshop the need for an Indigenous Communications Officer was raised as a vital component to ensure effective communication between Traditional Owners and FNQ NRM Ltd. A special position was seen as necessary because the communication channels and methods employed by FNQ NRM Ltd will not necessarily be an effective method to reach Traditional Owners.

**DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR PLAN THEMES,
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS
PROCEEDINGS**

**9 February 2004
Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns**

**Facilitator: Dermot Smyth with Jean Fenton, Lyle Johnson and Libby Larsen
Prepared by Libby Larsen and Dermot Smyth**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation
Allan Paucke	
Bennet Walker	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Bill Morganson	Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
Brad Dorrington	FNQ NRM Ltd (Chief Executive Officer)
Bruce Butler	<i>Bandjin</i>
Catherine Joseph	<i>Yidinji</i>
Charlie Morganson	Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
Chicka Turner	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Chris George	<i>Warrgamay</i>
Claude Beeron	<i>Girramay</i>
Darren Butler	<i>Bandjin</i>
Dawn Hart	<i>Djiru</i>
Dermot Smyth	Consultant
Desley Rosas	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Donette Walsh	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
Elsie Go-Sam	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Ernie Raymont	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Hazel Cassady	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
Janette Singleton	<i>Yirriganydji</i>
Jean Fenton	FNQ NRM Ltd (Indigenous Project Officer)
Jean Rosas	<i>Bar-Barrum</i>
Katherine Kynum	<i>Yirrganydji</i>
Libby Larsen	Rainforest CRC (Planning Officer)
Libby Morgan	<i>Goldsborough Valley Yidinji</i>
Lillian Clubb	
Lillian Freeman	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Linc Walker	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Lyle Johnson	FNQ NRM Ltd (Indigenous Project Officer)
Margaret Freeman	<i>Jirrbal</i>
Mark Fenton	Burdekin Dry Tropics
Melissa George	Burdekin Dry Tropics
Patricia Singleton	<i>Yirrganydji</i>
Phil Rist	Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
R. Turpin	<i>Bar-Barrum</i>
Rae Kelly	<i>Djiru</i>
Rebecca Clear	Regional NRM Facilitator
Russell Butler	<i>Bandjin</i>

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

Name	Affiliation
Tracey Kluck	Cape York NRM Facilitator
Troy Wyles-Whelan	<i>Warrgamay</i> / FNQ NRM Ltd (Indigenous Board Director)
Warren Canendo	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Yvonne Canendo	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>

PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dermot Smyth

Consultant, Smyth and Bahrtdt Consultants

Dermot Smyth welcomed people to the workshop and introduced himself. He acknowledged the Traditional Owners, the *Gimuy Yidinji*, and introduced the Aboriginal Planning Team to the workshop.

Dermot briefly ran over the agenda for the day. He explained that the main purpose of the workshop was to:

- Discuss the key themes (and sub-themes); and
- Further develop long-term, medium term and short-term goals (defined as 'targets' by the government) for each of the key themes that were developed at local one-day workshops between September and December 2003.

DEVELOPING GOALS AND ACTIONS (TARGETS) FOR KEY THEMES FOR THE ABORIGINAL PLAN AND THE WET TROPICS REGIONAL NRM PLAN

Libby Larsen

Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC

Libby outlined progress on the Aboriginal Plan development and identified current timeframes and deadlines. She talked about the outcomes of the one-day local workshops and the kind of information that had been recorded. She said that a number of issues were identified in the local workshops and that themes had been developed from these. Libby reported that a number of strategies and actions had been developed for each of these themes, which were part of a PowerPoint presentation to the workshop. She stated that although the Aboriginal Plan didn't need to be approved by the government, the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, including its Traditional Owner content, would need to be accredited.

Matters for Targets (Themes)

Libby talked about State and Commonwealth Government requirements for regional NRM plans. She said that the government had set themes, which regional NRM plans had to address. These themes are called 'Matters for Targets'.

Table 6: Draft 'Matters for Targets' for the Aboriginal Plan.

Indigenous Cultural Knowledge and Practices:	Sustainable Use of Resources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Languages • Access to Country • Use of Country • Knowledge of Country • Transmission of Cultural Knowledge • Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting and Gathering • Commercial Use of Resources • Cultural Tourism
Cultural Landscapes, Places and Materials:	Biodiversity Conservation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Landscapes • Sites of Significance • Aboriginal Cultural Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Plants and Animals • Weeds • Feral Animals
Wetlands and Waterways:	Sea Country:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Quality • Cultural Significance • Weeds and Feral Animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Resource Use • Cultural Significance • Managing Sea Country
Capacity Building and Institutional Change:	Planning, Policy and Legislation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Infrastructure and Resources • Training and Skills development • Building Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation • Policy • Planning
Management of Country:	Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Areas and World Heritage Areas • Other Tenures 	

Libby said that these matters for targets included:

- Water quality;
- Significant species and ecosystems; and
- Rivers and wetlands.

Libby highlighted the fact that many themes emerged from the workshops. These included, Aboriginal languages, sites of significance and access to country. These kind of issues were important for Traditional Owners in terms of looking after country but were not necessarily matters for targets addressed in the development of regional plans. However, it was important that these types of themes are included in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Targets (Strategies and Actions)

Libby reported that for each of the themes (i.e. Matters for Targets), the NRM regions are required to develop both long and medium-term strategies, as well as short-term actions. She stated that the government calls these 'aspirational targets', 'resource condition targets' and 'management action targets' (see Figure 8).

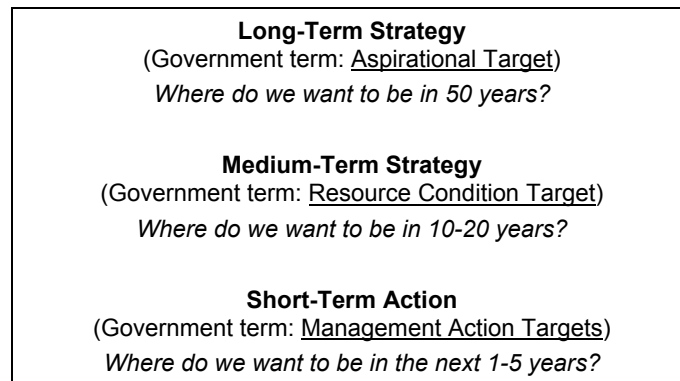


Figure 8: Explanation of strategies and actions presented at the workshop.

Libby stated that the aim of the workshop is to further develop strategies and actions for the key themes that had been developed from local workshops. She said that it was important that the information gathered at the local workshops was brought back to Traditional Owners at a regional workshop, such as this Planning Workshop. She said that there were various pressures on the Planning Team to integrate the Traditional Owner themes, strategies and actions into the Wet Tropics NRM targets. Libby stated that one of the objectives of the workshop is to get feedback from Traditional Owners about whether they are willing to endorse the themes, strategies and actions for integration into the mainstream Wet Tropics NRM targets. In the weeks to follow, these targets would go out for public consultation.

SMALL WORKING GROUPS

Jean Fenton, Tracey Kluck, Libby Larsen, Rowena Grace, Melissa George, Lyle Johnson, Rebecca Clear and Chicka Turner

Facilitators

Melissa George presented examples using various themes of long-term strategies, medium-term goals and short-term actions to enable participants to develop these elements for the Aboriginal Plan. The workshop then broke into smaller groups and each group was assigned a number of themes. There were two facilitators per group. The groups were given large pieces of butcher's paper and recorded those long-term strategies, medium-term strategies and short-term actions identified for that theme from the one-day local workshops. Each group was then asked to discuss and build on the strategies and actions that had already been developed.

Outcomes from the Workshop

Each group reported back to the main group in the afternoon on the themes, strategies and actions developed in the earlier session. On the whole, participants expressed satisfaction with the themes, strategies and actions developed on the day.

However, workshop participants felt that the strategies and actions for each theme still required further work and endorsement by Traditional Owners before they could be incorporated into the mainstream targets of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. Participants agreed to re-work the strategies and actions and deliver them to Traditional Owners in a regional workshop in May.

Workshop Resolution 1:

The themes, strategies and actions need further work before they can be incorporated into the Wet Tropics NRM Targets and were NOT endorsed to go to public consultation with the Wet Tropics NRM Targets.

Workshop Resolution 2:

FNQ NRM Ltd fund a regional workshop in May 2004 to finalise and endorse themes, strategies and actions for incorporation into the Wet Tropics NRM Targets.

**DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**FINALISING AND PRIORITISING THEMES,
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS
PROCEEDINGS**

**31 May to 1 June 2004
Cairns Student Lodge, Cairns**

**Facilitator: Mark Fenton with Jean Fenton
Prepared by Libby Larsen, Mark Fenton, Lyle Johnson and Jean Fenton**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation
Abe Muriata	<i>Girramay</i>
Alwyn Lyall	<i>Western Yalanji</i>
Bennett Walker	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Brad Dorrington	FNQ NRM Ltd (Chief Executive Officer)
Charles Morganson	<i>Warungnu / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>
Chris Gloor	FNQ NRM Ltd (Director Coastal and Marine)
Claude Beeron	<i>Girramay / Aboriginal Rainforest Council (Giringun Elders and Reference Group Delegate)</i>
Danny James Hooligan	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (Giringun Elders and Reference Group Delegate)
Desley Rosas	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Eliza Morta	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Elsie Go-Sam	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Ernie Raymont	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i> Delegate)
George Riley	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Koko Muluridji</i> Delegate)
Gordon Wone	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Ma:Mu</i> Delegate)
Hilton Noble	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (interim <i>Gungandji</i> Delegate)
Jean Fenton	FNQ NRM Ltd (Indigenous Project Officer)
Jean Rosas	<i>Bar Barrum</i>
Joe Morganson	<i>Warungu</i>
Kevin Singleton	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Yirrganydji</i> Delegate)
Lex Assan	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Djiru</i> Delegate)
Libby Larsen	Rainforest CRC (Planning Officer)
Libby Morgan	<i>Yidinji</i>
Lyle Johnson	FNQ NRM Ltd (Project Officer)
Lynley Halliday	Aboriginal Rainforest Council (<i>Yidindji</i> Delegate)
Marilyn Wallace	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Marion McCarthy	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
Mark Fenton	Consultant
Merv Riley	<i>Koko Muluridji</i>
Michael Morta	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Mick Morgan	<i>Yidinji</i>
Nola Joseph	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Peter Stanton	FNQ NRM Ltd (Director Conservation)
Peter Wallace	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>
Philip Rist	<i>Nwaigi / Giringun Elders and Reference Group</i>

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

Name	Affiliation
Rebecca Clear	Burdekin Dry Tropics and Wet Tropics (NRM Facilitator)
Rita Turpin	<i>Bar Barrum</i>
Rodney Riley	<i>Western Yalanji</i>
Russell Butler Jnr	<i>Bandjin</i> / Aboriginal Rainforest Council (Girringun Elders and Reference Group Delegate)
Tracey Heenan	<i>Tableland Yidinji</i>
Valma Green	<i>Koko Muluridji</i>
Victor Maund	<i>Ma:Mu</i>
Vince Mundraby	<i>Mandingalbay Yidinji</i>
Warren Singleton	<i>Yirrganydji</i>
Yvonne Canendo	<i>Ngadjon-Jii</i>
Hermann Sexton	Yarrabah Community Ranger Program (Ranger)

APOLOGIES

Name	Affiliation
Troy Wyles-Whelan	<i>Warrgamay</i> / FNQ NRM Ltd (Indigenous Board Director)
Ray Byrnes	FNQ NRM Ltd (Local Government Board Director)
Bill Shannon	FNQ NRM Ltd (Industry Board Director)
Ken Atkinson	FNQ NRM Ltd (Board Director)
Caroline Coppo	FNQ NRM Ltd (Catchment and Community Board Director)
Mike Berwick	FNQ NRM Ltd (Chair)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

A two-day regional workshop with Traditional Owners was held in Cairns on 31 May and 1 June 2004. The workshop was organised by FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Project Officers, Jean Fenton and Lyle Johnson. Mark Fenton facilitated the workshop with input from the Indigenous Project Officers and Rainforest CRC Planning Officer for the Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan, Libby Larsen.

The workshop was the result of a resolution from the previous regional workshop that took place at the Sisters of Mercy in Cairns in February 2004. At the February workshop, Traditional Owners resolved that they did not want their strategies and actions to be integrated into the targets of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, which would be subject to public consultation in March 2004. However, it was decided to convene another regional workshop in May 2004 for the purposes of endorsing themes, strategies and actions for both the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Participants were informed that a multiple criteria analysis was being developed for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, which would prioritise the NRM issues identified in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan as high priority, medium priority and low priority. These issues would form the basis of the implementation programs within the Regional Investment Strategy.

Determining the regional issues and priorities of Traditional Owners is problematic. In contrast to the regional focus of the mainstream NRM Plan, Traditional Owner authority for natural and cultural resource management is at a local, country-based level and issues and priorities for caring for country can differ remarkably between different groups. However, for the purposes of the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, the Regional Investment Strategy and the proposed separate investment strategy, a prioritisation process was necessary to assist in the determination of funding priorities.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the workshop were:

1. Finalise the themes, strategies and actions developed over a number of months with Traditional Owners at various local workshops and at the February 2004 Regional Workshop for inclusion in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan (as targets) and the Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan;
2. Sequence the strategies and actions into funding years for the Wet Tropics Regional Investment Strategy and the proposed Aboriginal Plan Investment Strategy; and
3. Score each of the strategies against agreed criteria ('Healthy Culture', 'Healthy Country', and economic benefit) with ratings of 1 (high) to 3 (low) benefits and then roughly group each strategy into higher priority, moderate priority and lower priority.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY ONE

WELCOME

Jean Fenton

Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Jean Fenton informed the meeting that *Yirrganydji* Traditional Owner, Jeannette Singleton, was unable to attend and perform the 'Welcome to Country' ceremony.

As one of the Aboriginal Plan project officers, Jean welcomed everyone to the workshop, including the Board Members of FNQ NRM Ltd.

INTRODUCTIONS

Chris Gloor and Peter Stanton

Board Directors, FNQ NRM Ltd

Chris Gloor, Coastal and Marine Director of FNQ NRM Ltd, gave a brief introduction regarding his position on the NRM Board. He also outlined his experience in environmental planning and the importance of working with Traditional Owners. He noted that the participation of Traditional Owners was essential to the success of national and regional planning schemes. Chris referred to a meeting he attended in Adelaide recently, where it was apparent that the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan was far ahead of others. He gave a vote of thanks to the Traditional Owners for their involvement, time and energy in this process. Peter Stanton, FNQ NRM Ltd's Conservation Director, then took the floor, explaining his involvement on the NRM Board and his interest in representing conservation perspectives, with a strong sympathy towards Indigenous aspirations. He then apologised that he would not be able to attend the rest of the meeting.

Brad Dorrington

Chief Executive Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Brad Dorrington welcomed everyone to the workshop, noting it was wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces. He said as the meeting was running behind time he would not give a long speech. He encouraged meeting attendees to freely give their feedback to present FNQ NRM staff and Directors. Brad then reflected on previous regional workshops, which had pulled people together from across the region, acknowledging a long and torturous transitional process to establish new regional arrangements in the region. He also thanked Elsie Go-Sam and Victor Maund for their input into this process and workshop participants applauded their efforts. Brad also acknowledged the effort and input of Rowan Foley, and said that the workshop needed to focus on future efforts and long-term visions as well as focusing on the short term. He stressed that it was crucial to identify issues important to Indigenous people and to take the plan forward into the future.

THE ABORIGINAL PLANNING PROCESS

Jean Fenton

Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Jean Fenton introduced to the meeting Mark Fenton, Rowena Grace, Rebecca Clear, Lyle Johnson, Libby Larsen and herself. Jean gave an expression of thanks to ARC representatives for their attendance and acknowledged the success of their contribution to the planning process.

Jean summarised the two-year planning process to date, from March 2002 with the convening of the first regional workshop. She said that the last workshop, held in February 2004, had progressed the strategies and actions developed at the local one-day workshops. The purpose of today's workshop was to finalise and prioritise strategies and actions under key themes.

Libby Larsen

Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC

Participants were given a copy of the draft strategies and actions document. This document is the result of the local workshops with Traditional Owners and the regional workshop in February 2004. Libby explained that the document would also form a core-part of the Aboriginal Plan and acknowledged the input and effort of Traditional Owners in its development.

Libby talked about the development of the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and how they would feed into each other. She stressed the need to finalise and endorse the strategies and actions so that they could be incorporated into both the Aboriginal Plan and the NRM Plan. She noted that some aspects of the Aboriginal Plan fit well into the present Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan but that other issues needed further consideration. Libby then gave an overview of the current time frame within which to develop a draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM plan for public consultation and a draft Aboriginal Plan for consultation with the Traditional Owners. She added that the Aboriginal Plan would be a key guiding document for the Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) and that it would be useful to sub-regional groups, such as Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, as well as to local Traditional Owner groups, to attract support and funding.

Major Themes

Libby reviewed the major themes developed from previous workshops. She noted how each of these themes had sub-themes, strategies and actions developed from local workshops and from the Traditional Owner regional workshop in February 2004. She stated that some themes, such as employment, planning and policy, previously separate themes, were now addressed throughout all of the themes. Libby explained that this approach seemed more appropriate. The themes were:

Theme 1: Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Heritage

- Places of cultural significance and cultural material;
- Aboriginal languages; and
- Aboriginal knowledge systems and cultural property rights.

Theme 2: Cultural Maintenance

- Access and use of country; and
- Transmission of knowledge.

Theme 3: Tropical Forest Landscapes

- Plants and animals;
- Weeds and feral animals;
- Customary fire management;
- Waterways;
- Forest resource use;
- Cooperative management arrangements; and
- Agroforestry.

Theme 4: Sea Country

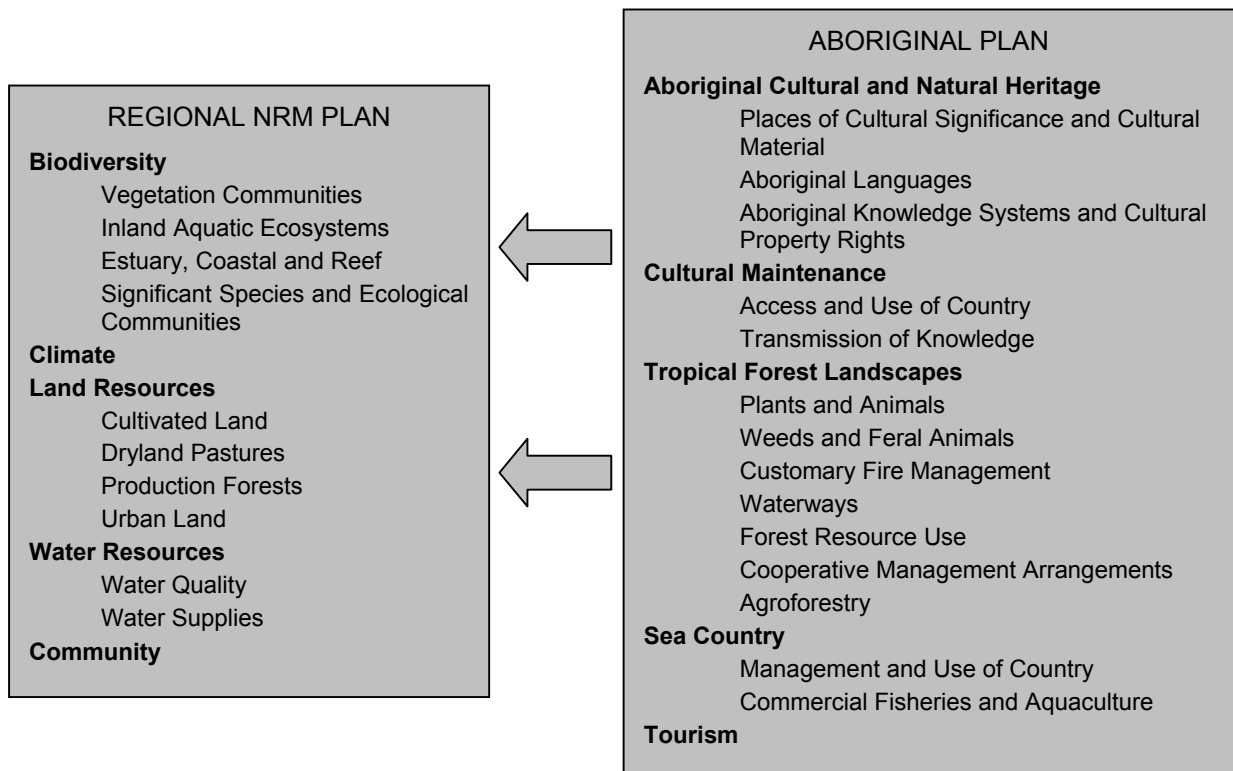
- Management and use of country; and
- Commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Theme 5: Tourism

A booklet was given to workshop participants, which detailed the themes, strategies and actions developed to date.

Integrating the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan

Libby explained that the themes, strategies and actions needed to be endorsed by Traditional Owners, before integration in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. In some cases, this would be an easy undertaking, but in other areas it would be more difficult. To illustrate this point, she showed the following diagram to the workshop.



Questions and Comments

- Question:** Peter Jackson asked if it was too late to add information to the Plan, such as the boundaries of Traditional Owners' land.
- Comment:** Jean Fenton acknowledged that it had been difficult to include *Kuku Yalanji* people in the local meetings because of ongoing ILUA negotiations. She said that Libby and herself were more than happy to visit both *Kuku Yalanji* groups to get their feedback, as well as to document any new issues that needed to be included in the Plan.
- Comment:** Rodney Riley said he had raised the issue with Brad Dorrington that *Western Yalanji* country is not included in the NRM Plan's map and that this needed to be rectified.
- Question:** Gordon Wone asked if there are any employment opportunities in the [Wet Tropics Regional] NRM Plan.
- Comment:** Libby advised that this was a theme, which ran through most issues and that participants at the workshop should integrate this issue into key themes. As projects are developed, Traditional Owners would be paid in an advisory capacity. Furthermore, long-term, future employment would be developed through the Regional Plan and key agencies.
- Comment:** Lyle Johnson suggested that a separate Employment Plan should be developed to complement the [Wet Tropics Regional] NRM Plan.
- Comment:** Gordon Wone said there was a need to press the issue of employment as well as the matter of how government groups are to approach and carry on business with Traditional Owners. He gave the example of groups, such as river catchment groups, who failed to consult Traditional Owners in their decision-making processes on issues that directly affect Traditional Owners. Jean Fenton advised Gordon that this specific issue is dealt with in the Plan, which should also be used as a guide for agencies on how to engage with Traditional Owners in the future.
- Question:** George Riley said that critical information, such as that contained within the Plan, does not reach people at the grassroots level. Traditional Owners need to be able to go back to their people with specifics and positives, such as employment in the Wet Tropics.
- Comment:** It was made clear that *Koko Muluridji* were included in the initial consultation workshops and that they had been continually informed about the process and invited to all regional workshops.
- Question:** Mervyn Riley questioned whether Traditional Owners are able to protect sacred sites.
- Comment:** Libby said this that this issue was addressed under one of the key themes.
- Question:** Alwyn Riley of *Western Yalanji* queried planned procedures for other groups with interests in both the Wet Tropics NRM region and other neighbouring NRM regions. He used the Wujal Wujal community as an example, with its overlap with the Cape communities.
- Comment:** Lyle Johnson explained that this aspect of the Plan was yet to be worked out. Chris Gloor acknowledged there were areas of overlap but that FNQ NRM Ltd had anticipated this and foresaw the need for negotiations to work in unison with these other groups. Jean Fenton said a regional handshake existed between the boards for Cape York Peninsula and for the Wet Tropics, and also a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

REVIEWING AND PRIORITISING STRATEGIES

Mark Fenton

Sociologist and Consultant

Mark Fenton gave a synopsis of developing a Regional Investment Strategy for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. He said that most of the funding would come from the government through the NHT program but that efforts would also be made to source funding from other avenues. He said that the first step was to review and endorse the strategies and actions developed. After this, the group needed to put these strategies into funding years and to go through a prioritisation exercise where each strategy would be scored against certain criteria.

Mark explained that this would help to develop funding packages, some of which could be integrated into the Regional Investment Strategy for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. This could then be used as the first stage of developing an Investment Strategy for the Aboriginal Plan.

The workshop was divided into four major groups and assigned a number of themes with associated strategies and actions. Each group was then asked to review the strategies and actions, noting that once this was achieved then the group would work to sequence strategies into funding years.

Mark added that at a later date funding figures would be applied and further consideration would be given to the Plan's key issues, implementation and ownership.

The workshop participants agreed to break into smaller groups and were assigned certain strategies to work through and approve. Each group was given butcher's paper and asked to add further strategies and actions they considered important to the existing list. Groups then workshopped their strategies for the rest of the day.

Questions and Comments

Questions: Lynley Halliday queried the relationship between the Regional Investment Strategy, the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Comment: Mark Fenton advised it would be a fairly complex integrated process.

Question: Alwyn Riley raised a concern about the language used for the draft strategies and actions document, such as references to Traditional Owners and other terminology.

Comment: Mark acknowledged this was an important issue but that it was essential to work on prioritising actions and strategies at today's workshop.

Question: Charlie Morganson raised the issue of the relationship between Traditional Owners, FNQ NRM Ltd and the North Queensland Land Council. Rodney Riley agreed with Charlie Morganson that Traditional Owners needed to work independently of the NQLC.

Comment: Mark suggested that this concern should also be addressed in the workshop.

Question: Nola Joseph queried whether the government was genuine about the Plan.

Comment: In response to Nola's query, Chris Gloor said this was a pertinent and relevant question, and that in a sense we could ask whether the government was genuine about anything. However, the current promise is that the Federal

Government has committed itself to a second phase of funding for a three-year period and had reached agreement with every state except Queensland. He said that the Board of FNQ NRM Ltd continually asks this question in its dealings but is willing to put in the time to give this plan the opportunity to succeed.

Question: George Riley asked if FNQ NRM Ltd was able to influence the NQLC to enable Traditional Owners to exercise their rights on their own country.

Comment: Jean Fenton said that FNQ NRM Ltd was not in a position to do this. Nola Joseph said that she is on the Board of the NQLC, and that it was not the NQLC stopping Traditional Owners from doing things on their land, but rather it was the state government and Native Title restrictions. Liza Morta argued that the focus of today's meeting was not on Traditional Owners' relationship with NQLC but on the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.

Question: Seith Fourmile raised the fact that funding never filters down to people on the ground but gets diverted by competing bodies whether they be Traditional Owners, councils, government etc. Seith questioned, how, given the limited funding on offer, Traditional Owners are able to compete for that funding.

Comment: Elsie Go-Sam expressed the view that Traditional Owners have been presented with a great opportunity to work with the FNQ NRM Ltd. Elsie pointed out that the Aboriginal Plan represented an excellent opportunity for Traditional Owners. In her view, participants needed to be less pessimistic and focus upon working towards finalising the document.

Comment: Seith Fourmile expressed the view that money was not the issue but that due recognition, courtesy and how Traditional Owners are approached was more important. He said that he knew there was not much in the way of funding but that he was glad for this process as it needed to happen.

Comment: Peter Wallace didn't think the rules were fair and that decisions should always be made in consultation with the respective Traditional Owners. Mark suggested that this issue is indicative of the concept of "institutional change" and should be considered as another key issue in the Plan.

PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO

FINALISING DRAFT STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

On the morning of the second day the participants continued to finalise the strategies. Each group then presented their findings to the whole group for discussion. The strategies and actions were presented on a screen and changes were made as required during the presentation process, reflecting the input from each group and from the workshop as a whole.

A number of issues and views were raised during this process:

- The participants expressed strong views about the use of the term 'Aboriginal'. They advocated that it should be replaced with the term 'Traditional Owner' throughout the listed strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan, where possible.
Outcome: Amendments were made at the workshop and in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and Aboriginal Plan where possible.
- Concern was also raised about the spelling of the term, 'Law', when referring to Aboriginal law. Many people thought that it should be spelt as 'Lore'.
Outcome: Amendments were made to the Aboriginal Plan, the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Targets, so that both terms are used together, with an explanation provided in a footnote.
- Participants voiced their concern about the use of the term 'consultation' and queried what this term implied. Participants stated that consultation could be interpreted as just talking to one Aboriginal person.
Outcome: A description of what is 'appropriate' consultation and current consultation protocols in the region are fully referred to in both the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan.
- Participants were adamant that identified strategies needed to be fully resourced and supported in accordance with their Lores / Laws, customs and protocols. Many people wanted to have this condition stipulated for each strategy.
Outcome: The phrase 'Fully resourced and supported' was added to relevant strategies and actions for both the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Aboriginal Plan. The phrase "All actions must be developed and implemented in accordance with customary Lore / Law, in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners that respects the rights of Traditional Owners" was added to both the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan in discussions about how strategies should be implemented.

The majority of these changes were made during this discussion and the resulting strategies and actions are shown below.

THEME 1 – ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Sub Theme 1: Places of Cultural Significance and Cultural Materials

Strategy 1: Identify and document the values for Aboriginal culturally significant places and materials.	
Actions	
1.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop regional and/or local Aboriginal cultural landscape mapping projects to document cultural and natural heritage values.
1.2	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council to coordinate the re-listing of the WTWHA on the <i>National Heritage List</i> (which is required as the first step before advancement to World Heritage Listing as a Cultural Landscape or a series of landscapes).
1.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake research to determine the nature and extent of the threats to their cultural and natural heritage values.
Strategy 2: Increase broader community awareness about Aboriginal culturally significant places and materials.	
Actions	
2.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement cultural awareness programs for the community, industry, government, landholders and other NRM stakeholders.
2.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement ongoing educational campaigns for all industry, government and non-government organisations, and the broader community on Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation and policies.
Strategy 3: Protect and manage Aboriginal culturally significant places and materials.	
Actions	
3.1	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Traditional Owners to ensure that WTMA, DEH, EPA, DNR&M abide by the Cultural Heritage Protocols (and other relevant protocols in the Regional Framework Agreement), for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and to promote the uptake of the Cultural Heritage Protocols by local government, and all other relevant non-government and community organisations in the Wet Tropics NRM region.
3.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to ensure that their cultural heritage values are appropriately recognised and protected in government and community NRM planning schemes (e.g. catchment management plans, national park plans, local government plans, etc.).
3.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop ICPR agreements and protocols with relevant stakeholders for the collection, use, access and storage of cultural heritage material on government and other institutional cultural heritage databases and registers.
3.4	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop agreements with relevant stakeholders, regarding access to, and use of places of cultural significance by Traditional Owners, in culturally-appropriate ways and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
3.5	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop agreements with relevant stakeholders regarding culturally-appropriate restrictions and protocols for the use of and access to these places by non-Aboriginal people.
3.6	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate and manage a review of cultural heritage legislation and policies in culturally-appropriate ways.
Strategy 4: Return Traditional Owners' cultural materials to country, to be managed by Traditional Owners.	
Actions	
4.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop legally binding agreements for cultural materials housed in other institutions and museums until cultural materials are returned.
4.2	Fully resource and support the establishment of Aboriginal cultural heritage management committees with Traditional Owner representation for museums to address issues relating to the identification, return, preservation, use and ownership of Traditional Owners' cultural material.
4.3	Fully resource and support established Aboriginal keeping places and museums in the region.

Strategy 5: Increase the capacity of Traditional Owners to manage culturally significant places and materials.	
Actions	
5.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop country-based, or community cultural heritage management plans.
5.2	Provide ongoing resources and support for current (and establish new) Traditional Owner organisations and Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres (at all levels) as key organisations to support Traditional Owners in the management of cultural heritage.
5.3	Develop and implement culturally-appropriate, accredited and ongoing training programs for Traditional Owners to increase the knowledge and skills required to successfully manage cultural landscapes, places and materials.
5.4	Fully resource and support culturally-appropriate paid employment opportunities for Traditional Owners (of all ages including elders and young people) including full-time, part-time, casual, and consultancy and advisory positions in government and Aboriginal organisations at all levels.

Sub Theme 2: Aboriginal Languages

Strategy 6: Determine the present state of Aboriginal languages in the region.	
Actions	
6.1	Fully support and resource the Regional Aboriginal Language Maintenance Committee and Traditional Owners to assess the status of Aboriginal languages in the region.
6.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop databases on Aboriginal languages (status, language resources, language speakers and workers).
Strategy 7: Document Aboriginal languages in a culturally-appropriate way.	
Actions	
7.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to record oral histories from language speakers.
7.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake projects to document Aboriginal languages in various media formats (video, computer databases, story books, word lists, dictionaries, etc.).
7.3	Fully support and resource programs for Traditional Owners to return existing records of languages from public and private collections, libraries and archives to country.
Strategy 8: Promote and develop Aboriginal language programs.	
Actions	
8.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement radio programs on Aboriginal language (Indigenous and mainstream radio programs).
8.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement Aboriginal language programs in primary and high schools, university, TAFE and Aboriginal communities for all age groups.
8.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop Aboriginal language educational kits for schools and Aboriginal communities in the region.
Strategy 9: Increase awareness of the broader community about Aboriginal languages.	
Actions	
9.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement community awareness and educational programs about Aboriginal languages (and the appropriate use of language).

Sub Theme 3: Aboriginal Knowledge Systems and Cultural Property Rights

Strategy 10: Legislation, policy and management arrangements recognise and protect Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property rights.	
Actions	
10.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate the development of protocols and guidelines for recognition and protection of ICPR in all types of research and activities.
10.2	Fully resource and support the development of appropriate legal frameworks and policies for the protection of ICPR.
Strategy 11: Develop benefit-sharing arrangements for the use of Traditional Owners' intellectual and cultural property.	
Actions	
11.1	Develop and implement culturally-appropriate ICPR benefit sharing models that ensure Traditional Owners receive fair and equitable benefits from the use of their ICPR in biodiscovery, research, tourism and other uses.
Strategy 12: Increase the awareness of Traditional Owners' intellectual and cultural property rights and issues.	
Actions	
12.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement cultural awareness and educational programs for community groups, industry, government, landholders and other NRM stakeholders about Traditional Owners' intellectual and cultural property rights.
12.2	Develop an educational strategy and plain English information kit for Aboriginal people on their legal rights and legislation that impacts on their ICPR.

THEME 2 – CULTURAL MAINTENANCE

Sub Theme 1: Access and Use of Country

Strategy 13: Increase land and sea access for Traditional Owners.	
Actions	
13.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to purchase land through government initiatives, such as (but not limited to) the ILC.
13.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop formalised access and use agreements on all tenures.
13.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop enterprise and employment initiatives that facilitate getting back on country.
Strategy 14: Increase the awareness of non-Aboriginal people and organisations about Native Title and access issues.	
Actions	
14.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations and other relevant organisations to develop and implement educational programs about Native Title and access issues for community groups, industry, landholders government, landholders and other NRM stakeholders.
14.2	Develop and implement an educational campaign on Native Title for Aboriginal people, Traditional Owners, and Land Councils.
Strategy 15: Ensure Aboriginal peoples access rights and aspirations are reflected in Commonwealth, State, regional and local policy and planning processes.	
Actions	
15.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners and appropriate organisations to ensure that their Native Title rights are recognised in Commonwealth, State and local government and NRM planning schemes, (e.g. catchment management plans, national park plans, local government plans, etc.).
15.2	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Traditional Owners to ensure that WTMA, EPA, DNR&M and DEH abide by the protocols for consultation, policy and planning and other relevant protocols. Support the uptake of relevant protocols by local government, non-government and community organisations within the Wet Tropics NRM region to ensure that Aboriginal people are involved in the development of legislation and policy that impacts on their rights and aspirations to access their country.
15.3	Fully resource and support a review of current legislation in relation to access rights to traditional country.

Sub Theme 2: Transmission of Knowledge

Strategy 16: Develop and implement cultural education programs and materials.	
Actions	
16.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement ongoing cultural revitalisation programs and camps focused at bringing elders and young Aboriginal people together on country to facilitate the transmission of knowledge, cultural pride, and cultural land management practices.
16.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop educational material such as books, databases, and videos on Aboriginal knowledge (with appropriate ICPR protection).

THEME 3 – TROPICAL FOREST LANDSCAPES

Sub Theme 1: Plants and Animals

Strategy 17: Document traditional knowledge of plants and animals in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.	
Actions	
17.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate the documentation of Aboriginal knowledge of plants and animals, including (but not limited to) past and present distribution, cultural significance, status, customary management, use and threats (with appropriate recognition of intellectual and cultural property).
17.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop educational material on plants and animals.
Strategy 18: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of policy, planning and management arrangements regarding the management of plants and animals.	
Actions	
18.1	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Traditional Owners to ensure that EPA, WTMA and other agencies abide by the consultation, permitting, policy and planning protocols and other relevant protocols in the Regional Framework Agreement relating to the planning and management of plants and animals in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Support the uptake of relevant protocols by local government, non-government and community organisations in the Wet Tropics NRM region.
18.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake research on the management and monitoring of culturally significant species.
18.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to be appropriately represented on taskforces and committees for rare and threatened species.
18.4	Fully resource and support the increased involvement of Traditional Owners in the development and implementation of Recovery Plans under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i> .
18.5	Fully resource and support a variety of culturally-appropriate paid employment opportunities for Traditional Owners (of all ages including elders and young people) such as full-time, contract, consultancy and advisory roles in the research, management and monitoring of plants and animals in both government, community, private and Aboriginal organisations at all levels.
18.6	Encourage government agencies to budget for appropriate Traditional Owner involvement and consultation in planning processes and day-to-day management operations.
Strategy 19: Increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to manage plants and animals.	
Actions	
19.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop country-based or community environmental management plans.
19.2	Fully resource and support current and develop new Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres, and Traditional Owner organisations (at all levels) to play a key role in supporting Traditional Owners to undertake the management of plants and animals.
19.3	Develop and implement accredited training programs and informal educational sessions on all aspects of natural resource management for Traditional Owners.
Strategy 20: Develop partnerships between Traditional Owners and key organisations involved in the research and management of plants and animals.	
Actions	
20.1	Support and resource Traditional Owners to develop and implement ongoing cultural training days and educational campaigns to raise the awareness of all NRM stakeholders about the important role that Traditional Owners have in the research, planning and management of biodiversity to develop better respect and understanding of Aboriginal knowledge systems and management practices.

Sub Theme 2: Weeds and Feral Animals

Strategy 21: Document and protect Aboriginal knowledge and values for weeds and feral animals in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners	
Actions	
21.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate and document Aboriginal values for weeds and feral animals (including knowledge of landscape change resulting from feral animals and weeds, and threats to their values) with appropriate intellectual and cultural property protocols.
Strategy 22: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of planning, policy and management of weeds and feral animals.	
Actions	
22.1	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Traditional Owners to ensure that EPA, WTMA and other agencies abide by the protocols for consultation, policy and planning, and operational management in the Regional Framework Agreement relating to the planning and management of weeds and feral animals in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Support the uptake of these protocols by local government, non-government and community organisations in the Wet Tropics NRM region.
22.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop country-based or community environmental management plans.
22.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to plan, implement, monitor and review feral animal and weed management projects on their country.
22.4	Resource and support Aboriginal groups and organisations to develop meaningful partnerships with Catchments Groups, Landcare Groups, and other community-based organisations involved in weed and feral animal management, including (but not limited to) representation on management committees and boards.
Strategy 23: Increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to manage weeds and feral animals.	
Actions	
23.1	Develop and implement awareness-raising programs for Traditional Owners about feral animals and weeds and the community and government agencies responsible for their management.
23.2	Develop and implement flexible, ongoing and accredited training programs for Traditional Owners on <u>all</u> aspects of the management of feral animals and weeds.

Sub Theme 3: Customary Fire Management

Strategy 24: Record traditional knowledge about fire and its relationship to cultural values in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.	
Actions	
24.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to document the impacts of current fire regimes on Aboriginal cultural values including, places, plants and animals of cultural significance.
24.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to document the role of Aboriginal use of fire, including (but not limited to) the maintenance of cultural values and biodiversity and the history of vegetation changes from Aboriginal use of fire in the region.
Strategy 25: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in fire planning and management.	
Actions	
25.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement fire protocols and agreements with relevant government agencies. Ensure that these practices are implemented in accordance with customary Lore / Law.
25.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to burn off country in accordance with customary Lore / Law.

Sub Theme 4: Waterways

Strategy 26: Increase the recognition and protection of Aboriginal values for waterways.	
Actions	
26.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to document their values for waterways in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by the Traditional Owners.
26.2	Fully resource and support current Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres and Traditional Owner organisations (at all levels) as key organisations to undertake water quality monitoring.
26.3	Fully resource and support the appropriate representation of Traditional Owners on government and industry decision-making bodies regarding water management.
26.4	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to ensure that their values and priorities for waterways are recognised in legislation, policy and management arrangements.
Strategy 27: Increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to manage waterways.	
Actions	
27.1	Develop and implement flexible and culturally-appropriate accredited training programs (including competency-based 'on the job training') for Traditional Owners on water quality monitoring.
27.2	Develop and implement an educational campaign for Traditional Owners to increase their awareness of water flow and water quality issues, management and legislation.

Sub Theme 5: Forest Resource Use

Strategy 28: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in the development of policy, legislation and management arrangements, which impact on their rights and aspirations for using resources.	
Actions	
28.1	Fully resource and support appropriate Traditional Owner representation on relevant boards and committees that impact on Traditional Owners' resources and rights to use their resources.
28.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to negotiate with government agencies and other relevant organisations and bodies about resources use issues.
Strategy 29: Increase the awareness of NRM Stakeholders and the broader community about Aboriginal resource use.	
Actions	
29.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement ongoing educational, information and awareness-raising campaigns for all NRM stakeholders, including government and non-government organisations, community groups, farmers, school groups and industry groups to create greater awareness of Traditional Owners rights and aspirations to use their resources on country and the cultural significance of these activities.
Strategy 30: Resource and support Traditional Owners to manage their resources.	
Actions	
30.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to implement current agreements, and to develop further agreements with relevant government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders regarding access to and use of natural resources.
30.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop plans for the use and management of their resources.
30.3	Fully resource and support current, and develop new Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres and Traditional Owner organisations to play a key role in research, management and monitoring of resources that are utilised by Traditional Owners.
30.4	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake research on the impacts of Aboriginal resource use on threatened species in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
30.5	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop appropriate management models for the use of resources, that recognise and support Aboriginal customary Lore / Law for sustainable levels of harvest and community based-management approaches to resource use.

Sub Theme 6: Cooperative Management Arrangements

Strategy 31: Develop cooperative management arrangements between Traditional Owners and relevant stakeholders regarding the management of country.	
Actions	
31.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement legally binding agreements and cooperative management arrangements for their traditional country.
31.2	Fully resource and support the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Traditional Owners to ensure that EPA, WTMA and other agencies abide by the protocols for consultation, permitting, policy and planning, operational management, EIS, and cultural heritage management in the Regional Framework Agreement relating to the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Support the uptake of relevant protocols by local government, non-government and community organisations within the Wet Tropics NRM region.
31.3	Fully resource and support current, and develop new Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres and Traditional Owner organisations (at all levels) as key organisations develop and implement cooperative approaches for the management of country.
31.4	Fully resource and support appropriate Traditional Owner representation on NRM (government and non-government) decision-making bodies and advisory committees.
31.5	Develop and implement flexible and culturally-appropriate accredited training programs that meet the needs of Traditional Owners to develop and implement cooperative management arrangements.

Sub Theme 7: Agroforestry

Strategy 32: Increase the capacity of Traditional Owners to develop and implement successful agroforestry initiatives whilst retaining cultural integrity.	
Actions	
32.1	Develop and implement awareness-raising programs for Traditional Owners about agroforestry opportunities (including product identification, value adding opportunities, and support networks).
32.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop business plans and to attract funding to establish agroforestry initiatives.
32.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop equitable partnerships with government and private enterprises, as well as research and training institutions involved with agroforestry in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
32.4	Develop and implement culturally-appropriate, accredited training programs for Traditional Owners on all aspects of developing and implementing agroforestry initiatives.
32.5	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to negotiate with relevant government departments and to develop new legal frameworks regarding their rights to collect traditionally-used natural resources from protected area and government lands to support the development of commercial enterprises.
32.6	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to purchase land and develop agreements to utilise land for the purposes of developing viable commercial agroforestry enterprises.
Strategy 33: Protect Traditional Owners' intellectual and cultural property for traditionally-used plants, including processing technologies for these plants.	
Actions	
33.1	Develop and implement workshops and other forums to support Traditional Owners to develop ICPR protocols and guidelines.
33.2	Fully resource and support culturally-appropriate research to develop frameworks to protect ICPR in legislation, policy and management arrangements in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.

THEME 4 – SEA COUNTRY

Sub Theme 1: Management and Use of Sea Country

Strategy 34: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in the management of sea country.	
Actions	
34.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop cooperative management arrangements for sea country.
34.2	Develop and implement protocols to ensure the compulsory involvement of Traditional Owners in the development of policy, planning and management of sea country with all stakeholders in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
34.3	Develop and implement protocols to ensure the compulsory involvement of Traditional Owners in the allocation and monitoring of all permits for sea country in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
34.4	Fully resource and support current, and develop new Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Centres and Traditional Owner organisations (at all levels) as key organisations develop and implement cooperative approaches for the management of sea country.
34.5	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement sea country management plans.
34.6	Fully resource and support Traditional Owner representation (in a liaison role) on government and industry boards and governing committees with interests in sea country.
34.7	Develop and implement flexible and culturally-appropriate, accredited training programs for Traditional Owners on all aspects of the management of sea country.
34.8	Fully resource and support a variety of culturally-appropriate employment opportunities for Traditional Owners (of all ages including elders and young people), such as fulltime, contract, consultancy and advisory roles in both government and community organisations with interests in the management of sea country.
34.9	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake projects that identify Traditional Owner sea country boundaries and values for sea country in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
Strategy 35: Maintain and implement customary Lore / Law relating to the use of marine resources.	
Actions	
35.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop and implement management plans for the use and management of marine resources.
35.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop access and use agreements with relevant agencies in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
35.3	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop protocols with relationships with government fisheries organisations and industry relating to issues, such as the monitoring of commercial fishermen and access to by-catch.
35.4	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to undertake research on marine resources utilised by Traditional Owners in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
35.5	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop appropriate management models for the use and harvest of marine resources in recognition of customary Lore / Law.
35.6	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to regulate and monitor the poaching of culturally significant marine species.
35.7	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to become legally authorised fisheries officers to ensure more effective regulation of poaching.
Strategy 36: Increase the understanding of all NRM stakeholders about Aboriginal sea country issues.	
Actions	
36.1	Develop and implement educational programs and activities for government agency staff, all NRM stakeholders and the broader community about Aboriginal values for sea country.

Sub Theme 2: Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture

Strategy 37: Increase involvement of Aboriginal people in all levels of the commercial fishing industry and aquaculture enterprises.

Actions

- 37.1 Resource and support Aboriginal organisations and groups to develop cooperative arrangements with industry and government agencies regarding the management of commercial fisheries (such as stock assessment, fish enhancement and habitat management) and aquaculture.
- 37.2 Provide support and resources for a regional Indigenous Fisheries Working Group to advise industry on Indigenous issues.
- 37.3 Support and promote the employment of Aboriginal staff in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.

Strategy 38: Develop Traditional Owner fisheries and aquaculture enterprises.

Actions

- 38.1 Fully resource and support a review of aquaculture and commercial fishing opportunities for Traditional Owners, including a framework for economic development, and undertake an educational campaign to inform Traditional Owners about these opportunities and the skills required to sustain these businesses.
- 38.2 Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop business plans and to locate funding to establish aquaculture and commercial fishing enterprises.
- 38.3 Support the requirement for an allocated quota of commercial and culturally-appropriate fishing licences for Traditional Owners.
- 38.4 Develop and implement culturally-appropriate, accredited training for Traditional Owners interested in working in aquaculture and the commercial fishing industry.

THEME 5 – TOURISM

Strategy 39: Increase involvement of Traditional Owners in the tourism industry.	
Actions	
39.1	Fully resource and support the establishment of a regional Aboriginal tourism network to support Traditional Owners.
39.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop partnerships with key tourism industry stakeholders.
39.3	Fully resource and support the appropriate representation of Traditional Owners on industry, government and community-based tourism boards and committees.
39.4	Develop and implement culturally-appropriate training and apprenticeship initiatives for Traditional Owners regarding the development and management of successful tourism enterprises.
39.5	Develop and implement an educational campaign about opportunities for Traditional Owners in the tourism industry.
39.6	Ensure that the tourism industry support networks provide for the distribution of information in a culturally-appropriate format, which will assist Traditional Owners in learning about the tourism industry.
39.7	Increase the employment of Traditional Owners in all aspects of the tourism industry.
Strategy 40: Resource and support the development of Aboriginal tourism initiatives.	
Actions	
40.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop tourism business plans and marketing strategies.
40.2	Fully resource and support the development of an Aboriginal Regional Tourism Strategy for the Wet Tropics.
40.3	Resource and support Traditional Owners to develop cultural heritage walks and interpretative materials.
40.4	Fully resource and support the development and management of Traditional Owner cultural centres.
Strategy 41: Ensure that the intellectual and cultural property rights of Aboriginal people are recognised by the tourism industry.	
Actions	
41.1	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop cultural interpretative material and displays within government and community tourist information centres in a culturally-appropriate way and in a manner determined by Traditional Owners.
41.2	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop cultural protocols as part of the conditions of current and future tourism permits for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
41.3	Develop film and photography guidelines for the tourism industry to ensure that appropriate imagery is used in all publicity material in the tourism industry.
41.4	Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop protocols for tour operators on the appropriate use of Aboriginal cultural information in their marketing campaigns and tourism products.
41.5	Support and resource Traditional Owners to develop a regional Aboriginal authenticity label directed at both tourists and the tourism industry.
41.6	Fully resource and support the development and implementation of cultural training workshops for tour operators (marine and terrestrial) to promote cultural sensitivity and appropriate protocols.

PRIORITISING STRATEGIES

Mark Fenton

Sociologist and Consultant

Mark Fenton briefly explained to the meeting that it was now necessary to prioritise the forty-one strategies for the purpose of developing the Wet Tropics Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) and the separate Investment Strategy for the Aboriginal Plan.

Mark talked about the four criteria that had been developed to score against each action:

- Healthy Culture;
- Healthy Country;
- Economic benefit; and
- Self-determination.

He said that each attendee would be given a list of all of the approved strategies and actions, which would appear in the left column. Attendees needed to score each action in terms of its benefits or outcomes for each of the four criteria. Mark went through a few examples with the group to make sure that people understood the process. A three-point rating scale was used:

- 1 = Very Much;
- 2 = Somewhat; or
- 3 = Not much.

Attendees were asked to give a rating of between one and three for each of the actions on the list they had been given. A total of twenty-three Traditional Owners (some participants had to leave the workshop early) then undertook this task individually with assistance from Mark Fenton, Jean Fenton, Lyle Johnson and Libby Larsen.

Development of Action Packages and Allocation into Funding Years

Mark said that one of the purposes of the workshop was to prioritise strategies for the development of a Traditional Owner RIS and the Wet Tropics NRM RIS. He said that the strategies and actions themselves would generally have to be grouped into funding 'packages'. In other words, if funding was required to achieve the actions, the funding sought would not necessarily be for each individual action, but would be for a group of related actions, which could be funded as a single package. He said that the first step in the process was to identify those actions that might reasonably be expected to form unique funding packages.

Mark said that the final step in the process would be to identify which funding packages should be supported under the Wet Tropics NRM RIS and which packages supported under the Traditional Owner RIS. This would essentially be a discussion on the basis of information available at the time of the development of the RIS.

Mark then went through the revised strategies and actions with the workshop and each action was put into funding years.

Table 7 is the result of workshop discussions and the placement of each strategy and action into a four-year funding cycle.

Table 7: Development of Action Packages and allocation into funding years. Strategy definitions are detailed from page 160.

Strategy No.	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1	1.1, 1.2	1.3		
2	2.2	2.1		
3	3.2,3.3	3.1,3.4	3.5	Review
4	4.1, 4.2,4.3	4.1, 4.2,4.3	4.1, 4.2,4.3	4.1
5	5.1,5.2, 5.3, 5.5	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5	5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5	5.2, 5.3, 5.5
6	6.1, 6.2	6.1, 6.2	6.1, 6.2	6.1, 6.2
7	7.1, 7.2, 7.3			
8	8.1, 8.2, 8.3			
10	10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4			
12	12.1, 12.2	12.3		
13	13.2, 13.4	13.1, 13.3, 13.5		
14	14.1, 14.2			
15	15.2, 15.4	15.3	15.1	
16	16.1, 16.2,			
17	17.1, 17.2			
18	18.1 (on hold)			
19	19.2,19.3	19.1		
20	20.1			
21	21.1			
22	22.2	22.1	22.3	22.3, 22.4
23	23.1	23.2	23.2	23.2
24	24.1	24.2		
25	25.1, 25.2	25.1, 25.2	25.1, 25.2	25.1, 25.2
26	26.1, 26.2	26.2, 26.3	26.2	
27	27.1, 27.2	27.1, 27.2	27.1, 27.2	27.1, 27.2
28	28.1, 28.2			
29	29.1, 29.2	29.1, 29.2	29.1, 29.2	29.1, 29.2
30	30.1, 30.2, 30.6	30.3, 30.4, 30.5	30.4	30.4
31	31.1 to 31.6	31.1 to 31.6	31.1 to 31.6	31.1 to 31.6
32	32.1	32.2,32.6	32.3, 32.7	32.5
33	33.1, 33.2	33.2		
34	34.1 to 34.7	34.9, 34.10		
35	35.1, 35.2, 35.4, 35.5, 35.7, 35.9	35.3, 35.5, 35.6, 35.8	35.5	35.5
36	36.1, 36.2	36.1, 36.2	36.1, 36.2	
37	37.1, 37.2, 37.3	37.1, 37.2, 37.3	37.1, 37.2, 37.3	
38	38.1, 38.2, 38.4	38.3, 38.5		
39	39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.5, 39.6, 39.7	39.3, 39.4, 39.7	39.3, 39.7	39.7
40	40.1 to 40.4			
41	41.1, 41.2,41.3, 41.4, 41.5, 41.6	41.3, 41.4, 41.5	41.3, 41.4	41.4

Results

Due to time restrictions it was not possible to analyse the information and present the findings to the Traditional Owners at the workshop on the same day. This would have been useful so that the group could ground-truth the results and the criteria could be altered or the weighting of the results changed to reflect people's thoughts and ideas on the outcomes.

Participants thought that the information on the prioritisation of strategies and funding year allocations would need to be further developed at a later stage and that the proposed Traditional Advisory Committee to the Board of FNQ NRM Ltd should have a role in ground-truthing this information in the future.

Prioritisation of Strategies and Actions

Each of the four criteria (culture, country, economic benefit and self determination) was used by the Traditional Owners to score the forty-one strategies using a three-point rating scale (1 = Very Much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Not much). For each criterion, the extent of agreement amongst people in scoring was assessed by using a statistical index called 'Cronbach's Alpha'. This index varies between 0 (zero) and 1.0. A zero score (or negative) indicates no agreement amongst all the twenty-three people in scoring the strategies, while a score of 1.0 would indicate that all twenty-three people gave exactly the same scores to each of the strategies.

As shown below, most attendees agreed with the scoring of the economic criterion and less so with the scoring of the country criterion. In relation to the fourth criterion, self-determination, no one agreed on the scores (they may as well have been random) and as such this criterion was dropped from the analysis.

Culture

Alpha = 0.64 (Removal of four people with low item total correlations.)

Country

Alpha = 0.52 (Removal of twelve people with low item total correlations.)

Economic

Alpha = 0.84 (Removal of two people with low item total correlations.)

Self Determination

Negative alpha (Indicates a very unreliable scale for assessing the self-determination value of identified strategies. Thus this criterion was excluded.)

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

The proposed timeframe for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan public consultations and for the development of the Aboriginal Plan were discussed with workshop participants. Libby said that she needed to integrate the Aboriginal Plan strategies and actions into the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and Traditional Owners would have an opportunity to review a draft during the public consultation phase for the mainstream NRM Plan.

Workshop participants agreed that the prioritisation of information and funding year allocations would be a useful basis to begin work on the Traditional Owner component of the Wet Tropics RIS and the separate Aboriginal Plan RIS. Jean stated that funding had not yet been officially allocated to the Aboriginal Plan RIS but that it was being discussed.

**DEVELOPING THE WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**DRAFT PLAN CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS
PROCEEDINGS**

October to December 2004

**Facilitators: Lyle Johnson and Barry Hunter
Prepared by Libby Larsen with Birgit Kuehn and Lyle Johnson**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Seven workshops were organised and facilitated by Lyle Johnson (Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd) and Barry J. Hunter (Indigenous Consultant) during October 2004 and December 2004, for consultation on the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Draft Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan.

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOPS

The purpose of the workshops was to:

- Present the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Draft Aboriginal Plan to Traditional Owners for discussion and feedback;
- Highlight how the Aboriginal Plan themes and strategies had been integrated into the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan; and
- Discuss the development of the Regional Investment Strategy.

WORKSHOP LOCATIONS

Workshops were organised throughout the Wet Tropics NRM Region. Letters and flyers were mailed out to Traditional Owners throughout the region. These were followed up by phone calls to inform Traditional Owners about the workshops. Catchment Coordinators of FNQ NRM Ltd were invited to the workshops to develop better partnerships with the Traditional Owners in their catchments. Staff from Indigenous engagement units within Queensland Government NRM agencies were also invited to attend the workshops.

Table 8: Workshop locations and dates.

Workshop Location	Date
International Club, Atherton	7 October 2004
Chowai Centre, Innisfail	12 October 2004
Girringun Training Centre, Cardwell	15 October 2004
Community Hall, Wujal Wujal	19 October 2004
Mossman Gorge Training Centre, Mossman Gorge	21 October 2004
Sisters of Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns	29 October 2004
Community Hall, Yarrabah	10 December 2004

PROCEEDINGS

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS TO DATE

Lyle Johnson

Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd

Lyle gave an overview of the process to date and an update on the consultation process for the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Draft Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan. He talked about ways in which Traditional Owners could give input and feedback and he further specified the consultation deadlines.

THE DRAFT PLAN AND ITS COMPONENTS

Barry J. Hunter

Aboriginal Consultant

Barry presented information to the participants at the workshops on the Traditional Owner component of the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan and the Draft Aboriginal Plan. He explained the key themes and the types of strategies and actions for each theme.

REGIONAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

Catherine de Voil

FNQ NRM Ltd

Catherine talked about the current status of the Regional Investment Strategy and reviewed the process in general. She explained that there are a number of key implementation programs identified in the Draft Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. She said that future funding would be based around these programs and that one of these programs is called 'Meeting Aboriginal Aspirations for Natural and Cultural Resource Management'. Catherine emphasised that the Regional Investment Strategy was focused on NHT monies and that more work needed to be done to secure resources from other sources. The idea of a separate investment strategy for the Aboriginal Plan, what it may entail, and its benefits were discussed in the workshops.

It was explained that the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee would need to play an important role in the development and approval of the Traditional Owner program within the Regional Investment Strategy.

OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

Most of the concerns and questions that workshop participants had were about the Regional Investment Strategy, the second Traditional Owner Board Director, the function of the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee, the general roll-out of money for projects and how Traditional Owners would be involved with projects.

A summary of the key issues raised at the workshops is outlined below.

Regional Investment Strategy

Regional Investment Strategy key issues were:

- How much money would be available and when;
- Staffing requirements, i.e. the number of Indigenous Project Officers needed;
- How Traditional Owners would be involved in other projects;
- What types of projects identified in the planning process would get funded by NHT dollars;
- How projects would be prioritised for funding;
- Potential for conflict between groups; and
- Decision-making processes for the allocation of funding.

Investment Strategy for Aboriginal Plan

The Investment Strategy for the Aboriginal Plan raised the following issues:

- What it would entail and how long it would take;
- Other sources of government and non-government funding and support;
- Who would fund the separate investment strategy; and
- How it would relate to the ARC.

Second Indigenous Board Member

Participants discussed the fact that the proxy / support Indigenous position on the Board of FNQ NRM Ltd (Elsie Go-Sam) did not enjoy full voting rights. Furthermore, this position was not recognised in the Board's Constitution. Workshop participants agreed that this situation would need to be rectified as soon as possible.

Traditional Owner Advisory Group

Considerations about the Traditional Owner Advisory Group included:

- The need to be well resourced and supported; and
- Questions on how it was formed and how it relates to the ARC.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Plans

Workshop participants agreed on:

- The need to develop a good monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Aboriginal Plan; and
- The need for the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan monitoring and evaluation strategy to take into account Traditional Owner's issues and values.

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