



# *Country to Coast - a healthy sustainable future*

## **VOLUME 5C**

### **Priority Action Plan 1 Social and Economic Theme**

#### **PAP1.3 Indigenous Engagement**

## **Final Report**



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## **Paper C – Indigenous Engagement (PAP 1.3)**

### **Chapter one - Indigenous engagement and representation models**

#### **FINAL REPORT**

##### **Desk Study**

**Prepared for Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM  
by Michelle Maloney, Community Development Consultant  
5 October 2004**



**Burnett Mary  
Regional Group**  
*...for Natural Resource Management Inc*

## **Acknowledgement and thanks**

The Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) for Natural Resource Management and Michelle Maloney would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Burnett Mary region, including the Butchulla, Taribelung Bunda, Wakka Wakka, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Gubbi Gubbi, Kabi Kabi and Wulli Wulli peoples.

This paper is a ‘desk study’ which summarises existing reports about indigenous engagement and representation models, and natural resource management issues that are important to indigenous people. It was compiled based on existing written reports, and interviews with a number of Indigenous Support Officers in Qld Regional NRM Bodies and government officers in State Government Departments. We would like to thank everyone who made the time to provide information to us about their projects and programs.

Indigenous people from the Burnett Mary region were interviewed in the second part of this project, and their views are set out in Paper 2 of the BMRG’s Indigenous Engagement Project: ‘Community Consultation Report’. Copies of this report are available from the BMRG office in Bundaberg.

## Chapter one executive summary

### Overview of PAP 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement

In July 2004, the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG) contracted Michelle Maloney to carry out Priority Action Plan 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement. The PAP has involved two main projects:

1. The preparation of a desk study to inform BMRG about indigenous issues in NRM, and
2. Community consultation, to meet with indigenous people to find out about specific NRM issues and projects important to people in the region, and to identify effective indigenous representation structures for the BMRG.

### Purpose of this paper

The purpose of this desk study is to provide an overview of NRM issues important to indigenous people, and a discussion of selected indigenous engagement processes and representative structures that have been (and are) used by indigenous groups, government agencies and other organisations, to inform the BMRG's approach to long term engagement with indigenous communities in the region.

It is important to stress that this paper aims only to provide background information to inform BMRG's activities. The representative structures the BMRG chooses to put in place will be predominantly driven by the indigenous engagement process and choices made by the BMRG and local indigenous community.

### NRM Issues and Indigenous Peoples

Section 2 provides an introduction to NRM issues that are important to indigenous people. The second phase of PAP 1.3, the community consultation phase, will gather much more detailed information about NRM issues and projects that are important to indigenous people.

The section highlights a number of overarching issues that are important for groups such as the BMRG to understand when they are working with indigenous people on natural resource management. These issues include:

- ***Different world view.*** The different world view that indigenous people have of natural resource management, as compared to the common view held in western culture. Indigenous peoples see cultural heritage and natural resource management as a single concept, not independent concepts.
- ***Speaking for country.*** Traditional Owners are the only indigenous peoples who can speak for their country. Other indigenous peoples, such as 'historical' or 'community' people may have legitimate interests in the wellbeing of an area, but under traditional indigenous lore, they are not allowed to speak for other people's country. Sensitive and effective structures are needed to ensure Traditional Owners and other indigenous peoples are able to be involved in NRM issues in a manner that respects indigenous culture.
- ***Respect for culture and knowledge.*** Many indigenous peoples believe non-indigenous people do not understand or respect indigenous people's traditional knowledge or world view and this translates into unfair treatment and an absence of

opportunities for indigenous people to be involved appropriately in decision making processes.

- **Social and economic issues.** Indigenous involvement in resource management and cultural heritage issues cannot be separated from the social, economic and political circumstances of indigenous communities.

To provide an introduction to general NRM issues that are important to indigenous people, an overview is given of the Queensland Government’s Policy, ‘Looking After Country Together’, and an Indigenous Knowledge Forum that was held in Alice Springs in May 2003. Processes specific to the South East Queensland and Burnett Mary region are then discussed. This includes an overview of the Aspirations Documents prepared by Traditional Owners in five areas of South East Queensland: the Wakka Wakka (Eidsvold), Hervey Bay/Fraser Island, Port Curtis Coral Coast, Sunshine Coast and Hinterland and Bunya Mountains. Issues and principles identified through the Burnett Basin WAMP (Water Allocation Management Plan) process are also summarized.

In summary, priority NRM issues for indigenous people include:

- Ensuring NRM is about people as well as the environment
- Access to traditional country
- Protecting natural and cultural heritage
- River health and caring for inland waterways
- Caring for land and sea country
- Traditional hunting and gathering
- Improving communication with other stakeholders and community members
- Opportunities for involvement and representation in NRM bodies and government department decision making processes regarding NRM
- Opportunities to improve socio-economic circumstances through education, employment, tourism, business and other opportunities linked to caring for country.

## **Engagement and Representation Issues**

Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 provide details of different indigenous engagement processes and representative structures.

### **Section 3: Engagement and Representation Processes Initiated by Indigenous Groups**

This section looks at the idea of ‘stakeholders’ and questions ‘who’s engaging who?’

While consultation and engagement processes are often perceived to be processes initiated by governments, corporations and other non-community entities, engagement is not the exclusive domain of such groups. This section introduces a number of ways indigenous communities are reconstructing the idea that they are ‘stakeholders’ who need to be consulted by others. It sets out examples of how groups are trying to take more control of how they engage and work with government and other groups.

The examples given include the Aspirations Documents prepared by Traditional Owner groups in five different areas in South East Queensland, the protocol documents created by many indigenous groups when dealing with development proponents and others, and the ‘Community Working Party’ model in Far West NSW.

#### **Section 4: Engagement Protocols initiated by Government**

Protocols can provide guidelines to help people work together. This section looks at a number of different situations where protocols are used by government agencies and indigenous groups, to engage and work together.

- **Government engagement protocols.** Commonwealth and State government departments regularly produce protocol documents aimed at helping government officers understand how to engage and work with indigenous people. The examples discussed include protocols from: the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development (DATSIPD), the Australian Heritage Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Commission.
- While such protocols provide a good general introduction to some of the issues involved with working with indigenous communities, the protocols' high level of generality limits their usefulness. Once contact is made with communities and/or organisations, any 'protocols' for working together need to be discussed and negotiated together.
- **Protocols to guide government and indigenous working relationships.** Protocols are also used within existing and long term working relationships, such as between the Wet Tropics Management Authority and Aboriginal Rainforest Council.
- **Protocols to help Regional NRM bodies engage with indigenous groups** are also introduced:
- *Guidelines for Indigenous Participation in Natural Resource Management* – Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust, 2004.
- *Good Practice in Indigenous Consultation and Involvement in Integrated Regional NRM Planning* – prepared by the Indigenous Policy and Coordination Section, Environment Australia 1 August 2002.

#### **Section 5: Indigenous Engagement and Representation Among Other Regional NRM Bodies**

This section provides an overview of the indigenous engagement and representation approaches being used by six other Regional NRM Groups in Qld:

- Desert Channels Qld
- Fitzroy Basin Association
- Burdekin Dry Tropics
- South East Queensland
- Far North Queensland
- Mackay Whitsundays

For each NRM body, the following issues are covered:

- Who's being engaged – Traditional Owners, Native Title Claimants, historical communities and/or other members of the indigenous community
- Engagement processes
- Board representation - including the status of indigenous Board representation (whether interim or permanent arrangements are in place) and how representatives have been selected/appointed.

In summary, of the six Regional NRM bodies examined in this section:

- All have one staff member (Indigenous Support Officers, or Indigenous Land Management Facilitators) providing either full time or part time support to indigenous communities, with varying levels of additional support within each NRM body
- Two have set up ‘interim’ arrangements with temporary indigenous Board representatives, the others have permanent arrangements.
- Two have created two Board positions for indigenous representatives, one is currently negotiating a second Board position and the remaining three have one representative.
- Five have set up Board representation with Traditional Owner participation only. While all the NRM bodies aim to work with all indigenous peoples (Traditional Owners, plus all other indigenous people), through on the ground projects and funding opportunities, most groups recognize the right only of Traditional Owners to speak for their country, and consequently are structuring Board Representation to only include Traditional Owners.

### **Section 6: Indigenous Engagement and Representation Models**

There are a wide range of engagement processes and representation models used by government agencies and indigenous people.

The examples outlined in this section were selected because they provide a cross section of different types of engagement and representation models and processes – from short term, project specific consultation processes such as those to develop Water Allocation Management Plans under the Water Act (WAMP) to formalized, long term indigenous representative arrangements such as the Aboriginal Rainforest Council.

This section provides an overview of the following representation models:

- The ‘WAMP’ Process - The DNR’s Community Consultation Processes Under the Water Act, in the Burnett Basin and Mary River indigenous communities
- Engagement process for the development of Aspirations Documents, South East Queensland
- Aboriginal Rainforest Council
- Sea Forum
- Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership
- MOU between MDBC and Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations
- Indigenous Catchment Management Model – ‘On Ground, On Country’
- Murray Darling Basin Commission’s new indigenous engagement model

For each of these models, the following issues are covered:

- Overview of process
- Details of representation structure
- Analysis of the process – observations, comments, lessons learnt

## **Analysis of case studies and framework for BMRG’s indigenous engagement and board representation**

Section 7 draws on the examples and case studies from Sections 3 to 6 of the paper, to develop a framework for examining issues organisations such as the BMRG need to consider and incorporate into their operational structures, to effectively engage with indigenous people.

Each sub-section has a brief discussion of the issue and one or more recommendations.

### **7.1 Rationale for engagement**

#### ***Recommendation***

- That the BMRG articulate specific goals and create Key Performance Indicators for its Indigenous Engagement program. Such goals and KPIs would be internal, corporate working tools and would be in addition to the targets established in the Regional Plan that relate to indigenous people’s NRM goals and aspirations.

### **7.2 Who to engage with**

#### ***Recommendations***

That the BMRG:

- Adopt an inclusive approach and work with all indigenous peoples in its region.
- Understand and respect the distinction between Traditional Owners and other indigenous people.
- Adopt the MDBC’s approach to working with indigenous people, and design its engagement strategies on the basis that Traditional Owners have customary rights and obligations to ‘speak for country’ and make management decisions about cultural heritage, while other indigenous communities have a civil and political right and interest in natural resource management issues.
- Develop Board Representation structures by first consulting with Traditional Owner groups, and then with other indigenous people in the region.

### **7.3 How to engage: opportunities and structures for engaging with indigenous communities**

#### ***Recommendations***

That the BMRG:

- Consider creating an organizational charter or Protocol setting out its principles of respecting and working with indigenous peoples – Traditional Owners and other people – in all aspects of its work.
- Use Aspirations Documents and protocol documents created by indigenous groups, wherever such documents are available, and make all efforts to incorporate them into BMRG’s engagement strategies.
- Adopt a policy of encouraging indigenous people to apply for positions of employment and consulting/advisory work with the organization.
- Adopt a pro-active policy of encouraging indigenous people to participate in ‘mainstream’ NRM committees in the region, as well as research projects.

### **7.4 How to engage: attitudes and resources necessary for effective engagement with indigenous communities**

#### ***Recommendations***

That the BMRG:

- Work towards increasing mutual understanding and respect between indigenous and non-indigenous people, and investigate opportunities for funding:
  - a) Long term cross cultural training for non-indigenous staff, technical experts and Board.
  - b) Cross cultural training for non-indigenous people about government and commercial structures and operations.
- Use the information from this paper, and the report on community consultation under the PAP 1.3 Indigenous Engagement program, to develop a detailed strategy for helping build the capacity and resources of indigenous people in the region.

## 7.5 Governance and Representative structures

This section examines three questions:

- Who should the BMRG engage with on Board representation?
- How many Board positions should the BMRG have for indigenous representatives?
- How can the Board position/s be selected to be truly representative of the indigenous community and acceptable to Traditional Owners in the region?

### ***Recommendations***

That the BMRG:

- Note that these recommendations are based only on information available through the desk study and that PAP 1.3 for Indigenous Engagement will, through its community consultation process, work with indigenous people in the region to identify what kind of indigenous representation structures are most preferred by indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region.
- **Consider creating two positions on the Board for indigenous representatives.**
- Note the need for any regional representative structure to protect each Traditional Owner group's responsibility to be the only group that can speak for their country.
- Note the models used by the WAMP process, Sea Forum, Aboriginal Rainforest Council and SEQ Traditional Owner Consultative Committee and Murray Darling Basin Commission.
- Note the Burnett Basin WAMP process offered an acceptable representation structure for indigenous people in the BMRG region because each clan group was able to have two representatives, and two proxies, as part of the larger Indigenous Working Group. This larger IWG was then prepared to elect two representatives (and two proxies) to represent indigenous people on the Community Reference Group.
- **Consider creating an indigenous NRM forum, similar in structure to that of the WAMP process (with at least two representatives from each local clan or family group within the region), to enable indigenous people to work together on a regional basis on NRM issues and determine how they would like to select their BMRG board representatives.**
- **That the BMRG consider allocating funding to enable such an NRM forum to meet on a regular basis, for at least 12-18 months and discuss how best to structure indigenous representation on the BMRG Board.**
- **That the BMRG work with the indigenous NRM forum to explore ways of establishing long term funding resources to enable the regional group to take ownership of the forum and continue its work over the longer term.**

## **C1 Introduction**

### **C1.1 Overview of PAP 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement**

In July 2004, the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG) contracted Michelle Maloney to carry out Priority Action Plan 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement.

The PAP has involved two main projects:

1. The preparation of a desk study to inform BMRG about indigenous issues in NRM and possible engagement and representation structures.
2. Community consultation, to meet with indigenous people to find out about specific NRM issues and projects important to people in the region, and to identify effective indigenous representation structures for the BMRG.

### **C1.2 Purpose of this paper**

The purpose of this desk study is to provide an overview of NRM issues important to indigenous people, and a discussion of selected indigenous engagement processes and representative structures that have been (and are) used by indigenous groups, government agencies and other organisations, to inform the BMRG’s approach to long term engagement with indigenous communities in the region.

This paper looks at a range of existing and former engagement processes and representative structures, analyses their approaches and uses some of the observations and lessons learnt from those processes to suggest a framework for the BMRG to engage with indigenous communities.

It is important to stress that this paper aims only to provide background information to inform BMRG’s activities. The structures the BMRG chooses to put in place will be predominantly driven by the indigenous engagement process and choices made by the BMRG and local indigenous community.

### **C1.3 Limitations of this Paper**

This desk study has been prepared in a short period of time and suffers from the usual shortfalls typical of such a timeframe. It can only provide a sample of case studies, rather than offer a comprehensive survey of indigenous engagement processes.

In addition, the focus of the study – on *processes* rather than specific content related outcomes - has limited the amount of information available via a desk study. Typically, reports on natural resource management focus on content based or substantive outcomes, whereas this study has examined the underlying processes and structures that led to particular NRM outcomes. It is relatively more difficult and time consuming to obtain information that describes and assesses the processes used to reach specific outcomes. A small selection of interviews were conducted to obtain additional information about selected projects and processes, but further time would allow for more interviews and the collection of more extensive information about engagement processes and representative structures.

## **C1.4 Definitions**

### **C1.4.1 Aboriginal vs Indigenous**

There are many different opinions about the most appropriate words or terms for Australia's first peoples. While some people prefer the word 'indigenous' others find it offensive, and prefer to be called either Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander. This paper uses the term 'indigenous' to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as this is the term used by the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

### **C1.4.2 'Engagement' vs 'consultation' vs 'involvement'**

These words are sometimes used interchangeably. In the community sector, they can be seen as referring to three different levels of activity between community groups and other stakeholders. In this paper, the terms are used as follows:

*Engagement* – the processes or mechanisms used to contact, meet with and set up a relationship with individuals and groups.

*Consultation* – when a stakeholder meets with individuals or a group to present information about a specific project or activity (normally initiated by the stakeholder), and seek comments or input to the project from those being consulted.

*Involvement* – refers to a more developed relationship than 'engagement' or 'consultation' and is normally the term used when groups are working on projects together.

### **C1.4.3 Governance**

'The processes, structures and institutions (formal and informal) through which a group, community or society makes decisions, distributes and exercises authority and power, determines strategic goals, organizes corporate, group and individual behaviour, develops rules and assigns responsibility'<sup>1</sup>

### **C1.4.4 Indigenous heritage**

"Indigenous heritage is dynamic. It includes tangible and intangible expressions of culture that link generations of Indigenous people over time. Indigenous people express their cultural heritage through 'the person', their relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects all of which arise from Indigenous spirituality"<sup>2</sup>.

### **C1.4.5 Native title claimant or applicant**

An indigenous person or group who has a registered Native Title Claim under the Native Title Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Dodson, M and D.E.Smith 2003 'Governance for sustainable development: Strategic issues and principles for Indigenous Australian communities.' Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper 250/2003, Australian National University.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Heritage Commission 'Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values', National Capital Printing, Canberra'. (Hereafter cited as 'Australian Heritage Commission, Ask First') p.4

#### **C1.4.6 Traditional owner**

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person/s who has a genealogical connection to a particular ancestral homeland estate<sup>3</sup>

Or

Those people who, through membership in a descent group or clan, have responsibility for caring for particular country. Traditional Owners are authorized to speak for country and its heritage. Authorisation to speak for country and heritage may be as a senior traditional owner, an elder, or in more recent times, as a registered Native Title claimant<sup>4</sup>.

#### **C1.4.7 ‘Historical’ or ‘community’ people, or ‘other indigenous people with interests’**

‘Historical’ or ‘community’ people are indigenous people who have a connection to a certain area or part of country, not as Traditional owners with a genealogical connection to country, but by having an individual or family history of involvement in an area sometime since European arrival/settlement.

The Australian Heritage Commission defines these people as ‘Other indigenous people with interests’ and states they are: those people who through their personal or family history of involvement with a particular place have an interest in its heritage values. Such places could include, but are not limited to: mission stations, places of Indigenous protest and areas of land where people worked.’

## **C2 NRM issues and indigenous people – overview**

### **C2.1 World view – summary of issues relevant to BMRG**

A significant body of literature explores and explains Indigenous people’s unique relationship with the natural environment<sup>5</sup>. This section merely highlights a number of important issues that must be kept in mind by non-indigenous organisations thinking about how to involve indigenous people in ‘mainstream’ processes for natural resource management. The second part of the PAP 1.3, the community consultation phase, will aim to produce a very detailed list of NRM issues and projects that are important to indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region.

- Different world view. Indigenous people’s world view regarding ‘NRM and cultural heritage’ is different to mainstream ‘western’ ideas about resource use.

*“To indigenous people, cultural heritage and natural resource management are a single concept, in which the management and use of natural resources are intertwined in cultural practice and the exercise of cultural responsibilities. Many Indigenous people would see co-management as intertwined with their resource and political rights, culture and social and*

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<sup>3</sup> Wellington, Fiona, ‘Indigenous Traditional Owner Involvement in land use planning’, Environment Protection Agency, Brisbane, (Hereafter cited as Wellington, p1

<sup>4</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, ‘Ask First’, p.4

<sup>5</sup> ATSIC, AIATSIS and a range of other organisations can be contacted for references.

*economic arrangements – not as an independent arrangement as management agencies tend to see it .”*<sup>6</sup>

- **Speaking for country.** In Aboriginal culture, only Traditional Owners can speak for their country. While ‘historical’ or ‘community’ people may have legitimate interests in an area, under traditional Aboriginal lore they are not allowed to speak for other people’s country. This has significant implications for how an organization such as the BMRG can engage and work with Indigenous people in its region on NRM and land management matters. In many places there is a growing divide between the way Traditional Owners and other Indigenous communities are included in natural resource management. Sensitive and effective structures are needed to ensure Traditional Owners and other indigenous peoples are able to be involved in NRM issues in a manner that respects indigenous culture.
- **Respect for culture and knowledge.** Many indigenous peoples believe non-indigenous people do not understand or respect indigenous people’s traditional knowledge or world view and this translates into unfair treatment and an absence of opportunities for indigenous people to be involved appropriately in decision making processes.<sup>7</sup>
- **Social and economic issues.** Indigenous involvement in resource management and cultural heritage issues cannot be separated from the social, economic and political circumstances of indigenous communities.

**‘Government officials, professional fishing operators and scientists need to fully involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their processes, recognise our knowledge of the ecosystem, and involve us in decision making processes and the management of the oceans. They don’t necessarily know more about the marine environment just because they have spent 10 years at university. We have at least 50,000 years of cumulative knowledge about the oceans. It is time professional groups recognise the value of that knowledge and start relying on it to develop sound marine management policies and practices.’**

Rodney Dillon, ATSIC Land and Sea Commissioner,  
quoted in ‘Managing Sea Country Together’, p.13

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<sup>6</sup> George, M, Innes J, Ross H. (2004) *Managing sea country together: key issues for developing cooperative management for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area*. CRC Reef Research Centre Technical Report No 50, CRC Reef Research Centre Ltd, Townsville (Hereafter cited as George, M, Innes J & Ross H. ‘*Managing sea country together*’)

<sup>7</sup> Ward, Neil & Shelley Reys (2003) ‘Scoping Study on Indigenous Involvement in NRM Decision Making and the integration of Indigenous Cultural Heritage Considerations into Relevant MDBC programs.’, prepared for the Murray Darling Basin Commission, February 2003 (Hereafter cited as ‘Ward and Reys, MDBC Scoping Study’). The Scoping Study states this is one of the key of the key barriers identified by indigenous people to their access to resource management decision making processes

*‘Traditional Owners on country are the forgotten ones; they see the desecration of their ancestral lands and feel an overwhelming sense of loss and sadness. During a catchment community consultation, one Traditional Owner pointed out a sacred lake that had been completely drained of water by the current landowner. This person’s old people had been buried near this lake. To see such desecration is devastating, particularly when this water body had been teeming with life and now all that is left is dead trees and dust. This particular lake had never previously run dry as long as anyone could remember, even in the harshest drought ...’*

SQTOF and SQTOAC report, p.31

## **C2.2 Indigenous NRM issues**

As one of the most ‘consulted’ communities in Australia, there is a large body of material documenting Aboriginal people’s connection with and interest in their country, and ‘natural resource management’ issues.’

This section provides an overview of several documents that highlight NRM issues of importance to indigenous people across Queensland and Australia, and more specifically in South East Queensland and the Burnett Mary region.

In summary, priority NRM issues for indigenous people include:

- Ensuring NRM is about people as well as the environment
- Access to traditional country
- Protecting natural and cultural heritage
- River health and caring for inland waterways
- Caring for land and sea country
- Traditional hunting and gathering
- Improved communication with other stakeholders and community members
- Opportunities for involvement and representation in NRM bodies and government department decision making processes regarding NRM
- Opportunities to improve socio-economic circumstances through education, employment, tourism, business and other opportunities linked to caring for country.

### **C2.2.1 Issues shared by indigenous communities**

#### **Queensland Government’s ‘Looking After Country Together’ Policy**

The Queensland Government’s main policy for enabling indigenous communities to increase their involvement in land management is called ‘Looking After Country Together’<sup>8</sup>. It identifies three core areas of priority, and provides a simple overview of some of the key issues the Queensland government believes is important for indigenous communities:

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<sup>8</sup> Natural Resources and Mines, Qld (2003), ‘Looking after country together: A proposal for a partnership agreement to improve Indigenous people’s access to and involvement in the management of land and sea country’. Draft Discussion Paper

The policy aims to create:

1. Increased indigenous access to land and sea country
2. Stronger indigenous planning and management of land and sea country
3. Stronger indigenous involvement in and influence on broader natural resource planning and policy development

### **Indigenous Knowledge Forum, May 2003**

In May 2003, indigenous people from across Australia met at the ‘Indigenous Knowledge Forum’ in Alice Springs<sup>9</sup>. At this forum, speakers and participants discussed a range of different NRM issues. The participants also agreed to ‘A Framework of Principles’ – which is a useful summary of many indigenous groups’ interests in NRM:

- Indigenous people enjoy a fundamental and continuing relationship to all landscapes and seascapes
- Support for the maintenance, protection and continuity of indigenous knowledge is an NRM regional priority
- Regional bodies recognize indigenous rights and interests in planning and implementation of their regional plans
- Natural and cultural resource management involves a partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous interests
- Active involvement of indigenous people at all levels of decision making on NRM Regional Groups
  - Indigenous people represented on every Regional NRM body
  - Representation at sub-regional and regional level
  - Representation regardless of land tenure
  - Ensure equity in decision making through membership and consideration of world view
  - NRM regional plans to have appropriate performance indicators to assess the adequacy of indigenous participation and documented support from indigenous organisations that appropriate and effective consultation has occurred
- Indigenous people are adequately resourced to effectively participate in the development and implementation of Regional NRM plans
  - Investment in people as well as NRM outcomes
  - Recognition that indigenous interests go beyond planning, to active and on-going involvement in implementation

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<sup>9</sup> Copies of the Aspirations Documents can be obtained upon request from the relevant Traditional Owner groups

## **C2.3 Issues of importance to groups in the Burnett Mary Region and South East Queensland**

In the last few years, several processes have produced documents that articulate indigenous people’s priority NRM issues in South East Queensland and the Burnett Mary region. This section lists the issues identified through two processes: the preparation of Aspirations Documents and the Burnett Basin WAMP consultation. It also provides other examples of documents prepared by indigenous groups.

### **C2.3.1 Aspirations documents**<sup>10</sup>

During the development of the South East Queensland Forestry Agreement (YEARS), the EPA facilitated a parallel process to help interested groups prepare ‘Aspirations’ documents. Five such documents have been developed that represent the aspirations of Traditional Owners for the following areas:

- Wakka Wakka (Eidsvold)
- Hervey Bay/Fraser Island
- Port Curtis Coral Coast
- Sunshine Coast and Hinterland
- Bunya Mountains

(More about the process used to engage groups and work with them through this process can be found in Section 6 of this paper).

The following provides a very brief summary of some of the issues covered in the aspirations documents prepared by indigenous communities in South East Queensland:

#### **Eidsvold Wakka Wakka Traditional Land Custodians for Eidsvold region, (2003) ‘Aspirations of Traditional Land Custodians: for involvement in the management of traditional estate and matters of social and economic well being’**

The Wakka Wakka (Eidsvold) Aspirations Document includes the group vision:

“To continue our obligation to care for and protect traditional country and cultural heritage in a manner that would make our Elders and ancestors proud, and to ensure future generations recognise that our culture is still strong in connection with our spiritual land.

By promoting recognition and respect for our traditional culture and connection to country, and balancing cultural responsibilities with improvements in social; and economic well being, we wish to foster self purpose, identity and self determination within our people.”

The group’s aspirations include:

- Protecting natural and cultural heritage
- Improving communication
- Training and employment
- Business ventures
- Education

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<sup>10</sup> Copies of the Aspirations Documents can be obtained upon request from the relevant Traditional Owner groups

### **Port Curtis Coral Coast peoples, (200?) ‘Developing Partnerships Now and For the Future: Aspirations of Aboriginal People of Port Curtis Coral Coast’**

#### Vision

‘To cooperatively protect, preserve and promote our culture and connection to land, and educate current and future generations using a culturally appropriate manner. To also enhance the cultural, spiritual, economic, social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal people, and ensure our ability to care for our homelands.’

#### Aspirations

- Protecting natural and cultural heritage
- Employment opportunities
- Improve Communication
- Traditional hunting and gathering
- Tourism
- Education and training

### **The Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Aspirations Document includes the group vision:**

#### Vision

“To learn from the past to give us direction for the future, to protect and care for our country and cultural heritage so our ancestors, elders and future generations will be proud”.

#### Aspirations

- Protecting natural and cultural heritage
- Employment opportunities
- Improve Communication
- Cultural Tourism
- Education and training

Other documents, not part of Aspirations process, but setting out indigenous issues/interests in NRM:

Other documents that illustrate issues of concern to indigenous groups:

### **Gooreng Gooreng, Sea Country – Case Study (2003)**

‘Sea Country – Case Study’ is a report providing an account of the significance of land and sea country to Gooreng Gooreng people, by Gooreng Gooreng people. It traces the traditional knowledge and oral histories in relation to Gooreng Gooreng people.

“The land and the sea, the resources we take from it, and what we give back to it, how we regulate it, the practice of hunting, the keeping of our laws, the rights of passage over all areas of country, these are customs which have continued over countless generations. It is our obligation and the right of our people to continue living from the land and the sea. We have withstood the tests of time, invasion, drought and change, and the tides of time have not washed away our sovereign rights over country which we lawfully inherit from our forefathers.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Johnson, M ‘Sea Country - Case Study’, page 1

South Queensland Traditional Owner’s Federation Inc (SQTOF) & South Qld TO Aboriginal Corporation (SQTOAC) (DATE?)

‘Our vision is that each ancestral estate will, by 2020, have the necessary biodiversity and other cultural resources available for the continuation of the living Indigenous cultural of that ancestral estate until the end of time. Further that the Traditional Owner of the estate will have full self-determining access to and management of their cultural resources.

### **C2.3.2 Burnett Basin WAMP (Water Allocation Management Plan) process**

The Burnett Basin WAMP consultation process was conducted by the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines from 1998 to 2000, and involved representatives from all clan groups in the Burnett Basin. A full description of the engagement and representation structures used during this process can be found in Section 6 of this paper.

The Burnett Basin WAMP process identified a range of NRM issues of importance to indigenous people in the region. A detailed list of these issues can be found in the report titled ‘Burnett Basin WAMP: Indigenous Cultural Report’ at p.4-6<sup>12</sup>.

In summary, priority NRM issues were:

- River health
- Cultural heritage
- Fishing/hunting rights
- Native Title
- Indigenous employment and training
- Research
- Compensation
- Working groups/proper representation

In addition, the Indigenous Working Group developed a list of principles regarding what they would like to see in the WAMP documentation including the draft Plan.

The common values were:

- That Aboriginal Elders (Traditional Owners) be recognized for their knowledge, experiences and understanding of country and waterways;
- Recognition of the aspirations of Aboriginal People with an interest in the area, and acceptance that addressing them will require an integrated whole of Government approach;
- That Governments negotiate with the Traditional Owners, who represent the appropriate Aboriginal clan groups/communities to determine guidelines as to the procedures and processes which should be followed when implementing policy and program
- That Indigenous (Aboriginal) People of that country be involved in the facilitation of social, economic and cultural development as a basis for future planning of WAMP.

### **C2.3.3 BMRG Roundtable Reports**

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Burnett Basin WAMP: Indigenous Cultural Report’, A report produced with the members of the Burnett Basin WAMP Indigenous Working Group, Department of Natural Resources, May 2000

During 2004, BMRG Roundtables have also produced an overview of important NRM issues for indigenous people. [List the reports – from bibliography](#)

### **C3 Engagement and representation processes initiated by indigenous groups**

‘Community consultation’ and ‘community engagement’ processes are often perceived to be processes initiated by governments, corporations and other non-community entities to meet, consult and work with community based groups and individuals.

‘Engagement’ however, is not the exclusive domain of government and large corporations. There is a small but growing movement among community groups – indigenous and non-indigenous – to take control of engagement and consultation processes to achieve their own aspirations.

This section introduces a number of ways indigenous communities are reconstructing the idea that they are ‘stakeholders’ who need to be consulted by others. It sets out examples of how groups are trying to take more control of how they engage and work with government and other groups.

#### **Re-constructing ‘stakeholders’**

As discussed by George, Innes and Ross in ‘Managing Sea Country Together’<sup>13</sup>, by being in control of funding and other resources, many government bodies see themselves as being in control of resources and processes, and tend to ‘construct’ or ‘label’ other groups as stakeholders.

The authors argue that through effective representative structures such as the Sea Forum (discussed later in this paper), indigenous people can redefine themselves and their relationship with governments and others who believe they are in control of management processes. Their discussion of co-management issues are relevant to other indigenous engagement processes:

“The challenge for building co-management arrangements is for agencies such as GBRMPA to give up the assumed role of defining individual and group identities for the people who have an interest in the (area), to allow new identities to emerge, and to respond to how Indigenous peoples and others wish to engage with the GBRWHA.”<sup>14</sup>

The paper states there is an increasing desire by Traditional Owners to speak directly on behalf of their areas of country, independently of the government funded organisations set up to service indigenous needs. But resources, as always, are a significant barrier to long term success. Efforts by Traditional Owners to take increasingly control of their involvement have:

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<sup>13</sup> George, M, Innes J, & Ross H. *Managing sea country together*’

<sup>14</sup> George, M, Innes J, & Ross H. *Managing sea country together*’ p.29

“not been uniformly welcomed by the existing organisations. Since the groupings of Traditional Owners are generally unfunded, or meet under short-term funding, they are at a practical disadvantage in maintaining a ‘presence’ before governments.”<sup>15</sup>

### **C3.1 Aspirations documents**

As discussed in Section 2 of this paper, a number of indigenous groups in South East Queensland have developed ‘Aspirations Documents’.

These documents were created by indigenous groups to improve understanding by other stakeholders, including government departments, about each indigenous group’s issues and priorities. Full details about the engagement process used to develop the Aspirations Documents is set out in Section 6 of this report.

The main point to note here is that while the EPA/QPWS provided facilitation and assistance in the aspirations process, Traditional Owners have proprietorship over the Aspirations Documents and control their distribution. The documents have been presented back to the EPA in recognition of Agency input and involvement, and in future collaborative partnerships between Traditional Owners and EPA/QPWS staff.

### **C3.2 Individual groups developing their own protocols and processes for engaging government**

For some time, Native Title Claimant groups in Central Queensland (and no doubt many other areas) have prepared and disseminated their own very detailed protocols for mining companies to use when working with them on cultural heritage surveys and clearances. These protocols set out details about who to contact, appropriate timeframes for appropriate consultation and other details, in an effort to improve working relationships with the mining companies.

In the Burnett Mary region, the Butchella Traditional Owners have prepared their own protocol for working among themselves and for working with others. Such documents are increasingly useful for outside groups to understand who to talk to, to ensure ‘appropriate’ consultation and engagement processes.

### **C3.3 ‘Community Working Party’ model – Far West NSW<sup>16</sup>**

In Far West NSW, indigenous organisations are now working together as ‘Community Working Parties’, to develop more effective local governance structures.

ATSIC acted as a catalyst for helping key indigenous organisations in Menindee, Wilcannia, Broken Hill and Dareton/Wentworth to work together and engage with other stakeholders in their sub-regions.

The groups do not purport to represent Traditional Owners, or to ‘speak for country’, but rather are made up of key indigenous organisations that provide services to all indigenous people in their sub-regions (Traditional Owners and others). As one example, the Broken Hill

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<sup>15</sup> George, M, Innes J, & Ross H. *Managing sea country together*, p.41

<sup>16</sup> Notes from interviews with Richard Weston, Chair of the Broken Hill Community Working Party (Maara Ma Health, Broken Hill)

Community Working Party is made up of Maara Ma Health, Thankakali Corporation (the key CDEP organization in Broken Hill), the Lands Council and Weimija Aboriginal Housing Corporation.

The Community Working Parties meet each month to discuss issues and projects of shared interest. They have a Chairperson and core working group, and other indigenous people are allowed to attend as observers at any time, upon request. The Working Parties act as a ‘peak body’ for indigenous interests in their respective sub-regions and encourage government and other organisations to meet with the Community Working Parties as a starting point to commencing consultation or engagement processes with indigenous people.

## **C4 Engagement protocols initiated by government**

Protocols can provide guidelines to help people work together. This section looks at a number of different situations where protocols are used by government agencies and indigenous groups, to engage and work together.

### **C4.1 Government engagement protocols**

Commonwealth and State government departments regularly produce protocol documents aimed at helping government officers understand how to engage and work with indigenous people.

These protocols can offer a good general introduction to some of the issues involved with working with indigenous people and communities, particularly for people who have never worked with indigenous communities. However the protocols’ high level of generality limits their usefulness. Once contact is made with communities and/or organisations, any ‘protocols’ for working together need to be discussed and negotiated together.

**C4.1.1 Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development** DATSIP’s protocol<sup>17</sup> is aimed at its own and other Queensland Government officers who need to “consult with Queensland Aboriginal individuals, groups and/or communities”. The information is intended to “complement the experience and knowledge officers already have and cover basic information that officers dealing with Aboriginal people for the first time may not have”.

### **C4.1.2 Australian Heritage Commission**

*‘Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values’<sup>18</sup>*

‘Ask First’ sets out a generic process for identifying and managing indigenous heritage places. It includes principles for engaging with indigenous peoples, definitions of commonly used terms and a generic process for working with indigenous peoples including actions and hints for dispute resolution.

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP) Protocol for Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

<sup>18</sup> Australian Heritage Commission ‘Ask First’.

‘Ask First’ is used by other government agencies as a guide for people engaging with indigenous communities, and the Duty of Care Guidelines for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld) also refer development proponents to ‘Ask First’ to help them consult with indigenous communities.

#### **C4.1.3 Australian Broadcasting Commission**

Australian Broadcasting Commission (2004) Indigenous Cultural Protocol Site, online at: [http://203.2.218.61/message/proper/contact\\_community.htm](http://203.2.218.61/message/proper/contact_community.htm)

The Indigenous Protocol site is produced by the ABC Indigenous Programs Unit, Radio and Online in conjunction with indigenous staff and journalists. It’s aimed at assisting journalists, film makers, producers and documentary makers to understand the importance of abiding by Indigenous protocols. The protocol site covers principles, production tips, recognition, protection and copyright, how to contact communities, death in a community, protocol resources.

### **C4.2 Protocols to guide government and indigenous working relationships**

In addition to protocols aimed at assisting government agencies to *engage* with Indigenous communities, there are a wide range of protocols used within specific engagement and partnership processes, to help government agencies work effectively over the longer term with indigenous communities.

#### **C4.2.1 Wet Tropics Management Authority and Aboriginal Rainforest Council**

In mid-2004, the Wet Tropics Management Authority and Aboriginal Rainforest Council (representing 18 Aboriginal Rainforest groups) signed a co-management agreement after three years of negotiation and discussions. The agreement includes a Consultation Protocol and a range of other agreed protocols for working together, including:

- Consultation Protocol
- Integrated Aboriginal Engagement Protocol (for annual business plans & budgets)
- Operational Management Protocol
- Rainforest Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management and Mapping Protocol
- Policy Development and Strategic Planning Protocol
- Scientific and Educational Permitting Protocol
- Park Management Planning Protocol

### **C4.3 Protocols to help Regional NRM bodies engage with indigenous groups**

Two documents have been prepared to help Regional NRM bodies engage with indigenous groups:

*Guidelines for Indigenous Participation in Natural Resource Management* – Commonwealth Government’s Natural Heritage Trust, 2004.

*Good Practice in Indigenous Consultation and Involvement in Integrated Regional NRM Planning* – prepared by the Indigenous Policy and Coordination Section, Environment Australia 1 August 2002. The contents of this document are set out over the page:

### ***Good Practice in Indigenous Consultation and Involvement in Integrated Regional NRM Planning***

Good practice in indigenous consultation and involvement in integrated regional NRM planning will be reflected by:

- Inclusion of at least two indigenous people on each regional body
- List of local indigenous people and organisations with interests in land management issues in the region
- List of the indigenous organisations and individuals who were consulted in the process of developing the NRM plans
- Identification of Aboriginal owned properties in the region or the percentage of Aboriginal owned land in the region; id of areas of public land where Native Title rights and interests may continue
- The plan should explicitly seek to build partnerships with local indigenous organisations
- Each plan should have a statement on the region’s indigenous history, heritage and interests
- The plan should include the recognition that there are indigenous interests in most, if not all natural resources
- Plan should include recognition of indigenous cultural interests in water management
- The plan should recognize the need for protection of indigenous cultural heritage places as part of INRM
- Capacity building programs should recognize and include indigenous people’s traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices
- Plans should identify the need for ongoing indigenous participation in NRM eg the development of indigenous Land Management Facilitator-type positions
- Consultation with indigenous communities should commence in the early stages of the plans

*Prepared by Indigenous Policy and Coordination Section Environment Australia  
1 August 2002*

## **C5 Indigenous engagement and representation among other regional NRM bodies**

Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) bodies are required to involve indigenous communities in the development of their Regional Plans and Regional Investment Strategies, in order to be accredited and receive funding.

As outlined in Section 4, two documents have been prepared to help Regional NRM bodies engage effectively with indigenous communities:

- Guidelines for Indigenous Participation in Natural Resource Management – Commonwealth Government’s Natural Heritage Trust, 2004.
- Good Practice in Indigenous Consultation and Involvement in Integrated Regional NRM Planning – prepared by the Indigenous Policy and Coordination Section, Environment Australia 1 August 2002.

Even with these Guidelines in place, Regional NRM bodies are designing their own processes for engaging and working with indigenous communities and there is some variation among the NRM bodies.

This section provides an overview of the indigenous engagement and representation approaches being used by six other Regional NRM Groups in Qld:

- Desert Channels Qld
- Fitzroy Basin Association
- Burdekin Dry Tropics
- South East Queensland
- Far North Queensland
- Mackay Whitsundays

For each NRM body, the following issues are covered:

- Who’s being engaged – Traditional Owners, Native Title Claimants, historical communities and/or other members of the indigenous community
- Engagement processes
- Board representation - including the status of indigenous Board representation (whether interim or permanent arrangements are in place) and how representatives have been selected/appointed.

In summary, of the six Regional NRM bodies examined in this section:

- All have one staff member (Indigenous Support Officers, or Indigenous Land Management Facilitators) providing either full time or part time support to indigenous communities, with varying levels of additional support within each NRM body
- Two have set up ‘interim’ arrangements with temporary indigenous Board representatives, the others have permanent arrangements.
- Two have created two Board positions for indigenous representatives, one is currently negotiating a second Board position and the remaining three have one representative.

- Five have set up Board representation with Traditional Owner participation only. While all the NRM bodies aim to work with all indigenous peoples (Traditional Owners, plus all other indigenous people), through on the ground projects and funding opportunities, most groups recognize the right only of Traditional Owners to speak for their country, and consequently are structuring Board Representation to only include Traditional Owners.

All Indigenous Support Officers appear to be sharing the same messages with indigenous groups and communities in their regional boundaries: they're working hard to set realistic expectations in the community; they're stressing that their Regional NRM bodies and NHT2 won't be able to provide enough funding for all projects people want to work on and they're promoting the idea of the Regional NRM body's ability to help people work in partnerships and look for a broad range of funding opportunities.

## **C5.1 Desert Channels Qld<sup>19</sup>**

### **C5.1.1 Who's being engaged?**

DCQ are working with all Indigenous people in their region, not just Traditional Owners or NTAs.

### **C5.1.2 Engagement processes**

The DCQ regional area includes 14 traditional Indigenous lands, as well as indigenous peoples with historical connections to country. The DCQ began its engagement process earlier this year and held its first regional workshop in June.

At the June workshop, Indigenous participants agreed:

- To set up an Interim Steering Committee of 9 volunteers who will monitor the work of the NRM and further the development of the engagement process.
- To a 12 month schedule of meetings to enable Indigenous people to meet, discuss the NRM and NHT and focus on developing relationships and building capacity.
- That the meeting schedule will comprise several regional meetings, plus smaller sub-regional meetings.
- That while the issues of Board representation will be developed slowly, over the next 12 to 36 months (as long as it takes), the NRM will also move to develop 'real' projects with interested Indigenous groups, to develop trust and progress the goals of the Indigenous engagement process.

### **C5.1.3 Board representation**

At present there is an interim arrangement for Board representation. The position has been filled by an honorary or 'observer' position, with no voting power. The number of positions on the Board is open for negotiation.

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<sup>19</sup> notes from phone interview with David Thompson, Desert Channels Qld + Leah Saltner, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, Southern Queensland Region.

**Desert Channels – combining immediate and ‘real’ projects with longer term engagement processes to determine representation structures**

In addition to identifying priorities for the DCQ Regional Plan, the Indigenous Support Unit have begun working with Indigenous groups to develop specific NRM projects.

They have allocated \$100,000 in the 2004-2005 financial year so they can fund small projects (up to \$5,000 to \$8,000 per project) for Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Facilitator, David Thompson, said that working with Indigenous groups on real projects is the best way to promote the role of the DCQ and the best way to encourage Indigenous people to work together – and with other non-Indigenous groups – to become involved with NRM projects. They’ve already begun identifying potential projects to work on, and are linking with Landcare and the Envirofund to begin fundraising and implementation.

## **C5.2 Fitzroy Basin Association**<sup>20</sup>

The Fitzroy Basin Association has developed a close relationship with the Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee (FBEC) as a principal vehicle for indigenous engagement. FBEC evolved in the 1990s from the Bowen Basin Committee, which was formed primarily to help protect Murri cultural heritage, which was increasingly threatened by large scale mining developments. FBEC is now an incorporated body that aims to help indigenous people in the Fitzroy Basin on a range of issues, including NRM.

### **C5.2.1 Who’s being engaged**

Aboriginal traditional owners, historical and community people are encouraged to participate in FBEC/FBA NRM activities.

### **C5.2.2 Engagement processes**

Although the representation of Traditional Owners of the FBEC is patchy, the organization is inclusive and works to ensure that all Traditional Owner groups in the region are aware of the Fitzroy Regional NRM Plan and are invited to get involved in its work.

FBEC is a member of the Fitzroy Basin Association Stakeholder Council. FBA Stakeholder Council meetings are held every two months have about fifty participants – sometimes with five to eight indigenous participants. While the Stakeholder Council is a forum in which a wide range of NRM issues (including indigenous issues) are canvassed, it is not the principal method of engagement for Murries on NRM issues.

FBEC advises that the real engagement work happens at meetings with traditional owners, Government agencies and other stakeholders discussing land management issues, at a broad policy/regional level or in relation to specific areas of country.

In addition, FBEC works to provide information about land and sea management issues and the FBA’s programs directly to Traditional Owner groups. One way that this is done is via a regular newsletter informing the Murri community about NRM and other issues.

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<sup>20</sup> notes from phone interview with Graeme Lightbody, Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee

### **C5.2.3 Board representation**

The Fitzroy Basin Association has one appointed indigenous Board Member. The FBA has invited FBEC to nominate this Indigenous Board Member. Currently this Board Member is a member of the FBEC, though this may not always be the case.

## **C5.3 Burdekin Dry Tropics<sup>21</sup>**

### **C5.3.1 Who's being engaged**

To date, the BDT have consulted only with Traditional Owners. They are about to commence a second round of consultation, where they will start to engage with all indigenous people.

### **C5.3.2 Engagement process**

The BDT have been consulting with Traditional Owners for about two years. The Burdekin Dry Tropics region has 5 sub-regions, and each sub-region group has TO representation. The process was relatively open - Traditional Owners were invited to join any of the sub-regional groups they were interested in.

BDT used initial consultation money from NHT1 to enable 14 Traditional Owner groups to hold their own meeting, where they elected 2 board representatives.

The Traditional Owners were also helped to develop their own Traditional Owner Plan for NRM. Elements of this plan have been incorporated into the larger NRM Plan for the region. This engagement process involved a whole of catchment workshop, to enable Traditional Owners to talk about important issues, and how they wanted to contribute to the Regional Plan. After this whole of catchment workshop, further sub-regional forums were conducted, allowing more people to develop ideas for inclusion in the Plan.

### **C5.3.3 Board representation**

There are two indigenous Board representatives, who were elected by the Traditional Owners.

## **C5.4 South East Queensland NRM<sup>22</sup>**

### **C5.4.1 Who's being engaged**

To date, the SEQ NRM have consulted only with Traditional Owners, through the SEQ Traditional Owner Consultative Committee (SEQ TOCC).

SEQTOCC focuses primarily on the legislative rights and responsibilities of the Traditional Owner Custodians. However, when a SEQTOCC representative is present in a meeting dealing with a number of issues that affect the community as a whole then they act as community members and not just Traditional Owners.

SEQ TOCC recognizes (i) Traditional Owner Custodians (who are the direct descendents and holders of custom for the particular tract of country for which their Apical Ancestor and their family speak) and (ii) the Historical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (who are Traditional Owner Custodians from another area and do not have a familial link to the country in which they reside).

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<sup>21</sup> notes from discussions with Noel Gertz, formerly of Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM and Cliff Cobbo, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator for the northern regions (proper name for his area??)

<sup>22</sup> notes compiled from discussions with Leah Saltner and Madonna Williams, and access to written material about the SEQ NRM.

#### **C5.4.2 Engagement process**

SEQ Traditional Owners are using their SEQ TOCC (which was created prior to the creation of the Regional NRM bodies) to work with the SEQ NRM.

The SEQ TOCC works on a model whereby local issues are handled by individual local groups or clans, who have responsibility for their traditional estates. The SEQ TOCC works only on regional and sub –regional NRM planning and management issues.

For SEQTOCC they address sub-regional issues and regional issues. The framework sets out (i) where the sub-regions are, which Groups comprise the sub-region, what is the outer boundary of their homeland estate and what are the NRM related issues within the sub-region. (ii) What is the extent of the region (as seen by the T/O's), which is within the region, what are the regional issues and directs how consultation, engagement or information delivery occurs.

Currently SEQTOCC has a vision, purpose, objectives and a map of the sub-regions (with the Native Title Claims) and regional boundary is being developed. An office has been secured, some furnishings, equipment are being sought and the NRM SEQ body is supporting the incorporation of the SEQTOCC into a regional SEQ T/O Sea and Land Management Alliance Incorporated Body.

#### **C5.4.3 Board representation**

There are two Traditional Owner Board representatives (one male, one female), who were elected by the Traditional Owners representatives of SEQ TOCC.

### **C5.5 Far North Queensland<sup>23</sup>**

#### **C5.5.1 Who's being engaged**

FNQ NRM aims to engage all indigenous groups in its broader activities, but only with Traditional Owners for Board membership

#### **C5.5.2 Engagement process**

FNQ NRM conducted their indigenous community consultation meetings during the second half of 2003. Through that process, they told groups about the NRM and the Board position. They created a Technical Support Group, including indigenous and non-indigenous people.

They're now using their own technical advisory board plus the Aboriginal Rainforest Council (created through the Wet Tropics Management Authority process) to ensure Traditional Owner opinions and ideas are incorporated into the work of the NRM body.

#### **C5.5.3 Board representation**

The FNQ NRM Board currently has 1 position for an indigenous representative.

The FNQ NRM advertised the Board positions, and conducted an open and transparent recruitment approach where any indigenous person could nominate to be a candidate. Five people indicated interest and two people submitted written applications.

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23 Notes from phone interview with Lyle Johnson, FNQ NRM

The representative was chosen from an independent selection panel, made up of Joint Steering Committee members – from the Qld Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the FNQ NRM and the Queensland Forestry Association and two indigenous people.

The FNQ NRM is currently negotiating the creation of a second indigenous representative on the Board.

## **C5.6 Mackay Whitsundays NRM Group**<sup>24</sup>

### **C5.6.1 Who’s being engaged**

For Board representation, only Traditional Owners are being engaged. All other groups – Torres Strait Islander people and other indigenous people - are being involved through on the ground projects and other opportunities to participate, such as the Regional Stakeholder Committee.

### **C5.6.2 Engagement processes**

‘Natural Partners’, a private consulting group, have been contracted by the NRM to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region.

Workshops were conducted with each of the traditional owner representative groups. There are 6 traditional owner groups in the region, plus 3 other groups with overlapping interests (these groups are in the Burdekin Dry Tropics and Fitzroy regions).

In addition to the engagement processes set up for traditional owners, the Regional Stakeholder Committee has been set up to allow anyone in the region (indigenous and non-indigenous) to discuss NRM issues. This group is also looking to create an Indigenous Sub Committee that will be open to all interested indigenous people in the region.

### **C5.6.3 Board representation**

The Mackay Whitsundays NRM has 12 Board Directors, with 1 position for an indigenous representative. Sonia Minniecon, of Natural Partners, is the NRM Facilitator for the Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group and is currently the indigenous representative on the board. This is an interim arrangement, but many of the traditional owner groups are happy to have an independent and unbiased representative on the board. Natural Partners are working with the traditional owners to develop the longer term arrangements for representation.

## **C6 Indigenous engagement and representation models**

There are a wide range of engagement processes and representation models used by government agencies and indigenous people.

The examples outlined in this section were selected because they provide a cross section of different types of engagement and representation models and processes – from short term, project specific consultation processes such as those to develop Water Allocation Management Plans under the Water Act (WAMP) to formalized, long term indigenous representative arrangements such as the Aboriginal Rainforest Council.

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<sup>24</sup> Notes from phone interview with Michael Smith and Sonia Minniecon, Natural Partners

This section provides an overview of the following representation models:

- The ‘WAMP’ Process - The DNR’s Community Consultation Processes Under the Water Act, in the Burnett Basin and Mary River indigenous communities
- Engagement process for the development of Aspirations Documents, South East Queensland
- Aboriginal Rainforest Council
- Sea Forum
- Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership
- MOU between MDBC and Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations
- Indigenous Catchment Management Model – ‘On Ground, On Country’
- Murray Darling Basin Commission’s new indigenous engagement model

For each of these models, the following issues are covered:

- Overview of process
- Details of representation structure
- Analysis of the process – observations, comments, lessons learnt

## **C6.1 The ‘WAMP’ Process – The Burnett Basin and Mary River community consultation processes under the Qld Water Act<sup>25</sup>**

The Queensland Water Act required community consultation to ensure input to the development of water allocation management plans. This led to what became known as the ‘WAMP’ process, which saw community groups – including indigenous groups - working with the Department of Natural Resources in various community forums across the State. The two processes most relevant to the BMRG are the Burnett Basin and Mary River Community Consultation processes, as these involved indigenous groups whose country is included in the BMRG region.

### **C6.1.1 Burnett Basin WAMP process**

#### **Overview of Process**

The purpose of the WAMP planning process was to provide a framework for the sustainable allocation and management of water in the Plan’s area. From 1998 to 2000, DNR coordinated technical and community input through the creation of a Burnett Basin Technical Advisory Group and Community Reference Panel. The Community Reference Panel provided input and advice in terms of a representative sample of views and community values on water allocation and management issues. It consisted of a broad mix of people representing industries and interests from across the Burnett Basin. The views of indigenous clans within the basin were gauged through the work of the Indigenous Working Group.

The Burnett Basin Indigenous Working Group was formed in 1998 to provide input to two DNR processes necessary under the Water Act:

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<sup>25</sup> notes compiled from phone interview with Scott Buchanan and Paul Harris, plus personal interview with Dean Collins and review of minutes from the Burnett WAMP process

- The Water Allocation Management Plan (WAMP) process, concerned with the responsible management and equitable allocation of water within the catchment; and
- The Burnett Catchment Study, concerned with the planning and development of water infrastructure (dams and weirs) within the catchment.

Processes ran in parallel and shared some common issues, though some indigenous concerns were unique to each process.

### Details of Structure

The DNR used an indigenous consultant who spoke to individual clans and families over a short period (approximately 3 weeks), to bring people together to create the Indigenous Working Group.

The Indigenous Working Group was made up of two representatives and two proxies, from each of the 11 clan groups in the Burnett. In practice, it meant that sometimes four people were present at meetings for each clan group.

The clan group representatives on the Indigenous Working Group were as follows:

Community or clan group	Representatives
Cherbourg Community	Janet Daisy, Beryl Gambrill
Djakunda Wakka	Reg Little, Maurice Cameron, Adrian A Little
Gooreng Gooreng	Mervyn Johnson, David Rouse, Laverne Gosling
Gurang Gurang	Robert Walker, Harrison Blair, Averyl Walker
Kabi Kabi	Cliff Appo
Taribelang Bunda	Charles Broome, Jason Brown, Raymond Broome
Wakka Wakka	Rodney Hill, Lillian Mi Mi, Lawrence Mi Mi
Wakka Wakka Eidsvold	Oscar Chapman (Snr), Neville Chapman, Yvonne Chapman
Wakka Wakka Eidsvold Descendants	Robert West, Clint West, Tyrone West
Wakka Wakka Jinda	Mavis Hawkins Cobbo, Dennis Cobbo, Daryl Thomsen
Wuli Wuli	Richard Pope, Kevin Clancy, Robyn Chapman

The Indigenous Working Group then chose two representatives to participate in the Community Reference Panel. The reps (and their proxies) were:

- Robert Walker (Adrian Little proxy)
- Cecilia Chapman (Beryl Gambrill proxy)

The IWG met twelve times between June 1998 and November 1999. A final meeting was held in September 2000.

The first meeting involved some 50 people, who nominated their representatives and proxies. From then on, each meeting involved between 20 and 40 people. The meetings went for a day at a time, and DNR paid for travel, meals and accommodation costs to assist people to attend the meetings. Sitting fees were not paid.

The Burnett WAMP process worked as an open forum for discussions. The nominated representatives were the only people responsible for making decisions, but discussions were open to any indigenous people (proxies, others) who attended the meetings.

#### C6.1.2 Mary Basin ‘WRP’ (Water Resource Planning) process

##### **Overview of Process**

The Mary Basin process took place after the Burnett Basin ‘WAMP’. The water planning process for the Mary Basin was initiated in May 2002 and the community consultation process began in early 2003. During 2003 the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M) managed separate consultation processes for a range of different community sectors, including the indigenous community. Representatives from each of these community sectors were then selected to participate in the Mary Basin ‘Community Reference Panel’ which began meeting in December 2003. The purpose of the Community Reference Panel was to advise NR&M on the development of the draft Water Resource Plan, and it met every 2-3 months until early 2005, when the planning process was completed.

##### **Details of Structure**

The NR&M went to open tender to invite groups to facilitate the indigenous consultation process. In early 2003, the Queensland South Representative Body Aboriginal Corporation (QSRBAC) was selected to facilitate the meetings and work with NR&M to oversee the consultation process. The QSRBAC organized the meetings so that indigenous representatives in the Mary River Basin could meet on one day to discuss Native Title issues, and on the next day, to discuss the NR&Ms Water Resource Planning process.

The indigenous consultation group was made up of several representatives for each family or clan group. This group met five times, with the last meeting held in December 2003. Most meetings involved around 30-40 people. Clan groups represented at the meetings included:

- Kabi Kabi
- Gubbi Gubbi
- Undumbi
- Wakka Wakka
- Butchulla
- Jinibara

NR&M paid for meals, accommodation and travel costs. At first the group was reluctant to elect only two representatives to participate in the Community Reference Panel, but at its last meeting in December, the group selected six representatives to liaise with the Community Reference Panel. Subsequently, the representatives have been invited to attend all CRP meetings.

## **Analysis of the process – observations, comments, lessons learnt**

### Perspectives from Indigenous People

The Burnett Basin WAMP process is one of the few consultation processes that indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region have provided unsolicited, positive comments about.

People involved in the process have said that the Burnett Basin WAMP was a good process because it enabled each clan group to send their own representatives to the meetings, enabled different indigenous groups to come together to discuss a range of issues important to them (water related and other issues) and to contribute to a range of water management processes. At the same time however, indigenous people involved in the process have said that although WAMP was good, ‘it didn’t really go anywhere’. Comments indicate that some indigenous participants were disappointed by the lack of ‘real’ outcomes for indigenous people<sup>26</sup>.

### Perspectives from NR&M

In a summary paper titled ‘*Outcomes and Learnings from Indigenous Consultation in Water Resource Planning projects in Southeast Queensland*’<sup>27</sup> the NR&M assesses the processes and outcomes of the WRP community consultation processes in the Burnett Basin, Mary River and Logan Albert.

Section 4 of the Report summarised the main outcomes as follows:

- A key outcome was building good personal working relationships with Traditional Owners and members of the broader Indigenous community
- Processes were at times extremely frustrating – but also personally very satisfying. Water planning staff were, and still are, on a rapid learning curve regarding Indigenous issues and culture.
- For a substantial investment in time and resources, the processes contributed very little to the direct outcome requirements of the WAMP or WRP.
- From a Departmental point of view, the best outcomes achieved were good public relations.

Section 5 of the report sets out ‘Observations and Learnings’ and Section 6 of the report sets out ‘Ideas and Opportunities for Discussion’.

Both these sections contain highly relevant material for the BMRG and the following notes are taken directly from the report:

Some of the key points from Section 5 of the Report, ‘Observations and Learnings’ include the following<sup>28</sup>:

- Frustrations with information.

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<sup>26</sup> Summary of comments obtained during early weeks of indigenous community consultation and interviews in the Burnett Mary region by Michelle Maloney. Full details of these interviews can be found in Paper 2 of the BMRG’s Indigenous Engagement Project: Community Consultation Report.

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, A, Buchanan S, Collins D., Harris P., Herd.R, Horton G and Rowe N (eds) February 2004 *Outcomes and Learnings from Indigenous Consultation in Water Resource Planning Projects in Southeast Queensland* (unpub). Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland. (Hereafter cited as Anderson Report)

<sup>28</sup> Anderson Report , pp 9-10

- Much of the information generated by the process was relatively generic. It was noted that this was a similar issue experienced in other stakeholder groups, such as the conservation sector.
- Traditional Owners are reluctant to share detailed information about the cultural significance of features. The potential threat of vandalism was one of the reasons given for this reluctance.
- Frustrations with inclusiveness (particularly for the Mary Basin process, not the Burnett).
  - Inclusiveness could be a problem if the contractors or consultants hired to carry out community consultation were seen as aligned with any particular group (and not others).
  - Inclusiveness was also difficult at times when one family group refused to communicate or sit in the same room as another.
  - There were significant concerns about the high level of ‘murrie politics’ and ‘competitiveness’ within the Traditional Owner consultation environment.
- Role and capability of consultants.
  - Those processes that involved project officers who were hands-on people, activists, enthusiastic and motivated, active communicators, outcome focused and encouraging of inclusive approaches, stood out in terms of performance.
  - The contracting agency can lose a measure of control by engaging consultants to manage the process.
- Capacity and skills of participants
  - The capacity, skills and experience of the participants with meeting and group processes had a strong influence on the types of approaches used and performance of the group.
  - Activists in the group can be very disruptive – but they can also put a lot of energy into the group process. It is important to balance the influence of activists with the respected and considered view of quieter reserved participants, particularly Elders.
- Future role of NRM Regional Bodies.
  - The report claims that “It is difficult to see how the newly formed NRM Regional Bodies will deliver better or more effective processes than the WRP or WAMP projects – especially if they do not partner with regional agency staff and utilize existing working relationships, networks, learnings and credibility.

Some of the key points from Section 6, ‘Ideas and Opportunities for Discussion’<sup>29</sup> are as follows:

- Any investment or activity should be geared to supporting the building and maintenance of a robust, long term, culturally appropriate Traditional Owner representative/participation model or structure.
- Independence is an important requirement for service providers – avoid involvement in Traditional Owner politics

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson Report , p 11

- Be flexible with meeting/workshop processes – allow plenty of time for things to ‘unravel’.
- Provide names and contact details of people who can help with issues/concerns outside of the process at hand. Indigenous people, as with most stakeholders, often perceive departmental staff as ‘representatives of the whole state government’.
- There is a need to genuinely listen to, and understand what Traditional Owners are saying. Conversely, there is a need to make sure messages are clearly enunciated and understood. Simple two-way respect and communication are vital to a common understanding.
- Involve the participants in the evaluation of your performance and outcomes of the consultation exercises.
- Compile a draft report based on generic information on the normal range of values, issues and aspirations and ask the Traditional Owner advisory group to help modify and localize the contents for the particular area. This may expedite the process.

## **C6.2 Aboriginal Rainforest Council<sup>30</sup>**

### **C6.2.1 Overview**

The Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) was created in mid 2004 and is the regional body representing 18 Aboriginal tribes in Far North Queensland’s Wet Tropics.

The process that led to the creation of the ARC began in 1988. When the Wet Tropics first received World Heritage Listing in 1988, a steering committee was set up by Aboriginal groups, to help them work together to protect their interests and increase their involvement in the management of the Wet Tropics. Bamu Wabu was set up first, and was later replaced by the Rainforest Aboriginal Network. From 2001 to 2004, the main representative body for Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics was the Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT).

In June 2004, the ANT was replaced by the ARC, who signed the Regional Co-Management Agreement for the Wet Tropics with the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. The Co-Management Agreement represents the culmination of some 16 years of work by Aboriginal groups, and is now shaping the direction of Aboriginal regional representation in FNQ.

### **C6.2.2 Details of representation structure**

From 2001 to 2004, the Aboriginal Negotiating Team worked to negotiate the Regional Co-Management Agreement for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The ANT worked closely with five state government departments, three representative bodies (Cape York Land Council, North Queensland Land Council and Central Council Land Council) and the 18 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups.

The ANT coordinated regional workshops each year, and carried out extensive community consultation and information meetings for several months leading up to each regional workshop. The workshops and other work of the ANT were jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State governments. The Regional Co-Management Agreement was announced in June this year, but is expected to be ‘officially’ signed off by the ARC in late October or early November.

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<sup>30</sup> Notes from phone interview with Alison Halliday, Aboriginal Rainforest Council

In August this year, the ANT became incorporated as the Aboriginal Rainforest Council. Representatives on the Council work together on issues of regional importance, while preserving and strengthening the traditional rights of each local tribal group to speak for their own country.

The ARC has 12 Board Members. 3 Board members represent Girrigun, which is an umbrella organization for 9 of the Rainforest Aboriginal groups. The other 9 Aboriginal groups in the Wet Tropics each have one position on the Board.

The ARC has two purposes:

- To operate as a grass roots organization representing Traditional Owners interests in FNQ; and
- To serve as a statutory advisory committee to the Wet Tropics Board, under s.40 of the Wet Tropics Management Act.

The ARC's priority work programs include:

- Working with the Far North Queensland NRM, to assist with the implementation of the Aboriginal NRM plan for the region;
- Conducting cultural mapping for the region;
- Working with Native Title Representative Bodies to create a comprehensive, complementary role focused on land management and cultural heritage across the Wet Tropics.

### **C6.2.3 Analysis of the process – observations, comments, lessons learnt**

The ARC is the culmination of some 16 years of work by the Rainforest Aboriginal Tribes. Those involved with the process state that its tenacity and success (eg with the signing of the Regional Co-Management Agreement) is due to (i) the fact that its structure allows for all groups to continue to speak for their own country, while working together on issues of regional importance and (ii) the pro-active project management strategies of the various Steering Committees and Negotiating Teams over the years. While funded by government agencies, the representative structure itself has been, and continues to be, strongly driven by local indigenous representatives. Over the longer term, the ARC will be seeking funding from a wide range of sources (government and other) to ensure it continues to work as an independent, representative voice on behalf of its member groups.

## **C6.3 Engagement Process to Develop Aspirations Documents, SEQ**

### **C6.3.1 Overview of Process**

In 1999, the South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA) planning process commenced within the EPA/QPWS. As part of the consultation process, several community stakeholder groups were established to provide input into planning issues associated with the forest area transfers occurring under the SEQFA. It became evident through community consultative groups that there were a range of issues raised by Indigenous representatives which were either of a sensitive nature or more broad in scope than the focus of the SEQFA consultation. A parallel consultation process was established to ensure the capture of the

issues raised by Traditional Owner groups and individuals. This led to the creation of Aspirations Documents for 5 working groups in South East Queensland<sup>31</sup>

### **C6.3.2 Details of representation structure**

The primary objective of the Aspirations Process was to capture the aspirations of Traditional Owners for involvement in the management and protection of traditional country. A secondary objective within the process was to facilitate good working relationships between EPA/QPWS staff, Aboriginal Land Council representatives and Traditional Owner groups, in recognition of an ongoing commitment to working together with Indigenous people of southeast Queensland.

With Land Council assistance, separate working groups were established for the 5 different areas: Sunshine Coast and hinterland, Fraser Island and Hervey Bay hinterland, Port Curtis Coral Coast, Wakka Wakka Eidsvold and Bunya Mountains. These groups comprised Indigenous representatives with an interest in one of the five key areas. In some cases, traditional links and interests or native title claim boundaries extended into more than one of the key areas, in which case participation on more than one working group was welcome.

The following groups participated as part of the working groups for each area:

#### *Sunshine Coast and Hinterland*

- Kabi Kabi
- Undumbi
- Gubbi Gubbi (unable to attend meetings but supportive of material)

#### *Fraser Island, Hervey Bay and Hinterland*

- Butchulla
- Wakka Wakka
- Kabi Kabi

#### *Port Curtis Coral Coast*

- Bailai
- Gooreng Gooreng
- Taribelang Bunda
- Gurang

#### *Wakka Wakka (Eidsvold)*

- Wakka Wakka Eidsvold people only (The Wakka Wakka native title claim covers a large area, with separate family/clan groups centred around the townships of Eidsvold, Gayndah and Cherbourg. Gayndah and Cherbourg communities did not take part in the process)

#### *Bunya Mountains*

- Wakka Wakka

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<sup>31</sup> Notes from Ross Williams, EPA

- Western Wakka
- Kabi Kabi
- Cobble Cobble
- Jarowair
- Barunggam

Each group was asked to nominate two representatives and an Elder to attend workshops. Travel costs for these representatives were covered by the EPA/ Land Council. In addition to these representatives, workshops were open to all members of each of group and other Indigenous people with an interest in the region. An inclusive approach was adopted to ensure representation was as broad as possible whilst providing a platform where people were able to express a view regardless of the status of native title claim process relevant to the region.

Between three and four half day, full day or two day meetings were held with each Traditional Owner working group, over a 12 month period. Workshops were flexible in nature to accommodate cultural requirements of Traditional Owners and a strict agenda was generally not adhered to. The workshops covered a broad range of issues.

### **C6.3.3 Observations / comments about the process**

Owing to the complexities of the native title claim process and a determination yet to be made on areas of South East Queensland, difficulty was experienced in identifying those peoples/groups with a traditional interest in the land. Whilst an inclusive approach was adopted, it is unclear whether all members of relevant Indigenous communities were involved. In some cases, groups were invited to participate but were unfortunately unable to attend meetings.

Given this limitation it is worth reiterating that the Aspirations Documents are useful as a starting point only, and do not attempt to express the views of all Indigenous people of south east Queensland.

## **C6.4 EPA – Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership**<sup>32</sup>

### **C6.4.1 Overview**

Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership developed a mechanism for involving Traditional Owners in South East Queensland in planning and implementation processes.

### **C6.4.2 Details of representation structure**

The Policy Council of the Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership appointed a Traditional Owner Elder (Uncle Bob Anderson, a Ngugi Elder) to the Policy Council. This appointment began the process of representation for Indigenous Traditional Owners on each of the committees under the partnership structure.

Uncle Bob Anderson worked to create an SEQ Regional Traditional Owner Advisory Group, to ensure TO involvement in waterways planning and implementation. Traditional owner involvement was expanded to include the formation of TO Local Area committees and/or sub-regional circles. This three-tiered structure allowed for decision

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<sup>32</sup> Wellington

making and conflict resolution circles relevant to each homeland estate and its neighbours, and provided essential links to the identification of TO values for inclusion in sub regional and regional planning and project implementation. Regional TO Advisory groups provided a male and female representative to all other Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments partnership committees within the partnership structure.

### **C6.4.3 Analysis of the process – lessons learnt**

Fiona Wellington’s paper sets out five elements of better practice emerging from the EPA Planning Division’s experience on the Moreton Bay Partnerships process and other processes:

#### ***1. Culturally appropriate TO involvement mechanisms.***

Institutional structures need to ensure local TO responsibility and management of homeland estates is part of any ‘regional’ planning responses.

#### ***2. Adequate resourcing for the involvement of TOs.***

Resourcing is a continuing impediment to effective engagement and resources are needed for:

- Key advisory group members to involve/inform their communities
- TOs to network with other stakeholders, land managers and decision makers
- The employment of Aboriginal persons (Indigenous Involvement Planning Officers) to assist in community capacity building

#### ***3. Adopting a holistic approach.***

Wellington outlines that a key barrier to effective TO involvement in consultation processes is the dominance of underlying western worldviews or ways of thinking. One solution is to create separate TO advisory groups/advisory circles to provide a space for TOs to operate as TOs, sustaining indigenous worldview and cultural practice.

#### ***4. Indigenous employment strategy.***

Engagement/involvement processes benefit from indigenous employment, because although indigenous employees cannot speak for Traditional Owner groups, they can provide important insights into indigenous perspectives on natural resource management. Employment opportunities might include:

- effective involvement of TOs as service providers to programs
- traineeship/cadetship opportunities
- employment of indigenous Involvement Planning officers

The Moreton Bay process includes Indigenous Involvement Planning Officers

#### ***5. Cultural education and awareness training***

Two kinds of cultural education needed:

- TO training for their own community, to ensure TO ecological and cultural knowledge is sustained
- Cultural awareness training for other stakeholders – essential part of the process of gaining acknowledgement of the differing world view of Traditional Owners.

## **C6.5 GBRMPA – Sea Forum**

### **C6.5.1 Overview**

The Southern Great Barrier Reef Sea Forum was formed by indigenous people in 1998 to represent their interests in working toward co-management of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The key objective of the Sea Forum was to develop a framework agreement with both Commonwealth and Qld Govts for achieving co-management of the GBR.

### **C6.5.2 Details of representative structure**

The Sea Forum was an indigenous initiated and led collective of approximately 40 TO groups. The Sea Forum did not act as a representative body, but like a federal model where each of the TOs retained rights to speak for their country, with the Sea Forum providing a mechanism for collaborative action.

The Sea Forum created a Working Group from its membership, which carried out a range of tasks including the preparation of a framework paper for co-management.

in the paper ‘Managing Sea Country Together’, George, Innes and Ross note that it was the first time indigenous peoples were taking the initiative for how they could be involved in managing the GBR, and their pro-active stance and detailed proposals meant that government representatives had to respond to their calls for action. The government formed a ‘Senior Officer Working Group’ to consider policy options for co-management and respond to the Sea Forum Discussion Paper.

### **C6.5.3 Observations/comments about the process – lessons learnt**

In 2002 ATSIC withdrew from funding the operational costs of the Sea Forum, which has made it difficult for the group to continue its operations. But George, Innes and Ross claim that ‘the collective action that led to the production of the Sea Forum Discussion paper is an exemplary model of how TOs can present their interests and aspirations to government’<sup>33</sup>

They have also drawn a number of key points from the Sea Forum model that are relevant to all government-indigenous working relationships:

- They noted that a fundamental problem for regional working relationships is the differences between government decision making and indigenous governance:

“One challenge for the parties to co-management is that GBRMPA is a centralized body with authority over a very large spatial area of sea and reefs, while Indigenous authority (under customary law) is *decentralized*, with prime authority being vested in the Traditional Owners of many clan estates.” (p.3)

They go on to discuss the different models that can cope with these cultural/institutional differences, including:

- Boards, such as the Boards leading or coordinating decision-making for species management in Canada
- Regional Agreements specifying management plans and decision making structures which combine the parties for common action

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<sup>33</sup> George, M, Innes J, & Ross H. ‘*Managing sea country together*’

- Nested models – where local arrangements are overseen by a coordinating, central arrangement. This is the essence of Sea Forum’s proposal for a Framework Agreement, which would provide an overarching structure for development of customized regional agreements at smaller scales

## **C6.6 MOU between MDBC and Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations**<sup>34</sup>

### **C6.6.1 Overview**

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) have been negotiating with the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) to conclude an MOU as a framework for the participation of the Indigenous Nations in the management of the Basin.

### **C6.6.2 Details of representation structures**

MLDRIN is a collective or confederation whose members are TO groups whose Country is in Victoria, South Australia and NSW parts of the MDBC on the River Murray, Lower Darling River and Menindee Lakes. The group formed to provide direction for the involvement of these peoples in management of NRM in traditional resources, and to express their views in a coordinated and united way, particularly on issues which extend beyond the local area of any one group.

The proposed MOU will be current for 3 years and sets out mechanisms to identify and promote actions for achieving effective indigenous involvement in NRM decision making. The MOU provides for frameworks and processes to be developed to enable each Indigenous Nation to reach agreements with MLDRIN and the Commission on: representation, participation in environmental resource management, cultural heritage, native title and social and economic justice.

The MDBC will support the MLDRIN and MOU by providing a forum, resources and access to information and expertise.

## **C6.7 Indigenous Catchment Management Model - ‘On Ground On Country’**

### **C6.7.1 Overview**

The model was developed in November 2001 by representatives of the two peak Indigenous organisations for the Queensland section of the Murray Darling Basin – the South Queensland Traditional Owners’ Federation (SQTOF) and South Queensland Traditional Owners’ Aboriginal Corporation (SQTOAC)<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Ward and Reys, MDBC Scoping Study p.84-85

<sup>35</sup> Connolly, Diane and Kym Connolly-Wiseman (YEAR), South Queensland Traditional Owners’ Federation Inc (SQTOF) & South Queensland Traditional Owners’ Aboriginal Corporation (SQTOAC) ‘On Ground On Country. Murray-Darling Basin Catchment Areas: Balonne-Maranoa, Warrego-paroo, Condamine and Queensland Border Rivers – Traditional Owner Involvement’

### **C6.7.2 Details of representation structures**

The groups developed an institutional model for indigenous controlled catchment management. The model includes a catchment head office, four regional catchment offices with specialized staff in each to deal with issues, programs and community education, with structures for strong local, family/clan based input and involvement to the sub-regional offices. The paper sets out a Vision for the future, an overview of issues in the various catchment areas and a suggested organizational structure for indigenous and non-indigenous groups to work together to manage the catchments.

The model allows for discussions and decisions about country, and planning and implementation of sustainable land and aquatic management to be made at the grass roots level. It further provides an appropriate process of authorization and communication of Clan based decisions and issues in relation to country. It also aims to incorporate the views of other Indigenous people with historical connections to the local area and non-Indigenous community members.

In the model local, catchment and regional Indigenous advisory groups operate in parallel with committees for non-indigenous community input to NRM decision making. Group coordinators would be employed to facilitate input by indigenous advisory groups, promote training, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and develop support networks.

### **C6.7.3 Analysis of model**

The designers of the model claim that it addresses weaknesses identified in other approaches to indigenous involvement, which rely on indigenous representatives on NRM decision making and advisory bodies.

Its ‘bottom up’ approach provides for:

- Decision making about traditional country by the right people from the ground up;
- Indigenous involvement from local level through to peak decision making, through nested organisations which are accountable ‘down the line’ for their decisions, with ultimate accountability to TO groups; and
- Support structures for ‘on the ground’ action by indigenous people.
- Clear lines of communication, facilitated by the employment of coordinators with admin and communication support

## **C6.8 Murray Darling Basin Commission, Indigenous Representation Structures<sup>36</sup>**

### **C6.8.1 Overview**

In February 2003 the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) released “A Scoping Study on Indigenous involvement in natural resource management decision making and the integration of Indigenous cultural heritage considerations into relevant Murray-Darling Basin Commission programs”<sup>37</sup>. The recommendations from this report led to several actions,

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<sup>36</sup> Information for this section has been compiled from a phone interview with Liz McNiven, Murray Darling Basin Commission and Ward and Reys, MDBC Scoping Study

<sup>37</sup> Ward and Reys, MDBC Scoping Study

including the creation of an Indigenous Unit in the MDBC. The Indigenous Unit carried out further negotiations and discussions with Indigenous communities during 2003 and 2004, and developed an Action Plan for long term indigenous involvement in the MDBC. The Action Plan includes a detailed representative structure to enable indigenous communities to be fully involved with the work of the MDBC. It will be released to the public in early 2005.

The Scoping Study, together with the Action Plan present a very comprehensive analysis of how to improve indigenous peoples involvement in natural resource management and decision making.

### **C6.8.2 Engagement process used to develop the Scoping Study**

The Scoping Study conducted workshops in eight locations throughout the Murray Darling Basin, involving 127 indigenous participants from a broad cross section of the indigenous community. Specific questions were put to the groups, to get their opinions and feedback on how to improve indigenous involvement in NRM. The Study also interviewed a range of upper and middle management government officers, to assess their views and suggestions about indigenous involvement in NRM.

### **C6.8.3 Proposed Representative Structure being developed as part of the Action Plan**

All Ministerial Councils were asked to produce an Indigenous Action Plan for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), to address the disadvantage of indigenous peoples. The MDBC Indigenous Unit used the Scoping Study to commence an 18 month process of working with indigenous people to develop the Action Plan.

The unit's approach was to:

- Acknowledge indigenous nations
- Work via an 'ongoing informed consent' process rather than mere 'consultation'
- Create a partnership between indigenous nations and the commission to develop the Action Plan

The group worked in partnership with indigenous nations to develop an 'Action Plan' that sets out a range of strategies for including indigenous people in the decision making processes of the MDBC, including a representative structure.

The representative structure that will govern future indigenous involvement in the MDBC has three tiers: (i) it recognizes the autonomy of each individual indigenous nation, (ii) it facilitates a regional confederation of autonomous nations and (iii) two regions will form a united indigenous nations of the Murray Darling<sup>38</sup>.

### **C6.8.4 Analysis – lessons learnt**

The processes undertaken by the MDBC Scoping Study have produced a number of issues and proposed solutions that are directly relevant to the work of Regional NRM bodies such as the BMRG. A number of key findings have been reproduced below:

(1) **Constructs of Indigenous Communities.** The 2003 Scoping Study set out a two tiered construct of 'Indigenous Community' that is relevant to the work of Regional NRM bodies. It

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<sup>38</sup> Notes from phone discussion with Liz McNiven, Indigenous Unit, MDBC

suggests an approach for distinguishing between Traditional Owner communities and Local Indigenous Communities:

Local Indigenous communities have civil and political rights of involvement in NRM while TOs have these rights, plus inherent rights relating to their country and practice of customary laws. This distinction can be used to shape the way different indigenous people are involved in representative and decision making structures.

(2) **Barriers preventing indigenous involvement in NRM.** The 2003 Scoping Study included an analysis of barriers preventing indigenous people from getting involved with NRM, based on surveys and interviews conducted with indigenous people. The barriers as identified by indigenous people included the following:

- *Lack of Understanding.* Indigenous workshop participants said racism and stereotyping is a barrier to their involvement in NRM decision making processes. Such racist attitudes are not simply due to individual prejudices, but are related to a broader lack of understanding about and respect for Indigenous peoples and their perspectives.
- *Lack of Respect.* Indigenous workshop participants said that the lack of meaningful recognition by governments of Indigenous rights and responsibilities for lands, waters and cultural heritage is a barrier to their involvement in NRM. Participants felt that in contemporary decision making, this lack of respect translates to priority in NRM decisions going to economic interests.
- *The Culture and Capacity of Government Agencies.* Workshop participants felt that governments were inflexible. Examples were that bureaucrats are often unable to communicate in ways that are helpful for indigenous people (eg the use of Plain English instead of jargon, large reports instead of personal communication) and did not understand that for indigenous people, social and economic issues are intertwined with caring for country.
- *Lack of outcomes.* Both indigenous participants and government participants in the MDBC Scoping Study stated that lack of real outcomes was a severe problem in government-indigenous engagement processes. It was disheartening, frustrating and made it difficult to obtain the resources needed to support future indigenous involvement in NRM.

(3) **Ways to improve indigenous involvement in NRM.** The Scoping Study suggested a number of ways to improve indigenous involvement including:

- *Communication.* Indigenous people stressed the need for government and other groups to ‘come to the community’ (rather than call large community meetings) and to use effective, simple language, and using pictures instead of huge reports, to discuss concepts.
- *Representation.* Indigenous workshop participants stressed the need for involvement processes to respect the diversity within and between indigenous groups. They also said that there should always be more than one representative on committees and advisory boards – i.e. each tribal group in the committee’s area of operation should be represented with a minimum of two people.
- *Government and Organisational Culture.* There was general agreement that emphasis should be placed on the development of long term relationships between government officers and indigenous people, including long term strategies for cross cultural awareness opportunities (rather than ‘one off’ training) to help people understand each

other, and to help government officers develop greater understanding and more appropriate, flexible structures for working with indigenous people.

- *Resources.* Indigenous people require funding for meeting expenses, communications equipment, operating costs, increased Indigenous employment and that involvement processes provide sufficient *time* to allow for their effective input.
- *Indigenous Capacity Building.* While government officers who participated in the workshops identified a range of training needs and capacity building issues for indigenous people (the usual: governance, administration, project management etc), indigenous people also raised the need for their cultural knowledge and skills to be acknowledged, as this will build more equal and effective relationships.

Other suggestions include:

- Indigenous Only Workshops and Forums.
- Enabling indigenous people to access ‘Mainstream’ Natural Resource Management Committees, including increasing Indigenous representatives on Committees
- Indigenous involvement in research
- Indigenous employment
- Raising Awareness of indigenous cultural knowledge in the Non-Indigenous Community

(4) The representation structures are directly relevant to other regional bodies such as the NRM, but they are yet to be put in place and their impact/value assessed.

## **C7 ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES AND FRAMEWORK FOR BMRG’S INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT**

The examples and case studies set out in this desk study identify a number of structures and issues that need to be addressed to create an effective framework for engaging and working with indigenous communities.

This section sets out a range of issues that organisations such as the BMRG can consider and incorporate into their operational structures, to effectively engage with indigenous people.

### **C7.1 Rationale for engagement**

An organisation’s motivation and purpose for engaging with indigenous people will need to be clearly stated and understood by its management and staff, as its reason for engaging will guide the creation of engagement structures that are appropriate for its purposes.

As all NRM bodies are required to have consulted indigenous communities to have their Regional Plans and Regional Investment Strategies accredited, NRM bodies such as the BMRG are obviously going to be aiming to develop engagement structures that nurture effective, long term working relationships.

### **Recommendation**

That the BMRG articulate specific goals and create Key Performance Indicators for its Indigenous Engagement program. Such goals and KPIs would be internal, corporate working tools and would be in addition to the targets established in the Regional Plan that relate to indigenous people’s NRM goals and aspirations.

## **C7.2 Who to engage with**

As stated in the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) Scoping Study: ‘Indigenous governance structures are very diverse as a result of the range of local cultures. In addition, historical and administrative influences have led to dispersal and regrouping of family and clan groups and to quite different institutions.’ This can make it very difficult for non-indigenous groups to know who to engage with, on what issues.

As discussed throughout this paper, the main distinction in the indigenous community is between Traditional Owners and other indigenous people, who are sometimes referred to as ‘historical’ or ‘community’ people.

The MDBC works with ‘indigenous communities’ on two different levels, and offers a model that may be helpful to the BMRG. It identifies a division between (i) Traditional Owners and (ii) all other indigenous groups. It designs its engagement strategies on the basis that each of the two groups have legitimate interests in NRM, but have different areas of authority and responsibility – Traditional Owners have customary rights and obligations to ‘speak for country’ and make management decisions about cultural heritage, while other indigenous communities have a civil and political right and interest in natural resource management issues.

As seen in Section 5, other NRMs in Queensland are also using this kind of approach. They are engaging primarily with Traditional Owners on the Board representation matter – but aim to work with all indigenous peoples when it comes to land management projects on the ground.

*A further classification does exist – that of Native Title Applicants. This is a smaller group than that of Traditional Owners, and includes some or all of the Traditional Owners in a region who have passed the ‘Registration Test’ created under the Native Title Act, and are registered claimants with the Native Title Registrar. Being a registered Native Title Claimant group creates special rights and responsibilities for some groups, which should be respected by the BMRG. However as the Native Title process is difficult and divisive for indigenous communities, it is not advisable that stakeholders like the BMRG limit their engagement to Native Title Applicants only.*

### **Recommendations**

That the BMRG:

- Adopt an inclusive approach and work with all indigenous peoples in its region.
- Understand and respect the distinction between Traditional Owners and other indigenous people.
- Adopt the MDBC’s approach to working with indigenous people, and design its engagement strategies on the basis that Traditional Owners have customary rights and obligations to ‘speak for country’ and make management decisions about cultural heritage, while other indigenous communities have a civil and political right and interest in natural resource management issues.
- Develop Board Representation structures by first consulting with Traditional Owner groups, and then with other indigenous people in the region.

## **C7.3 How to engage: opportunities and structures for engaging with indigenous communities**

### **C7.3.1 Organisational charter and/or protocol**

Some organisations have chosen to draw up a basic charter or statement of principles, acknowledging Traditional Owners and other indigenous people in their community, and expressing a commitment to working with them.

Some organisations (eg the Wet Tropics Management Authority) have also developed a range of protocols to guide their ongoing working relationship with indigenous groups. General protocols typically include:

- Key contact persons
- Acknowledgement processes
- Consultation, negotiation and decision making processes
- Monitoring and review processes
- Information collection, storage, use
- Dispute resolution
- Timelines to be made clear
- Level of participation
- Outcomes (benefits, risks)
- Resources
- Type and format of feedback
- compliance

### **C7.3.2 Use of indigenous initiated protocols and aspirations documents**

Where possible, organisations such as the BMRG should use Aspirations documents and protocol documents created by indigenous groups, and should make all efforts to incorporate them into their engagement strategies.

### **C7.3.3 Indigenous employees, advisors and experts**

As noted in the MDBC Scoping Study and Fiona Wellington’s paper on the Moreton Bay Catchment Partnership (and other papers), the engagement of indigenous staff, advisors and experts to assist with specific and ongoing work tasks can offer a range of benefits to NRM organisations. While such employees or advisors are not representative of Traditional Owners and cannot make decisions on country, they offer indigenous perspectives and opinions on matters and can help to develop a deeper understanding and respect for indigenous issues and world view among staff in an organization.

### **C7.3.4 Increased opportunities for indigenous people to participate in ‘mainstream’ NRM activities**

The MDBC Scoping Study identified a range of ways indigenous people can be included more extensively in NRM activities and decision making, including the following:

- Enabling indigenous people to access ‘Mainstream’ Natural Resource Management Committees
- Indigenous involvement in research

#### ***Recommendations***

That the BMRG:

- Consider creating an organizational charter or Protocol setting out its principles of respecting and working with indigenous peoples – Traditional Owners and other people – in all aspects of its work.
- Use Aspirations Documents and protocol documents created by indigenous groups, wherever such documents are available, and make all efforts to incorporate them into BMRG’s engagement strategies.
- Adopt a policy of encouraging indigenous people to apply for positions of employment and consulting/advisory work with the organization.
- Adopt a pro-active policy of encouraging indigenous people to participate in ‘mainstream’ NRM committees in the region, as well as research projects.

## **C7.4 How to engage: attitudes and resources necessary for effective engagement with indigenous communities**

### **C7.4.1 Acknowledgement, understanding and respect**

As identified in the MDBC Scoping Study, many indigenous people feel there is a lack of acknowledgement and respect of their cultural knowledge and abilities, and there is a lack of

understanding about the historical and contemporary reasons for their socio-economic disadvantage.

Non-indigenous organisations will be better able to engage and work with indigenous people if they are able to embed in their organisational culture:

- Appreciation of the customary indigenous world view regarding natural resources and the cultural landscape;
- Appreciation of contemporary socio-economic circumstances affecting indigenous communities, and the historical reasons for these circumstances;
- An overall understanding and appreciation of post-colonial theory and the embedded unevenness of power that affects indigenous people in a very real way. An understanding of such issues would help non-indigenous people understand why many indigenous people don't see themselves as 'just another stakeholder', that instead, they are the first peoples, with custodial responsibilities for their country continuing despite the existence of dominant social, political and economic systems foreign to their own traditions and history.

To work together, indigenous groups will benefit from increased understanding of:

- Government structures – how departments agencies work, their demands, expectations etc
- Commercial issues – how the private sector works, their priorities and demands.

To achieve this level of mutual understanding and respect between indigenous and non-indigenous people, time and resources are required to:

- Fund effective, long term cross cultural training for non-indigenous staff, technical experts and Board.
- Assist with cross cultural training for non-indigenous people about government and commercial structures and operations.
- Develop real projects to work on together

#### **C7.4.2 Resources & capacity**

The need for effective capacity building and adequate resources is stressed by many groups (indigenous and non-indigenous) and in many reports.

Indigenous people's socio-economic circumstances mean that engagement and involvement are simply not possible for most people without assistance being provided for the practical costs associated with meetings, administration and communication.

#### **Capacity**

As stated by George, Innes and Ross:

'Capacity involves more than cash. It is necessary for both parties to co-management, and for the success of their relationship. It may be helpful to consider 'capacity' in several dimensions: (i) individual skills (ii) social (interaction) skills, (iii) flexible world views, (iv) supportive organizational arrangements (v) financial and staff resources and (v) time and patience.'

Some issues to incorporate into any capacity building strategy:

- Who’s capacity? While indigenous people need a range of capacity building and training opportunities to handle contemporary NRM and administrative/management approaches, non-indigenous people also need capacity building to understand indigenous people’s world view, cultural heritage responsibilities and socio-economic circumstances.
- Effective capacity building strategies can only be developed by specific needs analysis for local communities. For the BMRG, such a needs analysis will be commenced during the community consultation phase of the PAP for Indigenous Engagement, and continued over the longer term by the work carried out by the BMRG’s Indigenous Support Officer.

## Resources

Indigenous groups need assistance with resources on a number of levels:

- To enable indigenous people to identify, implement and manage projects created by their own, individual groups and regional representative structures.
- To enable representative structures to meet (where possible, costs for travelling, accommodation and meals need to be incorporated into any overarching budget for indigenous engagement)
- To enable representatives to communicate with the groups they represent – administrative/office resources, phone, fax etc

As stated by George, Innes and Ross:

‘Since Indigenous people have few financial resources, need to meet among themselves to build consensus on approaches, and may lack technical expertise and office supports, it is important that they be funded in the preparation, negotiation and implementation phases of co-management. They are at a considerable disadvantage compared to the levels of organization and staffing in the government and industry bodies with which they meet. **They also need strong continuing governance, which requires sustained resourcing, not merely the stop-start short term funding which prevails for natural resource management**<sup>39</sup>.’

### C7.4.3 Development of real projects

As identified by the Desert Channels Qld NRM, the development of real, on the ground projects is one of the most effective ways for indigenous and non-indigenous groups to work together, develop understanding and trust and deliver real outcomes for natural resource management.

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<sup>39</sup> George. M, Innes J, & Ross H. *Managing sea country together*’ p.29, p.46

## Recommendations

That the BMRG

- Work towards increasing mutual understanding and respect between indigenous and non-indigenous people, and investigate opportunities for funding:
  - (a) Long term cross cultural training for non-indigenous staff, technical experts and Board.
  - (b) Cross cultural training for non-indigenous people about government and commercial structures and operations.
- Use the information from this paper, and the report on community consultation under the PAP 1.3 Indigenous Engagement program, to develop a detailed strategy for helping build the capacity and resources of indigenous people in the region.

## C7.5 Governance and representative structures

One of the key priorities for the BMRG is to work with indigenous groups to create a structure to ensure indigenous people are represented on the BMRG Board of Directors, in a culturally appropriate manner.

This section examines three questions:

- Who should the BMRG engage with on Board representation?
- How many Board positions should the BMRG have for indigenous representatives?
- How can those Board position/s be selected to be truly representative of the indigenous community and acceptable to Traditional Owners in the region?

*It must be noted that this part of the report provides only an overview of possible ways forward, based on the written material considered during the desk study.*

*The Community Consultation phase of the BMRG's Indigenous Engagement Project, and the longer term development of relationships between the BMRG and Indigenous community in the Burnett Mary, will play a more direct role in setting up the appropriate representation structures for the region.*

### **(1) Who should the BMRG engage with specifically on Board representation?**

Building on the points made in Section 7.2 of this paper, and noting how most other NRM bodies are approach this issue, it would appear that the most effective way forward is to first work with Traditional Owners to explore the most appropriate Board representation, then as structures are set in place, work with other indigenous people to see how their interests can also be accommodated in any representative structures.

**(2) How many Board positions for indigenous representatives should BMRG have?**

The guidelines titled ‘Good Practice in Indigenous Consultation and Involvement in Integrated Regional NRM Planning’ states that best practice is for a Regional NRM body to have at least two indigenous representatives. In most representative forums, indigenous people prefer to have more than one representative, so that representatives can provide each other with resource support, and ensure there is always indigenous presence at meetings and events.

**(3) How can those Board positions be selected to be truly representative of the indigenous community?**

From the case studies assessed, it is clear that at present there are no existing sub-regional or regional structures in the Burnett Mary Region that the BMRG can work with. This is in contrast to NRM bodies such as the FNQ NRM, who are able to work with the Aboriginal Rainforest Council to tap into existing, effective regional representation structures.

The BMRG then, will need to work with indigenous people in its region to develop an appropriate representative structure.

As already discussed, the paper prepared by George, Innes and Ross identifies one of the most important issues to address when government or other regional/centralized bodies are working with indigenous people.

They noted that a fundamental problem for regional working relationships is the difference between government and indigenous decision making structures. While government agencies (and Regional NRM bodies) are typically centralized bodies with authority over a large regional area, Indigenous authority under customary law is *decentralized*, with prime authority being vested in the Traditional Owners of many clan estates.

**In simple terms, for many Traditional Owner groups it would be unacceptable to have a regional representative structure where one indigenous person purports to represent other people’s country. However there may be structures that can be put in place to ensure Traditional Owner groups are able to work together on a regional level and elect a smaller number of their people to represent them across a sub-regional or regional area.**

George, Innes and Ross discuss a number of different models that can cope with these cultural/institutional differences, including:

- Boards, such as the Boards leading or coordinating decision-making for species management in Canada;
- Regional Agreements specifying management plans and decision making structures which combine the parties for common action;
- Nested models – where local arrangements are overseen by a coordinating, central arrangement. This is the essence of Sea Forum’s proposal for a Framework Agreement, which would provide an overarching structure for development of customized regional agreements at smaller scales.

From the case studies examined in this paper, the most relevant ‘nested models’ are those of the Burnett Basin WAMP, the Sea Forum, the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and also the SEQ TOCC. In all of these cases, individual indigenous groups/clans/families maintained

their power and traditional right to speak for country, and came together at a sub regional or regional level to work together on *regional* issues.

### **C7.5.1 WAMP process as a possible model for a representative structure**

The engagement and representative structure created by the WAMP process was acceptable to indigenous people in the Burnett Basin because it allowed each of the family/clan groups to have two representatives and two proxies on the Indigenous Working Group. Once the Indigenous Working Group was formed, this larger group was then able to elect 2 people (and 2 proxies) from their number, to participate in the Community Reference Group.

It would appear then, that indigenous people in the BMRG region may be prepared to elect a small number of people to represent them, provided a larger structure exists to inform the representatives.

The WAMP, Sea Forum, ARC and SEQ TOCC are largely examples of a ‘nested model’ mentioned above - where groups maintain their local, clan based power and right to speak for country, but meet together with other clan representatives to talk about sub-regional or regional issues. If such a ‘nested’ structure was created in the BMRG regional area, it might provide an acceptable structure from which effective Board Representation can be chosen/elected.

#### **Recommendations**

That the BMRG

- Note that these recommendations are based only on information available through the desk study and that the Community Consultation process (Paper 2) and longer term work with indigenous people in the region, will help identify what kind of indigenous representation structures are most preferred by indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region.
- **Consider creating two positions on the Board for indigenous representatives.**
- Note the need for any regional representative structure to protect each Traditional Owner group’s responsibility to be the only group that can speak for their country.
- Note the models used by the WAMP process, Sea Forum, Aboriginal Rainforest Council and SEQ Traditional Owner Consultative Committee and Murray Darling Basin Commission.
- Note the Burnett Basin WAMP process offered an acceptable representation structure for indigenous people in the BMRG region because each clan group was able to have two representatives, and two proxies, as part of the larger Indigenous Working Group. This larger IWG was then prepared to elect two representatives (and two proxies) to represent indigenous people on the Community Reference Group.

- **Consider creating an indigenous NRM forum, similar in structure to that of the WAMP process (with at least two representatives from each local clan or family group within the region), to enable indigenous people to work together on a regional basis on NRM issues and determine how they would like to select their BMRG board representatives.**
- **That the BMRG consider allocating funding to enable such an NRM forum to meet on a regular basis, for at least 12-18 months and discuss how best to structure indigenous representation on the BMRG Board.**
- **That the BMRG work with the indigenous NRM forum to explore ways of establishing long term funding resources to enable the regional group to take ownership of the forum and continue its work over the longer term.**

## C8 References

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- Cliff Cobbo, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator for North Queensland Region
- Noel Gertz, formerly of Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM
- Alison Halliday, Aboriginal Rainforest Council
- Lyle Johnson, Far North Queensland NRM
- Graeme Lightbody, Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee
- Liz McNiven, Indigenous Unit, Murray Darling Basin Commission
- Leah Saltner, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator South Queensland Region
- Michael Smith and Sonia Minniecon, Natural Partners
- David Thompson, Desert Channels Qld NRM
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### **Documents generated by indigenous communities – aspirations, engagement protocols, other**

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Priority Action Plan 1.3 Indigenous Engagement:**

**Chapter two: Report on Indigenous Community consultation  
meetings**

**Final Report  
Prepared for Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM  
by Michelle Maloney, Community Development Consultant  
15 November 2004**



**Burnett Mary  
Regional Group**  
*...for Natural Resource Management Inc*

## **Acknowledgement and thanks**

The Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) for Natural Resource Management and Michelle Maloney would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Burnett Mary region - the Butchulla, Taribelung Bunda, Wakka Wakka, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Gubbi Gubbi, Kabi Kabi and Wulli Wulli peoples.

We would like to thank the Traditional Owners and all other indigenous people who made the time to meet with us during this first stage of the BMRG's Indigenous Engagement Program. We would also like to thank the non-indigenous people who work on community projects in our region and who referred us to indigenous people during this project.

## *Thank you -*

*(in order of interview)*

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## **Chapter two executive summary**

### **Introduction**

In July 2004, the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG) contracted Michelle Maloney, a community development consultant, to carry out Priority Action Plan 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement. The PAP involved two main projects:

- (1) The preparation of a desk study to inform BMRG about NRM issues important to indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region, and possible indigenous engagement and representation structures.
- (2) Community consultation, to meet with indigenous people to find out about specific NRM issues and projects important to people in the region, and to identify effective indigenous representation structures for the BMRG.

### **Goal of community consultation**

The goal of the community consultation process was to meet with members of the indigenous community in the Burnett Mary region to:

- (i) find out about natural resource management issues and projects of importance, so that the BMRG can incorporate indigenous priorities and needs into the Burnett Mary Regional Plan, and
- (ii) begin to develop a long term working relationship with interested indigenous groups, so that the BMRG can assist groups to identify and secure the resources they need to carry out their own natural resource management projects.

To achieve this, the community consultation meetings and interviews were designed to:

- Provide information about the BMRG, the Regional Natural Resource Management Planning process and the BMRG’s Board of Management;
- Find out from indigenous people about:
  - Priority natural resource management issues;
  - Current natural resource management projects groups and individuals are involved with;
  - The capacity of individuals and organisations to carry out projects that are important to them;
  - Regional representation models and ideas about indigenous representation on the BMRG Board.

### **This paper**

This paper provides a summary of the community meetings and interviews carried out under the BMRG’s PAP 1.3 and the key findings from this process.

- Section 2 outlines the method used for conducting the meetings and interviews.
- Section 3 provides a summary of key issues and findings regarding indigenous priority issues, current projects, goals and capacity.
- Section 4 provides a summary of the key findings regarding indigenous regional representation and representation on the BMRG Board.

- Section 5 sets out interviewee’s responses and comments to each of the survey

***Sections 3 and 4 aim to summarise the issues and ideas discussed in interviews and meetings. However you are urged to read Section 5 in its entirety, as it sets out the issues and problems faced by indigenous people, in their own words.***

### **Confidentiality**

As the majority of people interviewed preferred to have specific details about their organisations and projects kept confidential, this report summarises issues at a general level and includes people’s comments in a manner that does not include names, organisations or project details.

## **Part 2 - Methodology**

Section 2 sets out the methodology used for the community consultation project.

An important goal of the consultation process was to find out about specific projects, capacity building needs and problems faced by indigenous groups in the region, so it was decided to focus on small meetings and one-on-one interviews, to ensure people felt comfortable talking about issues that were important to them and their groups.

Thirty-four meetings were held between August and October 2004.

These included meetings with representatives from the following traditional owner groups: Butchulla, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Gubbi Gubbi, Kabi Kabi, Taribelung Bunda, Wakka Wakka, and Wulli Wulli peoples. In many instances, separate meetings were held with different clan/family groups within each major traditional owner group.

Meetings were also held with ATSIC Regional Councillors, representatives from the Cherbourg Council and representatives of CDEP projects.

The list of people who participated in the consultation meetings is at [Attachment 1](#). This is followed by a list of the main groups, and smaller family and clan groups, that were represented during the meetings.

Of the 34 meetings:

- All meetings involved a presentation about the BMRG. A copy of the presentation is at [Attachment 2](#).
- 23 meetings included detailed interviews, using the Survey Questions at [Attachment 3](#).
- 8 meetings involved a discussion about a range of NRM issues (and notes are included in this report), but they did not include running through the Survey Questions. There were various reasons why the Survey was not used – eg people did not have time, or felt others in their community were more appropriate to talk about representation issues, while they were happy to talk about NRM projects and issues.
- 3 meetings were an opportunity to introduce the BMRG, and to get further contacts, but the individuals were either not indigenous and/or indicated they were not the appropriate people to talk to in their town/area about NRM or representation.

### **Part 3 - NRM Issues, Projects, Goals and Capacity**

Section 3 provides an overview of natural resource management issues that are important to indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region, the kinds of projects that groups are currently involved with and the goals and aspirations groups have for the future.

The meaning of ‘Natural Resource Management’ (NRM) was discussed with people participating in the meetings and interviews, and for many people it helped to break the term ‘NRM’ into two linked issues: ‘the environment’ and ‘cultural heritage’.

Consequently the survey questions were changed to include ‘environment’ and ‘cultural heritage’, and these terms are used interchangeably with NRM in this report.

#### **NRM issues**

NRM, or environmental and cultural heritage issues that are important to indigenous people have been documented in other reports including the Aspirations Documents<sup>40</sup> recently developed by several indigenous groups in the Burnett Mary region. A question about priority issues was included in the interviews to get a snapshot of key issues – this report does not attempt to present an exhaustive list.

The issues of most concern to people who participated in the interviews were:

- River health;
- Land clearing (removal of trees and other vegetation);
- Land management (including weed control);
- Access to cultural sites and the ability to look after sites;
- The need to teach indigenous youth about their culture and overall concerns about loss of knowledge of culture.

#### **Current NRM projects**

Indigenous people across the Burnett Mary region are involved in a range of natural resource management projects, which can be grouped under three headings, as follows:

- Cultural heritage.
- Environmental projects.
- Commercial projects.

The most common projects that indigenous groups are currently involved in include the following:

- nine groups (at least) are involved in conducting cultural heritage surveys and clearances
- six projects see people involved in businesses that sustainably harvest natural resources;
- five groups are involved with the Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory group;
- four are working in partnership with government departments in either an advisory; capacity, or on specific land management projects;
- three groups are working to protect cultural sites;

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<sup>40</sup> List some of the Aspirations Documents, by various groups

- three groups are involved in weed eradication projects;
- three are negotiating with either the government or mining companies to obtain land for their traditional owner groups.

### **Goals and Aspirations**

All interviewees were asked about their goals and aspirations regarding environmental and cultural heritage projects.

All respondents saw a link between environmental/cultural heritage goals and the overall need for the creation of socio-economic opportunities for indigenous people, such as business development, job creation and real ‘hands on’ training and skills development.

*There was a marked difference in responses between those groups that currently own land and manage their own land based projects, and those groups that do not currently own land and do not manage their own land based projects.*

While people from both groups are keen to develop partnerships with others, groups that do not own land or have other resources (eg an office or paid staff) were focused on building the capacity of their group to gather resources and create new opportunities for their people, while groups with their own land and resources were focused on achieving specific land based goals and making their operations sustainable.

The goals and aspirations of groups that own land include:

- Creating self-sustaining, commercial operations;
- Increasing employment and economic opportunities;
- Achieving specific cultural and natural resource management goals on their own land;
- Working in partnership with more groups, to achieve NRM, social and economic goals.

The goals and aspirations of groups that do not currently own land include:

- Owning land of their own;
- Having access to cultural sites and working on cultural heritage protection projects, including cultural tourism and setting up cultural heritage databases/information systems;
- Building the skills and capacity of their people and organisations, so that they are able to gather more resources and work on more projects;
- Working in partnership with more groups, to achieve NRM, social and economic goals.

### **Problems and barriers**

A number of shared problems and barriers emerged from the interviews. Many of these are also reflected in the next section, regarding specific capacity building needs.

The main issues identified were:

- Lack of money and resources

- Money, resources, transport
- Lack of money to have paid staff
- Grant payments, sitting fees
- Lack of available people
- Lack of information, capacity, skills
- The need for more effective partnerships/relationships with other stakeholders
- Race issues
- Conflict between Aboriginal groups
- Other

### **Capacity building needs**

People were asked to comment on how they felt about the capacity of their organisations (institutional capacity) and the individuals who work for their organisations (individual capacity), to work on the projects they would like to do.

#### **(i) Institutional / organizational capacity**

To better understand the organizational capacity of groups involved in the interviews, interviewees were asked if their groups/organisations: (i) were incorporated, (ii) had an office (not a home office) and (iii) had any paid staff.

The people interviewed spoke for about 20 different groups or organisations<sup>41</sup>.

Of the 20 groups, there were approximately 16 groups or organisations created by traditional owners, to work on projects related to caring for country. Of these 16 traditional owner groups/organisations:

- 11 were incorporated organisations;
- only 1 group within the 16 have an office and paid staff;
- 15 groups/organisations have no administrative or project resources and do not have paid staff, but are run by part time or full time volunteers, out of home offices.

As outlined in the Section ‘Problems and Barriers’ - lack of money, resources and paid staff are some of the main problems noted by many people interviewed.

#### **(ii) Individual capacity building needs**

All interviewees said their people needed training in ‘mainstream’ management and administration, as well as in specific land management skills. They said they needed skills development in the following areas:

- General management and administration
- Cultural and land management projects
- Building self confidence

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<sup>41</sup> This does not include the Cherbourg Council, as it has very different funding and other status to most other Aboriginal groups.

### Ways to build capacity

Interviewees outlined a range of ideal ‘methods’ for building capacity, including:

- Practical, on-the-job training (in addition to formal, ‘class room’ training)
- Mentoring by skilled experts
- Long term business networks and partnerships

### **Conclusions – Issues and Capacity**

The meetings and interviews have shown that indigenous groups across the Burnett Mary region share many aspirations, problems and capacity building needs.

This report cannot stress enough the frustration experienced by many groups who do not currently have the human or financial capacity to work on the projects that are important to them, and who do not know how to *obtain* the know-how or resources they need to begin developing their organisations and projects. Many groups said that to work on any projects – whether they are environmental, cultural heritage or other projects – they need financial resources to pay people and set up programs and they need to develop the capacity of their individuals and organisations to carry out administration, project management and specific land and cultural heritage management projects. Several people said they felt ‘stuck’ – as they had many potential projects that could be developed, but no resources and no place to start.

### **Recommendations:**

The BMRG, and in particular, the position of Indigenous Support Officer, is already working on a range of strategies to help indigenous groups find the resources they need to work on projects that are important to them. The BMRG is rightly focusing on working on the ground with individual groups, on specific projects. This paper sets out, in a confidential report not available for the public, the current needs of specific groups and specific projects, which should help the BMRG identify some of the specific groups to work with, and specific actions that can be taken to help them in the immediate term.

In addition, the community meetings and interviews have shown that some of the ways the BMRG might be able to assist indigenous groups include:

### **No cost actions:**

- Facilitate increased inter-action between different indigenous groups in the region, so they can share ideas, skills and learnings.
- Facilitate introductions and **create mentoring relationships** between indigenous groups and other stakeholders in the region including: local councils, land management experts (government and private groups) and private businesses.
- Choose specific ‘topics’ of interest to a range of groups - such as the creation and management of keeping places/cultural centres, business development or weed eradication projects - and create learning circles, informal working groups, symposiums or other ways of bringing people together so they can actively seek out information and resources to achieve their goals.
- Create learning circles and other groups at the local and regional level, so that different groups can share information about the processes of creating change – for example, information sessions about strategic planning, grant writing, grant administration and project management.

- Create links to non-government resources from outside the region, who can directly assist groups in the Burnett Mary – eg private foundations such as ‘First Australians Business’ who operate business mentoring programs across Australia.

#### **Regional Investment Strategy opportunities:**

- Allocate funding with the Regional Investment Strategy for additional indigenous support officers to carry out networking and coordination tasks in the region, and to increase the BMRG’s ability to deliver real, on the ground project development.
- Allocate funding within the Regional Investment Strategy, and/or negotiate with other groups in the region, to help pay for a range of culturally appropriate project management and administration training opportunities for individuals within traditional owner organisations.
- Allocate funding to expose indigenous groups to as many new ideas and ways of doing business as possible – funding for study tours, visits to other indigenous run enterprises, etc.

## **Part 4 - Representation**

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 set out details about the BMRG’s community meetings, and the questions posed to those interviewed.

### **Regional Representation**

In summary:

- Everyone interviewed felt that it’s important for indigenous people to have a regional voice on NRM issues;
- An overwhelming majority of people (all but two interviewees) felt that only one representative on the BMRG Board is not sufficient, and that there should be at least two representatives, if not more.
- Two-thirds of the people interviewed have been involved in other consultation and engagement processes relating to NRM issues. These other processes included the WAMP (Water Allocation Management Plan) Process, the Sea Forum, the SEQ Forestry Agreement and Aspirations Documents process and the Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory Group.
- The majority of people interviewed believe that the most appropriate structure for a regional indigenous ‘voice’ on NRM should involve at least 2 representatives from each of the families and clans working together as a large group, and then that group electing smaller working groups and/or representatives to participate in regional activities.

Most interviewees were concerned about the need for the BMRG to assist with the costs of bringing people together, and assisting them with the costs of reporting back to their communities.

### **Overall involvement with the BMRG**

- All but two people interviewed said they would like to be involved with the BMRG, as members and as participants in projects. Seven people were already members of the BMRG and nine joined up as members during the meetings.

- All but one interviewee said they would be interested in attending a regional forum to discuss representation on the BMRG Board. The first regional forum was held in Bundaberg on November 3 and 4, and a second meeting is scheduled for early 2005.
- 14 of those interviewed said they had heard of the BMRG before the interview, 10 said they had not.

## **Conclusions - Representation**

The community consultation process has produced a number of very clear messages – including the fact that indigenous people definitely want to be involved with the work of the BMRG, would like to see more than 1 indigenous representative on the Board.

The overall recommendation from this paper is for the BMRG to continue with its current direction of bringing indigenous groups together to discuss, as a regional group, how they would like to work together, how they would like to work with the BMRG and how they would like to select indigenous representative(s) for the BMRG Board.

The BMRG's first Indigenous Representation Forum was held in Bundaberg on November 3 and 4, 2004. This paper recommends that resources be allocated for at least six further regional meetings over the next 12-14 months and then an ongoing budget to assist indigenous groups to coordinate and manage the longer term process they decide upon, for electing and supporting representatives for the Board.

## **C9 Introduction**

### **C9.1 Overview of the Burnett Mary Regional Group's (BMRG) Priority Action Plan 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement**

In July 2004, the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG) contracted Michelle Maloney, a community development consultant, to carry out Priority Action Plan 1.3 – Indigenous Engagement. The PAP involved two main projects:

1. The preparation of a desk study to inform BMRG about NRM issues important to indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region, and possible indigenous engagement and representation structures.
2. Community consultation, to meet with indigenous people to find out about specific NRM issues and projects important to people in the region, and to identify effective indigenous representation structures for the BMRG.

Through the development of the project, it was recognized that the BMRG would need to bring interested indigenous groups together to discuss the issue of representation on the BMRG Board and the broader issue of regional representation. Consequently the community consultation meetings also involved seeking advice from groups about the best structures for bringing people together.

The first BMRG Indigenous Representation Forum was held on November 3 and 4 in Bundaberg. A second forum is scheduled for early 2005.

## C9.2 Goal of community consultation

The goal of the community consultation process was to meet with members of the indigenous community in the Burnett Mary region to:

1. find out about natural resource management issues and projects of importance, so that the BMRG can incorporate indigenous priorities and needs into the Burnett Mary Regional Plan, and
2. begin to develop a long term working relationship with interested indigenous groups, so that the BMRG can assist groups to identify and secure the resources they need to carry out their own natural resource management projects.

To achieve this, the community consultation meetings and interviews were designed to:

- Provide information about the BMRG, the Regional Natural Resource Management Planning process and the BMRG’s Board of Management;
- Find out from indigenous people about:
  - Priority natural resource management issues;
  - Current natural resource management projects groups and individuals are involved with;
  - The capacity of individuals and organisations to carry out projects that are important to them;
  - Regional representation models and ideas about indigenous representation on the BMRG Board.

## C9.3 This paper

This paper provides a summary of the community meetings and interviews carried out under the BMRG’s PAP 1.3 and the key findings from this process.

- Section 2 outlines the method used for conducting the meetings and interviews.
- Section 3 provides a summary of key issues and findings regarding indigenous priority issues, current projects, goals and capacity.
- Section 4 provides a summary of the key findings regarding indigenous regional representation and representation on the BMRG Board.
- Section 5 sets out interviewee’s responses and comments to each of the survey

***Sections 3 and 4 aim to summarise the issues and ideas discussed in interviews and meetings. However you are urged to read Section 5 in its entirety, as it sets out the issues and problems faced by indigenous people, in their own words.***

## C9.4 Confidentiality

As the majority of people interviewed preferred to have specific details about their organisations and projects kept confidential, this report summarises issues at a general level and includes people’s comments in a manner that does not include names, organisations or project details.

## **C9.5 Limitations**

As discussed in Section 2, this ‘community consultation’ process has involved only a small sample of the indigenous community in the Burnett Mary region.

The BMRG sees the Priority Action Plan work as only the first step in a longer term process. The BMRG’s goal is to ensure the organization and its Indigenous Support Officer, builds an effective relationship with the indigenous community in the Burnett Mary region, and through this working relationship, the BMRG would like to assist indigenous groups to develop their own partnerships and obtain the necessary resources to achieve their NRM goals and aspirations.

## **C10 Methodology**

### **C10.1 Our Approach – who did we consult with, and why?**

#### **C10.1.1 Indigenous advisory panel**

The BMRG used an indigenous advisory panel to select the successful contractor to carry out the community consultation work. Once the contractor was appointed to the project, the indigenous advisory panel then acted as an advisory group to the consultant, to help prepare a strategy for meeting and interviewing a sample of indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region.

#### **C10.1.2 First steps towards longer term community consultation**

The goal of the consultation was to begin with a range of indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region, including: Native Title claimants (lists were obtained from Land Council sources), representatives from Traditional Owner groups and other community representatives, including ATSIC Regional Councillors and people from the Cherbourg Council.

#### **C10.1.3 Traditional Owners**

As the BMRG works on natural resource management issues – issues related to caring for country – the community consultation focused primarily on traditional owners, who have custodial responsibilities to care for country. In addition, the BMRG recognizes that indigenous people who are not traditional owners may have social and economic interests in natural resource management projects, and so the BMRG will also work with these individuals and groups on appropriate issues.

#### **C10.1.4 Small meetings and one-on-one interviews**

An important goal of the consultation process was to find out about specific projects, capacity building needs and problems faced by indigenous groups in the region, so it was decided to focus on small meetings and one-on-one interviews, to ensure people felt comfortable talking about issues that were important to them and their groups.

### **C10.2 Meetings and Interviews**

Thirty-four meetings were held between August and October 2004.

These included meetings with representatives from the following traditional owner groups: Butchulla, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Gubbi Gubbi, Kabi Kabi, Taribelung Bunda, Wakka Wakka, and Wulli Wulli peoples. In many instances, separate meetings were held with different clan/family groups within each major traditional owner group.

Meetings were also held with ATSIC Regional Councillors, representatives from the Cherbourg Council and representatives of CDEP projects.

The list of people who participated in the consultation meetings is at [Appendix CI](#). This is followed by a list of the main groups, and smaller family and clan groups, that were represented during the [meetings](#).

Of the 34 meetings:

- All meetings involved a presentation about the BMRG. A copy of the presentation is at [Appendix CII](#)
- 23 meetings included detailed interviews, using the Survey Questions at [Appendix CIII](#).
- 8 meetings involved a discussion about a range of NRM issues (and notes are included in this report), but they did not include running through the Survey Questions. There were various reasons why the Survey was not used – eg people did not have time, or felt others in their community were more appropriate to talk about representation issues, while they were happy to talk about NRM projects and issues.
- 3 meetings were an opportunity to introduce the BMRG, and to get further contacts, but the individuals were either not indigenous and/or indicated they were not the appropriate people to talk to in their town/area about NRM or representation.

### **C10.3 Consultation Materials**

A presentation about the BMRG was prepared and provided to everyone who participated in the meetings. A copy of the presentation is at [Appendix CII](#).

The presentation was designed to introduce the BMRG, provide an overview of the Regional Planning process and discuss the BMRG Board of Management. It then discussed a number of examples or ‘models’ of indigenous representation and engagement, such as the Sea Forum, Aboriginal Rainforest Council and the WAMP (Water Allocation Management Plan) process, in order to open discussion about the best structures for indigenous representation at the regional level in the Burnett Mary.

### **C10.4 Survey Questions**

The Survey Questions were designed to find out about three key areas:

- NRM issues and current projects;
- Individual and group/organizational capacity to carry out projects; and
- Preferred representation structures.

A full copy of the questions is at [Appendix CIII](#).

## **C10.5 Writing up of Interview Notes**

Detailed notes were taken in each interview, including quotes capturing people’s opinions about specific issues. The written notes were read back to people during the interviews, as part of reflective listening and to check that the notes were accurate.

Interview notes were written up and provided to all participants so they could check their notes were accurate and/or provide comments or modifications to the notes.

## **C11 Findings from community meetings: issues, goals and capacity**

This section provides a snapshot of natural resource management issues that are important to indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region, the kinds of projects that groups are currently involved with and the goals and aspirations groups have for the future.

The meaning of ‘Natural Resource Management’ (NRM) was discussed with people participating in the meetings and interviews, and for many people it helped to break the term ‘NRM’ into two linked issues: ‘the environment’ and ‘cultural heritage’.

Consequently the survey questions were changed to include ‘environment’ and ‘cultural heritage’, and these terms are used interchangeably with NRM in this report.

### **C11.1 NRM issues**

#### **C11.1.1 Summary**

NRM, or environmental and cultural heritage issues that are important to indigenous people have been documented in other reports including the Aspirations Documents<sup>42</sup> recently developed by several indigenous groups in the Burnett Mary region. A question about priority issues was included in the interviews to get a snapshot of key issues – this report does not attempt to present an exhaustive list.

The issues of most concern to people who participated in the interviews were:

- River health;
- Land clearing (removal of trees and other vegetation);
- Land management (including weed control);
- Access to cultural sites and the ability to look after sites;
- The need to teach indigenous youth about their culture and overall concerns about loss of knowledge of culture.

#### **C11.1.2 Survey responses**

Survey responses are set out below and can also be found in Section 4, under Survey Question 2.

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<sup>42</sup> List some of the Aspirations Documents, by various groups

The numbers in (brackets) indicate the number of times each issue was mentioned by different people. The sub-points indicate the specific issues under each heading that some people were concerned with.

- River health **(12)**
  - Erosion of banks, weeds (especially hyacinth), algae (8)
  - Weirs and dams (5)
  - Taking water from rivers for irrigation (3)
  - Wastes and chemicals going into rivers (1)
- Clearing of trees, vegetation **(12)**
- Land management, weed control **(7)**
- Access to cultural sites and ability to look after sites **(7)** - including burial grounds, burial trees, sacred sites
- The need to teach indigenous youth about culture, concerns about loss of knowledge of culture **(6)**
- Fishing **(3)**
  - Depletion of fish stocks (2), lack of enforcement by Fisheries Dept (1)
- Right to go hunting, gathering and fishing **(3)**
- Coasts and oceans **(3)**
  - Destruction of mangroves (1)
- Sustainable development of specific land areas managed by respondents **(2)**
- Animal control **(2)**
- Water quality – need to look after bore waters **(1)**
- Development – residential/urban development leading to land clearing and environmental destruction **(1)**
- Loss of soil **(1)**
- Loss of language, the need for Aboriginal names to be used for places **(1)**
- Lack of understanding and respect of indigenous culture in broader community **(1)**
- Sandmining **(1)**
- Impact of mining (especially tailings dams) and mine site rehabilitation **(1)**
- Fire management **(1)**
- Forestry management **(1)**
- Ferals and pests **(1)**

## **C11.2 Current NRM projects**

### **C11.2.1 Summary**

Indigenous people across the Burnett Mary region are involved in a range of natural resource management projects, which can be grouped under three headings, as follows:

- **Cultural heritage.** These projects include: conducting cultural heritage surveys and clearances prior to new developments taking place, working on cultural heritage

Advisory Groups, working to protect cultural sites, creating and/or managing keeping places and cultural centres and collecting stories and other cultural information.

- **Environmental projects.** These include weed eradication and revegetation projects.
- **Commercial projects.** This includes businesses and joint ventures that focus on sustainably harvesting natural resources, such as forestry and native crop harvesting, negotiating with governments and private interests to obtain land and managing Indigenous Land Use Agreements with companies.

The most common projects that indigenous groups are currently involved in include the following:

- nine groups (at least) are involved in conducting cultural heritage surveys and clearances
- six projects see people involved in businesses that sustainably harvest natural resources;
- five groups are involved with the Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory group;
- four are working in partnership with government departments in either an advisory; capacity, or on specific land management projects;
- three groups are working to protect cultural sites;
- three groups are involved in weed eradication projects;
- three are negotiating with either the government or mining companies to obtain land for their traditional owner groups.

The majority of these projects see indigenous groups working with a number of non-indigenous partners, including private companies, Local Councils, government departments and community based groups such as Landcare.

The majority of people interviewed said they would like to work in partnership with more groups – indigenous and non-indigenous - in order to achieve their goals, increase access to resources and learn from others. Many expressed interest in having a group such as the BMRG assist with introductions and facilitated processes to help them link up with more groups in their local and regional area. There was particular interest in having groups such as the BMRG assist with developing improved relationships with local councils on NRM or environmental and cultural issues.

### **C11.2.2 Survey responses**

A more detailed summary of survey responses are set out in Section 4, under Survey Question 3: *Are you currently involved in any environmental or cultural heritage management projects?*

## **C11.3 Goals and Aspirations**

### **C11.3.1 Summary**

All interviewees were asked about their goals and aspirations regarding environmental and cultural heritage projects.

All respondents saw a link between environmental/cultural heritage goals and the overall need for the creation of socio-economic opportunities for indigenous people, such as business development, job creation and real ‘hands on’ training and skills development.

*There was a marked difference in responses between those groups that currently own land and manage their own land based projects, and those groups that do not currently own land and do not manage their own land based projects.*

While people from both groups are keen to develop partnerships with others, groups that do not own land or have other resources (eg an office or paid staff) were focused on building the capacity of their group to gather resources and create new opportunities for their people, while groups with their own land and resources were focused on achieving specific land based goals and making their operations sustainable.

The goals and aspirations of groups that own land include:

- Creating self-sustaining, commercial operations;
- Increasing employment and economic opportunities;
- Achieving specific cultural and natural resource management goals on their own land;
- Working in partnership with more groups, to achieve NRM, social and economic goals.

The goals and aspirations of groups that do not currently own land include:

- Owning land of their own;
- Having access to cultural sites and working on cultural heritage protection projects, including cultural tourism and setting up cultural heritage databases/information systems;
- Building the skills and capacity of their people and organisations, so that they are able to gather more resources and work on more projects;
- Working in partnership with more groups, to achieve NRM, social and economic goals.

All traditional owner groups said they would like to create a keeping place or cultural centre, to store, protect and teach others about their cultural heritage.

### **C11.3.2 Survey Responses**

A list of people's goals and aspirations are set out in Section 4 under Survey Question 4: *What are your goals and aspirations regarding environmental and cultural heritage management? (This might include general ideas and goals, as well as specific projects)*

## **C11.4 Problems and barriers**

### **C11.4.1 Summary**

A number of shared problems and barriers emerged from the interviews. Many of these are also reflected in the next section, regarding specific capacity building needs.

The main problems and barriers identified were:

- ***Lack of money and resources:***
  - *Money, resources, transport.* Many groups said that they wanted to be able to look after cultural sites (such as rock art, burial grounds and other sites), but simply can't afford to travel to the sites or to buy the materials needed to look after them.

- *Lack of money to have paid staff.* Many groups were deeply concerned about their lack of ability to obtain funding to pay people to work on projects that are important to them. Many commented on the overall difficulty of finding sources of funding for administrative requirements, and this is discussed further in Section 3.5.
- *Grant payments, sitting fees.* Several people commented on the problems with the timing of grant payments, and the continuing lack of appropriate payment to indigenous people for their involvement in advisory and other consultation processes.
- ***Lack of available people to work on projects and develop new projects.***

This was a universal problem – all groups are concerned that, especially without funding to pay people, there aren't enough young (or other) people stepping forward to get involved with cultural heritage, environmental or other community focused projects.
- ***Lack of information, capacity and skills.***

Again, this was a common problem. Most groups commented on the lack of specific business and land management skills among their people. This is discussed further in Section 3.5.
- ***The need for more effective partnerships/relationships with other stakeholders.***

A number of groups said they would like more effective relationships with other stakeholders in their area, including local councils, local businesses, pastoralists, other land holders. Several people specifically asked if the BMRG could help with the development of improved local relationships for environmental and cultural heritage projects.
- ***Race issues.***

Several people commented on the overall lack of understanding and respect indigenous people still encounter from non-indigenous people.
- ***Conflict between Aboriginal groups – including native title applicants excluding other traditional owner groups***

Almost all groups mentioned that local 'in-fighting' with other Aboriginal groups is often a major barrier to getting projects started (and finished). Many people expressed a deep desire to see improved relationships between all Aboriginal groups in the region.

#### **C11.4.2 Survey Responses**

A full list of respondents' comments regarding problems and barriers is set out in Section 4 under Survey Question 5: *What are some of the problems or barriers, stopping you from working on current or proposed projects of importance to you?*

### **C11.5 Capacity building needs**

#### **C11.5.1 Summary**

People were asked to comment on how they felt about the capacity of their organisations (institutional capacity) and the individuals who work for their organisations (individual capacity), to work on the projects they would like to do.

### **C11.5.2 Institutional / organizational capacity**

To better understand the organizational capacity of groups involved in the interviews, interviewees were asked if their groups/organisations: (i) were incorporated, (ii) had an office (not a home office) and (iii) had any paid staff.

#### *Snapshot of organizational resources*

Many of the interviewees were involved with a number of different indigenous organisations, as they were often involved in paid employment with one organization and involved on a voluntary basis with one or more other organisations. Most people interviewed chose to speak on behalf of their traditional owner groups. The people interviewed spoke for about 20 different groups or organisations<sup>43</sup>.

Of these 20 groups, there were:

- 15 incorporated organisations;
- 5 groups that are not incorporated, but several plan to become incorporated in the future.

Of the 20 groups, there were approximately 16 groups or organisations created by traditional owners, to work on projects related to caring for country. These traditional owner groups/organisations have been set up to work on any or all of the following: Native Title, providing cultural heritage advice and other services to stakeholders on country, conducting cultural heritage surveys and clearances prior to new developments, caring for cultural sites and carrying out other traditional owner responsibilities. Many of these traditional owner organisations are also involved with, or plan to become involved with, a range of community, social and economic development activities, but they are normally organisations originally created by traditional owners to carry out custodial responsibilities to care for country.

Of these 16 traditional owner groups/organisations:

- 11 were incorporated organisations;
- only 1 group within the 16 have an office and paid staff;
- 15 groups/organisations have no administrative or project resources and do not have paid staff, but are run by part time or full time volunteers, out of home offices.

As outlined in the Section ‘Problems and Barriers’ - lack of money, resources and paid staff are some of the main problems noted by many people interviewed.

Without exception, all groups without an office or paid staff expressed interest in setting up and administrative base and having paid staff. Those groups with an office and/or paid staff are keen to develop the skills of their staff and increase their administrative resources.

These numbers are only a sample, but it is helpful for BMRG and other groups to understand the overall lack of resources experienced by many traditional owner groups in the Burnett Mary region. While many indigenous organisations created to achieve social and economic development goals (eg Stronger Families Program, health projects, drug and alcohol rehabilitation etc) are often able to find funding from a range of government programs and

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<sup>43</sup> This does not include the Cherbourg Council, as it has very different funding and other status to most other Aboriginal groups.

sources, groups set up to manage traditional owner/Native Title and cultural heritage responsibilities typically have difficulty locating resources for their administrative and staff requirements.

### **C11.5.3 Individual capacity building needs**

Interviewees identified a range of specific training needs and areas of skill development that individuals within their groups need, in order to effectively work on environmental and cultural heritage projects that are important to them.

All interviewees said their people needed training in ‘mainstream’ management and administration, as well as in specific land management skills. They said they needed skills development in the following areas:

#### General management

- Administration
- Management – for commercial businesses and community organisations
- Project management
- Financial management
- Business development
- Grant writing, grant administration/management
- Tourism
- Communication, networking and negotiation
- Cultural ‘training’ – story telling, other

#### Cultural and land management projects

- Training to know how to set up information systems for cultural sites and information
- Training in land management, such as:
  - Understanding plants, animals and soils
  - Weeds and weed eradication
  - River health and water monitoring

#### Building self confidence

Many people also said that in addition to learning new skills, it is important that indigenous people are able to build their personal confidence and self esteem, in order to take advantage of training and other project opportunities.

#### Ways to build capacity

Interviewees outlined a range of ideal ‘methods’ for building capacity, including:

- Practical, on-the-job training (in addition to formal, ‘class room’ training)
- Mentoring by skilled experts
- Long term business networks and partnerships

Interviewees made a number of general comments about capacity building that help non-indigenous people understand their needs:

- “It’s important to send at least 2 people to attend new training or other work opportunities. Some people have never worked before and need support.”

- “People need a lot of support. *A lot*. Especially the younger ones. They need to have one-on-one support, to find out what they need and help them get there. (Our organization) tries to offer as much training as possible, but emotional support is as important as the training. There are also difficulties getting people ‘job ready’ – low literacy and numeracy skills.”
- “People need long term, consistent support, resources, role models and to go out and see how other projects work. They need regular, consistent support – not stop and start. Need long term funding.”
- “People also need some fun, some positive rewards. We don’t see a lot of rewards given to people for getting active, making changes.”
- “People need some training and skills development – eg need help to learn how to write grant applications, managing projects – but most of all they need their self-esteem and confidence built up.”

#### **C11.5.4 Survey Responses**

A full list of respondents’ comments regarding their capacity building needs is set out in Section 4 under Survey Question 6: *How do you feel about the capacity of your group to do the projects it wants to do? What would you change if you could?*

Details about specific organisations are confidential and have not been included in this report.

#### **C11.6 Conclusions**

The meetings and interviews have shown that indigenous groups across the Burnett Mary region share many aspirations, problems and capacity building needs.

This report cannot stress enough the frustration experienced by many groups who do not currently have the human or financial capacity to work on the projects that are important to them, and who do not know how to *obtain* the know-how or resources they need to begin developing their organisations and projects. Many groups said that to work on any projects – whether they are environmental, cultural heritage or other projects – they need financial resources to pay people and set up programs and they need to develop the capacity of their individuals and organisations to carry out administration, project management and specific land and cultural heritage management projects. Several people said they felt ‘stuck’ – as they had many potential projects that could be developed, but no resources and no place to start.

##### **C11.6.1 Recommendations**

The BMRG, and in particular, the position of Indigenous Support Officer, is already working on a range of strategies to help indigenous groups find the resources they need to work on projects that are important to them. The BMRG is rightly focusing on working on the ground with individual groups, on specific projects. This paper sets out, in a confidential report not available for the public, the current needs of specific groups and specific projects, which should help the BMRG identify some of the specific groups to work with, and specific actions that can be taken to help them in the immediate term.

In addition, the community meetings and interviews have shown that some of the ways the BMRG might be able to assist indigenous groups include:

### **No cost actions:**

- Facilitate increased inter-action between different indigenous groups in the region, so they can share ideas, skills and learnings.
- Facilitate introductions and **create mentoring relationships** between indigenous groups and other stakeholders in the region including: local councils, land management experts (government and private groups) and private businesses.
- Choose specific ‘topics’ of interest to a range of groups - such as the creation and management of keeping places/cultural centres, business development or weed eradication projects - and create learning circles, informal working groups, symposiums or other ways of bringing people together so they can actively seek out information and resources to achieve their goals.
- Create learning circles and other groups at the local and regional level, so that different groups can share information about the processes of creating change – for example, information sessions about strategic planning, grant writing, grant administration and project management.
- Create links to non-government resources from outside the region, who can directly assist groups in the Burnett Mary – eg private foundations such as ‘First Australians Business’ who operate business mentoring programs across Australia.

### **Regional Investment Strategy opportunities:**

- Allocate funding with the Regional Investment Strategy for additional indigenous support officers to carry out networking and coordination tasks in the region, and to increase the BMRG’s ability to deliver real, on the ground project development.
- Allocate funding within the Regional Investment Strategy, and/or negotiate with other groups in the region, to help pay for a range of culturally appropriate project management and administration training opportunities for individuals within traditional owner organisations.
- Allocate funding to expose indigenous groups to as many new ideas and ways of doing business as possible – funding for study tours, visits to other indigenous run enterprises, etc.

## **C12 Findings from community meetings: regional representation**

### **C12.1 Survey questions about representation**

#### **C12.1.1 Overview of discussions and interviews about representation**

One of the main goals of the community consultation was to find out what indigenous people think about working together at a regional level on NRM issues, and more specifically, if and how indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region would like to be represented on the BMRG Board of Directors.

To stimulate discussion about representation issues, the presentation given to all interviewees included the following (see Appendix DII for a copy of the whole presentation):

- Information about the structure and role of the BMRG Board;
- Information about the one position currently available for an indigenous representative on the BMRG Board;

- An introduction to the broader issue of the ‘mis-match’ between the power base of state and regional bodies, and that of indigenous traditional owner groups, whose power and obligations are held locally by groups and families;
- Examples of how this ‘mis-match’ has been handled by different models, including the WAMP, Sea Forum, Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Murray Darling Basin Commission. Typically, ‘federal’ or ‘nested’ models involve each family or clan group being able to select a few representatives to participate in a larger regional gathering of indigenous groups.

The questions about representation were then designed to encourage people to talk about their experiences and opinions of other consultation and representation forums – such as the Water Allocation Management Process (WAMP) and the Sea Forum, which many indigenous people in the Burnett Mary region participated in.

### **C12.1.2 Survey questions**

The survey included five questions about regional representation for indigenous people, and representation on the BMRG Board of Directors. The questions were:

- Q7. Have you been involved in other consultation processes regarding environmental issues/projects? What was good about them? What was not so good about them?
- Q8. Do you think it’s important that indigenous people have their ideas and voices heard on environmental and land management issues?
- Q9. What are your ideas about the best way for indigenous people’s opinions to be heard?
- Q10. Do you think representation on the BMRG board would be helpful for indigenous people?
- Q11. What do you think about the idea of having one indigenous representative on the BMRG board?

## **C12.2 Findings about regional representation**

### **C12.2.1 Overview**

In summary:

- Everyone interviewed felt that it’s important for indigenous people to have a regional voice on NRM issues;
- An overwhelming majority of people (all but two interviewees) felt that only one representative on the BMRG Board is not sufficient, and that there should be at least two representatives, if not more.
- Two-thirds of the people interviewed have been involved in other consultation and engagement processes relating to NRM issues. These other processes included the WAMP (Water Allocation Management Plan) Process, the Sea Forum, the SEQ Forestry Agreement and Aspirations Documents process and the Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory Group.
- The majority of people interviewed believe that the most appropriate structure for a regional indigenous ‘voice’ on NRM should involve at least 2 representatives from each of the families and clans working together as a large group, and then that group electing smaller working groups and/or representatives to participate in regional activities.

Most interviewees were concerned about the need for the BMRG to assist with the costs of bringing people together, and assisting them with the costs of reporting back to their communities.

Details of all survey responses can be found in Section 4, under Questions 7 to 11. The following provides a summary of the responses.

#### **C12.2.2 Q7: Other consultation processes**

Seven interviewees had not participated in any other consultation or representation processes relating to environmental and/or cultural heritage issues.

All other interviewees have participated in a number of other consultation and representation processes, including:

- The Water Allocation Management Process (WAMP) – 11 of the people interviewed said they had been involved with either the Burnett Basin WAMP (9) or the Mary River Water Resource Planning process (2).
- Sea Forum, which works with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) – (5)
- Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory Group – (5)
- SEQ Forestry Agreement and Aspirations Documents process (5)

Most interviewees said that the WAMP and Sea Forum were the best processes they'd been involved in, because they allowed for 2 or more representatives from each family or clan group to come together and work on issues together, and everyone was able to speak for their own country.

With respect to WAMP however, people expressed disappointment that while the processes were good, there didn't seem to be any outcomes for indigenous people, with many people saying the process didn't seem to 'go anywhere'.

#### **C12.2.3 Q8: Regional voice**

Without exception, all those interviewed thought it was important to have a regional voice on NRM issues. But many qualified their response by saying it would only be important if it actually worked, not if it turned into a fight or wasn't supported by the appropriate traditional owner representative structures.

#### **C12.2.4 Q9: Best structure for regional representation**

It should be noted that the answers for Question 9 were undoubtedly influenced by the presentation about the BMRG (noted in the introduction, above) given before the survey questions were asked.

In particular,

1. The presentation about the BMRG explained the BMRG Board, and discussed the single position available for the indigenous representative. Consequently many people's answer to Question 9 of the survey was influenced by the discussion about the BMRG Board.
2. The presentation also raised examples of other representative structures (Sea Forum, WAMP, Murray Darling Basin Commission), in order to stimulate discussion about preferred approaches. No doubt this has influenced people's answers, but this was

considered acceptable given that it was vital to discuss the range of other models that are out there and/or that people have been personally involved with.

Basically, people’s opinions fell into a couple of fairly similar groups. They said that the best structure for any kind of regional representation for indigenous people on NRM issues should be a large group (forum, meeting, gathering of some kind) that brings everyone together. Such a group should allow for a minimum of 2 representatives from each family or clan group to come together and discuss issues.

The representatives on such a regional group will need assistance with resources, to make sure they are able to go back and communicate to their community.

Such a group could then elect smaller working groups as necessary, to carry out specific work tasks.

#### **C12.2.5 Q10: Usefulness of Board Representation to indigenous people**

All interviewees said it would be helpful for indigenous people to have representation on the board, provided it was ‘done right’ and the right people were chosen to be on the Board.

#### **C12.2.6 Q11: One indigenous representative on the BMRG Board**

Overwhelmingly, all but two people thought one indigenous representative on the Board wouldn’t work or wasn’t appropriate. All interviewees thought at least two representatives would be more appropriate, with many saying that 4 or more would be best.

The reasons given were:

- One person can’t talk for other people’s country (4 people)
- One person won’t give indigenous people enough of a voice/effective representation on the Board (4)
- Need more than one representative, so the indigenous representatives can support/help each other (4)
- Need an underlying structure, a larger advisory group/body, to support/elect the representative (3)
- Gender equity - need men and women on the Board (3)
- No reason (3)

### **C12.3 Overall involvement with the BMRG**

The final three questions on the survey were:

#### **C12.3.1 Q12 – Would you like to be involved with the work of the BMRG?**

All but two people interviewed said they would like to be involved with the BMRG, as members and as participants in projects. Seven people were already members of the BMRG and nine joined up as members during the meetings.

### **C12.3.2 Q13 – Would you like to attend a regional forum to discuss indigenous representation issues**

All but one interviewee said they would be interested in attending a regional forum to discuss representation on the BMRG Board. The first regional forum was held in Bundaberg on November 3 and 4, and a second meeting is scheduled for early 2005.

### **C12.3.3 Q14 – Have you heard of the BMRG before our meeting?**

14 of those interviewed said they had heard of the BMRG before the interview, 10 said they had not.

## **C12.4 Conclusions**

The community consultation process has produced a number of very clear messages – including the fact that indigenous people definitely want to be involved with the work of the BMRG, would like to see more than 1 indigenous representative on the Board.

The overall recommendation from this paper is for the BMRG to continue with its current direction of bringing indigenous groups together to discuss, as a regional group, how they would like to work together, how they would like to work with the BMRG and how they would like to select indigenous representative(s) for the BMRG Board.

The BMRG's first Indigenous Representation Forum was held in Bundaberg on November 3 and 4, 2004. This paper recommends that resources be allocated for at least six further regional meetings over the next 12-14 months and then an ongoing budget to assist indigenous groups to coordinate and manage the longer term process they decide upon, for electing and supporting representatives for the Board.

## **C13 Survey responses**

### **C13.1 Q1: Groups/organisations represented by interviewees**

People interviewed said they were representatives of the following groups:

- Butchulla
  - Gala family
  - Owens family
  - Maryborough Elders Group
- Gooreng Gooreng
  - Johnson family
  - Blackman family
- Gurang
- Gubbi Gubbi
- Kabi Kabi
  - Dalton family
  - Henderson family
- Taribelung Bunda
- Wakka Wakka

- Jinda
- Gayndah
- Eidsvold
- Cherbourg
- Wulli Wulli

Also representatives from:

- Cherbourg Council
- Gayndah Shire Council
- ATSI Regional Councillors, Central Queensland (4)

### **C13.2 Q2: Environmental and cultural heritage issues of interest and concern**

The numbers in (brackets) indicate the number of times each issue was mentioned by different people. The sub-points indicate the specific issues under each heading that some people were concerned with:

- River health **(12)**
  - Erosion of banks, weeds (especially hyacinth), algae **(8)**
  - Weirs and dams **(5)**
  - Taking water from rivers for irrigation **(3)**
  - Wastes and chemicals going into rivers **(1)**
- Clearing of trees, vegetation **(12)**
- Land management, weed control **(7)**
- Access to cultural sites and ability to look after sites **(7)** - including burial grounds, burial trees, sacred sites
- The need to teach indigenous youth about culture, concerns about loss of knowledge of culture **(6)**
- Fishing **(3)**
  - Depletion of fish stocks **(2)**, lack of enforcement by Fisheries Dept **(1)**
- Right to go hunting, gathering and fishing **(3)**
- Coasts and oceans **(3)**
  - Destruction of mangroves **(1)**
- Sustainable development of specific land areas managed by respondents **(2)**
- Animal control **(2)**
- Water quality – need to look after bores **(1)**
- Development – residential/urban development leading to land clearing and environmental destruction **(1)**
- Loss of soil **(1)**
- Loss of language, the need for Aboriginal names to be used for places **(1)**
- Lack of understanding and respect of indigenous culture in broader community **(1)**
- Sandmining **(1)**
- Impact of mining (especially tailings dams) and mine site rehabilitation **(1)**

- Fire management (1)
- Forestry management (1)
- Ferals and pests (1)

### **C13.3 Q3: Current environmental and/or cultural projects**

The NRM projects people are involved in at present can be grouped under the following headings:

- Cultural heritage projects
- Commercial businesses and projects
- Environmental projects
- Partnerships

The numbers in (brackets) indicate how many different groups are currently involved with each kind of project:

#### **C13.3.1 Cultural heritage projects**

- Cultural heritage surveys and clearances – many groups have their own protocols and two mentioned they employ their own archaeologists, rather than being employed *by* archaeologists (9)
- The Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory Group (5)
- Working independently, or with others, to protect cultural heritage sites (3)
- Working with developers to prepare cultural heritage management plans (1)
- Working to set up a cultural centre (2) – one group has a tourism focus and the other is working to set the cultural centre up for the local school
- Using land as a place to educate young people (indigenous and non-indigenous) about culture, and to help young offenders or troubled youth learn (2)
- Collecting stories and other cultural information for inclusion in a proposed keeping place (1)
- Organising traditional dancers to perform for tourists and events (1)
- Talking to schools about Aboriginal culture (1)
- Hunting and gathering activities (1)

#### **C13.3.2 Commercial businesses and projects**

- Businesses that focus on sustainably harvesting natural resources (6)
- Negotiating with either the government or mining companies to obtain land (3)
- Negotiating with private developers to develop indigenous/cultural tourism ventures, either as separate ventures or in combination with other projects (2)
- Joint venture forestry project with an agribusiness company (1)
- Leasing their land to forestry companies (1)
- Managing ILUAs with mining companies (1)

### **C13.3.3 Environmental projects**

- Weed eradication projects, managed by CDEP or other groups (3)
- Revegetation and land management - on their own sites, not within broader community (2)
- CDEP projects including maintenance, landscaping (weed control as mentioned above) (1)
- Botanic/plant surveys as part of cultural heritage surveys (1)

### **C13.3.4 Partnerships – advisory, other**

- Working with government departments (4)
  - in a consultative or advisory capacity (2)
  - to obtain land management advice and assistance (2)
- Working with Local Councils on specific land or cultural projects (2)
- Working with Landcare on specific/real projects (1)

## **C13.4 Q4 – Goals and aspirations regarding environmental and cultural heritage management**

There was a marked difference in responses between those groups that currently own land and manage their own land based projects, and those groups that do not currently own land and do not manage their own land based projects.

While people from both groups are keen to develop partnerships with others, groups that do not own land or have other resources (eg an office or paid staff) were focused on building the capacity of their group to gather resources and create new opportunities for their people, while groups with their own land and resources were focused on achieving specific land based goals and making their operations sustainable.

### **C13.4.1 Comments from groups that own land and manage land based projects<sup>44</sup> :**

People interviewed said they want the following:

#### **Self-sustainability**

- To find ways to increase our income and achieve self-sustainability, eg through increased commercial production and sales. (Norm Barney)
- To be self sustaining, to create business partnerships with wider industry. (Colin Purcell)
- To become self sufficient – to work with mining companies and other developers and private interests, and use resources such as compensation and other resources from ILUAs to develop sustainable businesses, employment, training and economic development. (Noel Pope)
  - “Empowerment is going to come from economic opportunities, and attitude changes from both sides (indigenous and non-indigenous). The benefits of self-sustaining businesses can then be turned into community services, such as health, education and employment.” (Noel Pope)

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<sup>44</sup> This includes Cherbourg

### **Employment and economic opportunities**

- We want to create our own employment for people. (Norm Barney)
- Would like to see the government/fisheries employ Aboriginal people to help monitor and protect the waterways and the environment. (Norm Barney)
- More employment, more training opportunities. (Delphine Howden)
- Would like to develop new commercial opportunities – such as the opportunity to develop an aquaculture business. (Frances Gala)
- We'd like to see our (land management) trainees get a good grounding in land management, so they can either one day work for the Council and/or do their own work and get employed outside the community. (Warren Collins)
- We're looking at the development of small businesses and tourism as a key way to develop an economic base. But it'll take time. (Warren Collins)
- To build the ability of (our) Corporation to manage all its projects and develop more opportunities for (our) people. (Colin Johnson)
- Our overall goal is to have a team of our people trained as experts, to care for and look after (our land), and also to develop commercial activities, for economic growth and jobs. (Lurl Henderson)
- I'd like to see more indigenous workers out there, on country, working for country. No more traineeships – real jobs. We need to get our young people back onto country. It's good for them, and good for our land. (Lois Blackman)

### **Cultural and natural resource management goals**

- Increase seed propagation work and seed banks, and be the site for a cultural centre and keeping place. (Jason Brown).
- Increase (the land's) role as a healing place for people. (Jason Brown)
- Continue working with young people, especially troubled youth. Want to set up a housing base, huts, for young offenders to come out, clean up and learn some skills.
- Cultural education, preservation, tourism. (Adrian Little)
- Would like to use CDEP participants to help clean up rivers. (Frances Gala)

### **Partnerships**

- Would like to work in partnership with other groups (indigenous and non-indigenous) to make things happen – like training for young people in NRM and finding better ways to work with government departments. (Norm Barney)
- Increased access and inclusion on more issues at the local level. (Delphine Howden)
- We'd like to partner up with the local councils. We've started talking to pastoralists about working together on land management, and many are really interested to work together. (Noel Pope)

## **C13.5 Goals and Aspirations: Comments from groups that are currently not landholders**

*Land (need to attribute these quotes)*

- We want land of our own. We're talking to the ILC.

- We want our own land, our own country.
- We want to get some land (back on country), somewhere to live and work.
- We want to build the group's resources – own land, look after land. We want to set up sanctuaries, not use the land commercially.
- We're interested in getting more land for (our) people to use – for economic development, and a place to take young ones ... a place for everyone.
- We need our own land.
- We'd like some land one day.
- We're currently negotiating to get land through our ILUA. We want to develop our (land) as a place to set up greenhouses, plant propagation, land management and cultural learning – especially for kids.

*Cultural heritage projects (need to attribute these quotes)*

- To start getting young ones involved in cultural management projects.
- Keen to teach younger ones about culture and land – want to build their skills up.
- We really want to set up our own land and cultural database of information; we want more information collected and stored and looked after about (our) culture and history. (Una Chapman)
- Want to set up cultural management projects
- Need better access to cultural sites – we need transport and access to visit and care for our sites. (Connie Johnson).
- We want to look after our special places (including graves)
- Would like to develop opportunities for cultural tourism, an information centre.
- Want to have the resources to look after our cultural heritage.
- We want to manage our rock paintings and sacred sites. (Charles Broome)
- We want to look after our sites and work with landholders where our sites are on private land.
- We want to develop a cultural centre and library.

*NRM and Economic growth*

- We'd like to get involved with forestry management projects. (Yvonne Chapman)
- We'd like to turn some areas (of our land, when we get it) into cultural tourism sites for economic development and employment.

*Partnerships*

- We'd like to strengthen work in the local area, our town, but also work on other projects, across traditional country. (Yvonne Chapman)
- We don't have a very good working relationship with our local council – maybe BMRG can help us talk to each other better? (Una Chapman)
- We're really interested in working more with other groups, in partnership. We'd like to work with the local green groups and other land holders, bee keepers, others working on country. Fisheries are a bit touchy with us, because of the rezoning of fishing areas, but we'd like to work with them too. (Charles Broom)

- We currently work really well with Landcare and the Council. We'd like in the future to work even more with the broader community – (on festivals) and the show. (Harry Hill)

#### *Capacity – organizational and individual*

- We're trying to set up our own organization ... we want to make it strong for our nieces and nephews to look after our culture in the future. It can be used to set up some of the cultural heritage projects they need to do.
- We're working (with others), trying to set up an office. This will help us to keep working others – the Council, mines, government departments. People will be able to contact us and we'll have somewhere to work from, instead of our homes.
- We'd like to have paid staff.
- We need to develop short and medium term strategic plans – identify priority actions and projects, and start working on them. We're too scattered at the moment.
- We need to set up a base, draw our people together, have a conference and work out what we want to do. (Lillian Mi Mi)

#### **C13.5.1 The important intangibles**

- We need to build our people's self esteem, and bring young people back to our past, make them think about the past and get back in touch with culture and old land management practices. (Phyllis Lea)
- What I'd really like to see, is all the clan groups in this area work together better. There's so much conflict. It would be good to see everyone work together. (Dot Morland)
- Land ownership isn't a huge priority for (us). I have no goals to develop projects anymore ... (soon) I'm going to stop community work. I'm tired of all the fighting. (Mavis Hawkins)

#### **C13.6 Q5 Problems or barriers stopping current or proposed projects**

A number of shared problems and barriers emerged from the interviews.

The main issues identified were:

- Lack of money and resources
  - Money, resources, transport
  - Lack of money to have paid staff
  - Grant payments, sitting fees
- Lack of available people
- Lack of information, capacity, skills
- The need for more effective partnerships/relationships with other stakeholders
- Race issues
- Conflict between Aboriginal groups
- Other

## ***Money and resources***

### *Money, resources, transport*

- Lack of money. (4)
- Money, resources.
- Lack of resources.
- We really need our own tools – we have to use other people’s tools. (Harry Hill)
- Lack of money mostly – need additional funding for more equipment and resources.
- Need more funding for capital – better equipment, tractors, slashers, etc.
- There’s not enough resources – money, people – to develop all the projects the way we’d like to.
- Lack of resources to develop (our project), and no transport to get there.
- No funding or resources, especially for transport to get to sites.

### *Lack of money to have paid staff*

- Lack of money to pay salary for a full time (project manager) and to protect cultural sites/look after country.
- Money – especially to pay people to work (on our projects); we want to have a funded organization.
- Funding – we can’t expect everyone to work for nothing; we need to pay people to do hands-on work, like weed management and other projects.
- Lack of money to pay staff – it’s really difficult to get funding for salaries and administrative costs.
- No office or administrative base.

### *Grant payments, sitting fees*

- Timing is all wrong with grant payments – the way they’re paid is all wrong – never enough up front. (Jason Brown)
- Grants are all going to the wrong people, for the wrong uses.
- Lack of fair payment for advisory work – eg QPWS has paid other people to attend meetings, but traditional owners are getting nothing.
- Another problem is that with the restructuring of ATSIC, and the mainstreaming of funding, we need to make sure funding is actually used to help indigenous people.

### ***Lack of available people***

- No young people interested in the cultural community or environmental projects. (Connie Johnson)
- Need more people available to get involved (Kevin Clancy)
- Lack of people to work on cultural and environmental projects. (Charles Broome)
- Lack of indigenous people in high level decision making – in government, in other groups. Even where representatives are included, their voice isn’t heard as much as the white voices. Plus, we often don’t get the right people (Traditional Owner representatives) to act in the right positions – they need to be able to handle the positions. (Lois Blackman)

- A big problem is whether Aboriginal people will be motivated enough to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the project. Once they get motivated, they'll be able to work on stuff. The biggest problem is low self esteem, the project will help to empower people, make them feel confident to be a part of it. (Vera Weber)

#### ***Lack of information, capacity, skills***

- Not knowing what's out there already to help Aboriginal people. (Noel Pope)
- Lack of information about how to do new things – eg construction of infrastructure. (Jason Brown)
- Lack of knowledge ... about land management practices. (Warren Collins)
- Lack of awareness of the issues and problems (land management). (Warren Collins)
- Need for a lot of training and support for people. (Kevin Clancy)
- Lack of people with skills – need someone who is well versed in weed eradication, weeds, noxious stuff. (Lurl Henderson)
- Lack of admin and management, networking and business development skills. (Lurl Henderson)
- Lack of skills among the team.
- Lack of capacity among our people.
- Lack of training and knowledge in propagation, land management.
- Need to train people who have the ability to manage the (project) – not just be token employees, but really understand land management, seed germination, soils, plants and growing plants and trees. (Noel Pope)
- Lack of education and training for people who want to work – we need to get training in land management – use of chemicals and poisons, weed management, chainsaw licenses. (Harry Hill)
- People need more training and help to understand what to do to look after country (Phyllis Lea).

#### ***Institutional capacity***

- Money is a big problem, but we also need help to set up a new organization. Not just a hand-out but 'real' training, so we can manage our own projects really well.
- The main problem is that we need to get our organization working properly. We need to get the Committee to pull together. Once we get the organization working right, things should work well. Specific things that are stopping us from moving forward – we need paid staff (and to get our office sorted out). (Una Chapman)
- We have no office or base, or strategic plan. We need an office, and properly trained administrative staff, to get the corporation running properly. (Harry Hill)

#### ***Relationships/partnerships***

- Concerned about our poor relationship with the Local Council. They don't provide enough information or notice about new developments .... The Mayor's alright, but some of the others are racist. (Frances Gala)
- Poor relationship with [Hervey Bay Council] – would like to work better with the council. So far we've just worked with them on formalities for the K'Gari centre –

there's no real partnership. We definitely see scope for working more effectively with the Council. (Delphine Howden)

- Representative and consultative structures don't allow for the proper time and consultation. Reps need time and resources to report back to their groups and feed ideas from the groups into committees and organisations. (Lois Blackman)

### ***Race issues***

- There's no real understanding of indigenous culture in the area, it's all pretty red-neck. (Delphine Howden)
- Inter-generational baggage on both sides (black and white). Lack of goodwill and understanding between mining companies/developers and Aboriginal groups – we can't really work together until we understand each other. We need to understand different cultural backgrounds, values. Need to be aware of each other. (Noel Pope)

### ***Conflict between Aboriginal groups***

#### *Native Title groups excluding non-Native Title Applicants*

- Other Aboriginal groups have native title claims over water and this is cutting out general concerns from other Traditional Owners. We need to educate government departments about working with *all* interested Aboriginal groups. (Norm Barney)
- The registered Native Title applicant is a problem. We can do some things to look after country here, but (that person) can stop things. (Maree Wilkinson)
- The conflicting native title claim is a major problem. (Tony Dalton)

#### *General conflict*

- Jealousy, hate, competition. Families against families. It stops people from working together. (Frances Gala)
- Other Aboriginal people in the town block everything we try to do. (Mavis Hawkins)
- The biggest problem is (another traditional owner in town) – throwing negativity around. (Harry Hill)
- Just can't get any of the Traditional Owners together as a group. (Des Cowburn)
- Need our people to work together more. (Charles Broome)
- There's too much 'what's good for me and mine' and not enough 'what's good for all of us' (Tony Dalton).

### ***Other***

- Lack of access to sites, because they're fenced off – especially privately owned land. (Phyllis Lea.)
- Women's voices are just not loud enough – men's voices in the region are too loud. (They) take over everything. (Connie Johnson)
- Current barrier to skills development of Butchulla people on K'Gari Educational Centre project – the non-indigenous consultant working on the business plan and other projects with Uncle Mackey. (Delphine Howden)
- Everyone's looking at cultural heritage surveys, but no-one's setting up long term institutional structures to achieve community development goals. (Noel Pope)

## **C13.7 Q6: Capacity**

***How do you feel about the capacity of your group/organization to do the environmental and cultural heritage projects it wants to do? What would you change if you could?***

People were asked to comment on how they felt about the capacity of their organisations (institutional capacity) and the individuals who worked for the organisations (individual capacity), to carry out projects that are important to them.

### **C13.7.1 Institutional/general**

*Groups without an office or paid staff*

- (Our organization) needs restructuring. Building the strength of (our) organization and individuals is very important. (Noel Pope)
- We need to build the skills and ability of people in our organization. And we need to be able to pay people – at the moment, we only have volunteers (Connie Johnson).
- Capacity is a big issue for us. We need to get our office and administrative stuff sorted out before we can really work well on projects. We want to do plans for policies and procedures and improve how our organization works. (Una Chapman)
- For Gurang Land Council and cultural heritage work, we just run things from home. We'd love an office, and to be able to help young people develop skills and get jobs for cultural and land projects. (Charles Broome)
- We need to find some funding assistance for administrative/running costs. (Lurl Henderson)
- There's only a few of us, but we do okay for cultural heritage surveys and clearances. (Maree Wilkinson)

*Groups with an office & paid staff*

- Want to see an office and administrative centre (as part of the cultural centre). (Delphine Howden)
- We need to develop the capacity of our corporation and the individuals working within it. The priority is to have a General Manager, someone who can oversee the project development and implementation of (our) projects and staff. We need to be able to pay a good salary so we can get a really good GM. (Colin Johnson)
- It's not too bad – it's being built up and many people need more training, but it's not too bad. We have two paid staff. We need the board (of both our organisations) to be able to meet more often and do more. I'd like to see more members attending meetings too, and getting involved. (Lois Blackman)
- We have three people running it, and that's working well. We need more workers, and we need more partners with the capacity to contribute to our projects. (Jason Brown)

### **C13.7.2 Specific training/capacity building needs for individuals**

- Want to see training for the project officer already working on (our cultural centre project), plus others who might want to work on the project. Also want to see training for the Board. (Delphine Howden)
- We need individuals for our (cultural centre) project who are confident and can focus on managing the centre. Training needs would include: management, administration, tourism, handling logistics/communication. (Malcolm Burns)

- I'd like to see some training ... for some of the younger ones who we'd like to see managing projects in the future. Practical training, beyond just the school/book stuff. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- Our team has commenced some training modules with Wide Bay TAFE, including NRM and project management and administration. ... What would be good are some mentors and practical training/capacity building opportunities for the team. (Greg Smyrill, Cherbourg Land Management Team)
- Need help to develop (our project manager's) land management skills. We're keen to partner up with government and other land management expertise/advisors. (Colin Fewquondie)
- We want expert advice about business development – advice, training, mentoring. (Colin Purcell, Emu Farm)
- Am looking forward to getting more skills for our people – especially in administration, management, land management. (Harry Hill)
- We need all the whitefella skills: administration, management, negotiation, financial management. As well as cultural teaching and learning, storytelling skills, learning about own history and culture. (Tony Dalton)
- Would need training in land management, administration, other skills (Lurl Henderson)

#### **C13.7.3 Overall support and capacity building that's required**

- It's important to send at least 2 people to attend new training or other work opportunities. Some people have never worked before and need support (Frances Gala).
- People need a lot of support. *A lot*. Especially the younger ones. They need to have one-on-one support, to find out what they need and help them get there. (Our organization) tries to offer as much training as possible, but emotional support is as important as the training. There are also difficulties getting people 'job ready' – low literacy and numeracy skills. (Warren Collins)
- People need long term, consistent support, resources, role models and to go out and see how other projects work. They need regular, consistent support – not stop and start. Need long term funding. (Vera Webber)
- People also need some fun, some positive rewards. We don't see a lot of rewards given to people for getting active, making changes. (Vera Webber)
- People need some training and skills development – eg need help to learn how to write grant applications, managing projects – but most of all they need their self-esteem and confidence built up. (Vera Webber)

#### **C13.7.4 Skills versus opportunities**

- You can only go as far as the white man lets you. We have heaps of skilled people – apprentices, other trained people – who can't get work in the white world. So it's important that Aboriginal people create their own work. (Frances Gala)
- We have young people who've finished Grade 12 and have certificates from TAFE and college. People here have skills. But once they get their certificates, there's nowhere to use them. They only move because there's nothing here except CDEP – which I hate. They only work for 2 days, for the dole. That's no incentive to work. (Beryl Gambrill)

## **C14 Representation**

### **C14.1 Q7 Other consultation processes regarding environmental/cultural projects**

*Have you been involved in other consultation processes regarding environmental issues/projects? What was good about them? What was not so good about them?*

#### **No (7 responses)**

- Not really, the only person who's approached us was a government officer, to talk about possible aquaculture businesses. (Frances Gala)
- No – 6 responses (Delphine Howden, Noel Pope, Lois Blackman, Des Cowburn, Vera Webber, Phyllis Lea)

#### **Yes, WAMP - Burnett Basin (9 participated)**

- People who said they had participated, but provided no other comments: Maree Wilkinson
- It worked well – we had 2 reps from each clan. (Jason Brown)
- Didn't produce much, but it was good because it got people together. (Colin Johnson)
- Was good and bad. So many meetings I can't remember one from the other. But I think we earned a lot of respect by working together, and with government. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- WAMP was good; brought everyone together, each family/clan had representation. (Yvonne Chapman)
- Good because it brought us all together, but not so good because it just fell through. There was lots of talk, but nothing happened. (Beryl Gambrill)
- WAMP was good – good ideas came out of it, but it didn't go anywhere. (Mavis Hawkins)
- It was alright, but lots of people didn't turn up, they shouldn't have signed up to be reps if they weren't going to turn up. It was a talk fest really, meant to get back to the community and do stuff, but often people didn't. (Charles Broome)
- I participated in WAMP – but I'm yet to see anything come out of it. What's happening on the water monitoring and water quality? Where's the progress? All we see are more dams. (Kevin Clancy)

#### **Yes, WAMP – Mary Basin (2 participated)**

- Was a good opportunity for DNR to get everyone together, and at least they helped with payments. 6 reps were elected onto the Community Reference Panel. It now meets 5 times a year, but often there's only 1 indigenous rep there. I'm not happy with it. I don't feel the government is letting enough people get involved. Indigenous reps are often not able to go. These days I'm saying to people 'only put your hand up to attend stuff if you're really going to attend.' (Lurl Henderson)
- (Tony Dalton also participated in WAMP Mary Basin)

#### **Yes, Sea Forum (5 participated)**

- People who said they had participated, but provided no other comments: Colin Johnson

- It worked well – had a big group, then elected a smaller working group/advisory group. (Jason Brown)
- Good forum, but difficult to share information with other people afterwards – costs money to get around and provide feed back. (Malcolm Burns)
- This was the best structure I’ve been involved with. It had about 100 people – 2 or 3 reps from each group/family. The bigger group selected a smaller working group. The biggest group was the best group; everyone got talk about sea-country and share information. The working group then took issues to government. (Maree Wilkinson)
- I liked it a lot. They explained things and I found about what’s going on. GBRMPA managed the Sea Forum pretty well. (Charles Broome)

**Yes, Burnett Water/Paradise Dam Advisory Group (5 participate)**

- Mentioned it, but no comment: Mavis Hawkins, Harry Hill
- The five groups (Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Wakka Wakka Jinda, Wakka Wakka 2, Taribelung Bunda) each have 2 representatives on the advisory group. This group is always represented at surveys and meetings – it works pretty well. (Colin Johnson)
- This works alright. (Yvonne Chapman)

**Yes, SEQ Forestry Agreement process – and aspirations documents (5 participated)**

*(participated, no comments: Yvonne Chapman, Eve Fesl, Beryl Gambril, Mavis Hawkins, Lurl Henderson)*

**Other consultative processes:**

- Various committees and advisory groups with government. (Maree Wilkinson)
- For National Parks, work on the Burnett/Bania Community Consultation Group. Made up of reps from Taribelung Bunda, Gooreng Gooreng, Wakka Wakka (Eidsvold). The meetings are pretty good. QPWS provide money for costs to attend meetings; helps us learn together about plants and trees and country. I’ve learnt a lot through the work with QPWS. (Connie Johnson)
- Attended meetings with government reps to do with algal blooms. (Eve Fesl)
- Meetings in Gympie with Burnett Mary hinterland groups, about environmental issues and water in the Burnett Mary. These are good, run by Alan Williams. They’re good because they get things done. (Beryl Gambril)

**General comments about consultative processes**

- Was around when WAMP and SEQ Forestry Agreement process was going on, but didn’t get involved. Their agenda was already decided before they began, they knew what they wanted to achieve, so they weren’t really going to listen. (Warren Collins)
- I have a real problem with the ‘consulted to death’ syndrome, where Aboriginal people are consulted, but we never see the results. (Tony Dalton)
- Aboriginal people really need help with administrative costs and mail out costs, to tell members about the meetings they go to. (Lurlene Henderson)

## **C14.2 Q8 Regional voice**

*Is it important that indigenous people have their voices heard at a regional level on environmental and cultural issues?*

All interviewees said yes.

- Yes (12) (Delphine Howden, Noel Pope, Maree Wilkinson, Colin Johnson, Yvonne Chapman, Eve Fesl, Beryl Gambrell, Mavis Hawkins, Des Cowburn, Harry Hill, Lurl Henderson, Vera Webber)
- Yes, bloody oath! (Kevin Clancy)
- Yes, but working on a regional level, well people may not work together ... but you never know, it's never really been tried before. (Frances Gala)
- Yes, we need a regional voice. (Jason Brown)
- Yes, need a voice locally and regionally (Malcolm Burns)
- Yes, but it's got to work properly, with real traditional owners, not gammon gammon mob. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- Yes, but I don't think it'll work. There's a lot of jealousy. (Connie Johnson)
- Yes, it'll be good to get everyone together and manage our inland waterways. (Lois Blackman)
- Yes, but a regional approach probably won't work. It'll be too big and unwieldy to achieve anything. BMRG has good people, but not enough on the ground; lack of personnel will be a real problem. (Warren Collins)
- Yes, so long as it's relevant to the BMRG and not beyond its power (not going into native title issues). (Charles Broome)
- Yes, regional level is important. Can start locally, then work together. (Phyllis Lea)
- Yes, but only if it can be coordinated, not if it turns into a shit fight. (Tony Dalton)

## **C14.3 Q9 Ideas about the best way for indigenous people's opinions to be heard at the regional level**

People's opinions fell under one of the of the following headings

- Need a large, regional group (forum, meeting, gathering) to bring everyone together
- Need a large, regional group to bring everyone together, as they did in WAMP and/or the Sea Forum
- Other

### **Need a larger group to bring everyone together (11):**

- Need one rep from each family to attend. (Delphine Howden)
- Bring people together, ask 1 rep from each clan, and ask community people too. Make the first meeting a big and inclusive meeting, invite people to set up a working group. As the working group meets, they'll work out the best way to have representation on the Board. Let it happen over time, so people can find the best way. If you get the underlying structure right – eg you set up an Advisory Group properly – it will develop its own working practices and eventually a couple of really good people will shine through, and you'll have your board reps. (Noel Pope)

- Consult traditional owners first, then invite others to get involved later. Get a big group together, like the Sea Forum did. Have at least 2 reps for each group – pay for their meals, accommodation, sitting fees and transport. Regional representation might work – but most people round here only work when there’s money involved. (Maree Wilkinson)
- You can’t have just one blackfella representing different tribes, we can’t speak for other people’s country. Could have an advisory group, 2 people from each family group. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- Some sort of big advisory board – I’d love to see it work. (Connie Johnson)
- An advisory group, or bigger group to help the reps on the Board, that would be good with at least 2 reps from each family or clan. (Lois Blackman)
- Need a management structure/working committee, with reps from all family groups. Then, if that group can work together, go from there. (Des Cowburn)
- Don’t want too big a group – if it’s too big, nothing will get done. Smaller groups are better, they get stuff done. And you need clear rules about the work the group would do. Need proper people too – the right people from within Traditional Owner groups. They need knowledge and the right to speak. (Charles Broome)
- Should have 2 reps from all the clans in the region – and a separate regional plan/report for indigenous issues. No white faces in the forum. We’ll need to discuss accessing sites and getting permission to work on projects – how do we manage projects as one big group? Need a sound, traditional owner base, to discuss potential developments and how to manage them. (Tony Dalton)
- I like the idea of a forum, gives people a voice, things can come out of it then. Must have at least two reps from each clan group, bring everyone together and give them a voice that way. (Lurl Henderson)
- Getting together, getting all clan groups and interested community people together to have a yarn. (Phyllis Lea)

#### **Need a larger group to bring everyone together ... like the WAMP, Sea Forum or Paradise Dam process (4)**

- Getting people together, along the lines of WAMP (reps from each family or clan) is probably the best idea; has a chance of working. (Warren Collins)
- Either 1 rep for each tribal group, or a larger ‘Advisory Body’ that can help the BMRG representative. Like the WAMP or Paradise Dam Advisory Group – 2 reps from each family group, who then work together and get information back to their own groups. (Colin Johnson)
- Something like the WAMP process, maybe an Advisory Group or big group than can nominate Board Reps (perhaps the Board Rep can be rotated). They should meet in Bundaberg first, then move around from town to town the way WAMP did. (Yvonne Chapman)
- Getting everyone together seemed to work for WAMP and the Sea Forum. BMRG needs a big group working together, so everyone stays informed. They should meet 3 or 4 times each year, then it can elect a smaller working group and 2 reps for the board. (Jason Brown)

### **Other comments (6)**

- Empower elders – place elders with a couple of young people for each group – let them work together. Any reps for each clan or family group need to be able to work together regionally – but also need resources too. (Noel Pope)
- When the Board, or other people are talking about specific country, they need someone there from that country, a rep from that country. (Malcolm Burns)
- Really interested in seeing more groups work together ... would be good to work with others in the region and see what they're doing, how they're doing their projects. (Yvonne Chapman)
- BMRG Board Representation should work. (Mavis Hawkins)
- Whatever you set up, you need some real feedback to the region – newsletters and information – back and forth exchange of ideas information. (Kevin Clancy)
- All comes back to money ... my concern is that people need to be paid sitting fees for their time and expertise. If you give people peanuts, you only get monkeys. If you want people to have a say, get people together, set it up like a conference or a forum. They can vote one person in, nominate names and take a secret ballot or something like that. Should ask the bigger group how to do it, or could ask ATSIC Chair or Deputy Chair to represent people. Having ATSIC involved is a good move politically. (Vera Webber)

### **C14.4 Q10 Will representation on the BMRG Board be helpful for indigenous people**

All interviewees said it would be helpful, but many then went on to qualify that it would only be helpful if it was 'done right' or if there were more indigenous people on the board.

#### **Yes (5)**

- Yes -Noel Pope, Malcolm Burns, Charles Broome, Lurl Henderson, Phyllis Lea

#### **Yes, so long as it's done right (5)**

- Yes, so long as it's done right. (Frances Gala)
- Yes, so long as it's done properly. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- Yes, if its' done right (Connie Johnson)
- Yes, if it's done right. (Beryl Gambrill)
- Yes, if it's done right (Mavis Hawkins)

#### **Yes, but would like more Aboriginal people on the board (2)**

- Yes, but need more than 1. 4 would be good. (Colin Johnson)
- Yeah, but would like to see more Aboriginal people on the board. (Kevin Clancy)

#### **Various (10)**

- Might work if proper structures are set up to support the reps. Will need a regional grouping of local organisations, with reps from the main clans (eg Owens clan, gala clan, Wundunna, Blackman). (Delphine Howden)
- Yes, Board representation on BMRG will be good, will help us to have a voice. So long as people work together and are truthful (Jason Brown).

- Yes, of course. And they have to give Aboriginal people a voice on the BMRG Board, because BMRG is dealing with our country. (Maree Wilkinson)
- Yes, we have to give it a go. (Lois Blackman)
- Yes. And we think it'll be really good if everyone (all the traditional owners) can work together – through some sort of advisory board or group – to talk about issues and work on projects together.
- Yes, but as to how it'll be done ... that's a tough one. (Warren Collins)
- I suppose it will be. We need to be part of these regional groups so that we're properly represented. (Des Cowburn)
- Would be good if you had the right person in it. Need to make sure you have good 2 way communication. (Harry Hill)
- Hopefully. (Tony Dalton)
- Definitely, depending on who they put up of course. If it's the right person, it can be very helpful for indigenous people. I think it's good for white and black to work together. (Vera Webber)

#### **C14.5 Q11 Opinion about one indigenous representative on the BMRG Board**

Overwhelmingly, all but two people thought 1 representative wouldn't work or wasn't appropriate.

The reasons given were:

- One person can't talk for other people's country (4)
- One rep won't give people enough of a voice/effective representation on the Board (4)
- Need more than one, so the reps can support/help each other (4)
- Need an underlying structure, a larger advisory group/body, to support/elect (etc) the rep (3)
- Gender equity - need men and women on the Board (3)
- No reason (3)

##### **One person can't talk for other people's country (4)**

- 1 rep can't work – people can't talk for other people's country. It's different to electing the reps for ATSIC – ATSIC reps work on social and economic issues. The rep on the BMRG Board will work on land and country issues – so 1 rep can't work. Maybe there should be rotating representatives, from different groups? (Frances Gala)
- That's crap. How can you get 1 person to speak for other people when they don't know their country? (Malcolm Burns)
- 1 rep isn't enough; 1 rep can't speak for everyone's country, for all the different groups in the region. (Warren Collins)
- It won't work – most people are in large family groups so 1 rep can't speak for other people's families or country. (Des Cowburn)

#### **One representative won't give people enough of a voice on the Board (4)**

- 1 rep is not enough. People don't listen to us, and so we get disillusioned and give up being involved. 1 rep can't speak for everyone's country and will be outnumbered by the non-indigenous reps. Given there's 4 main tribes (Gooreng Gooreng, Wakka Wakka, Butchulla, Kabi Kabi), we need at least 4 reps. They won't listen to 1 indigenous rep. They really need 4, or maybe 2. (Colin Johnson).
- One rep isn't enough, it's just a token. We need at least 2. 1 voice with 10 other white voices, just won't get heard. (Lois Blackman)
- One rep won't work. If there are 10 white people on the Board, they won't listen to one Aboriginal person. You need more. WAMP had 2 or 3 reps from each family group. We need at least 2 reps on the Board. There were only 2 of us Aboriginal people at the BMRG Roundtable in Eidsvold, and we didn't feel comfortable. (Yvonne Chapman).
- 1 representative is not enough. We see it all the time with other consultative processes – 1 person is expected to disseminate information to a wider group, but doesn't and you're left with the views of just that one person at the meeting. Need to have 3 reps – 1 for each main tribe: Gubbi Gubbi, Wakka Wakka, Gooreng Gooreng. (Eve Fesl)

#### **Need more than one, so they can support each other (4)**

- No good – need at least 2 or 3 people, so they can work together and back each other up. (Kevin Clancy)
- Would like to see at least 2, to ensure more fair representation of indigenous people's interests.
- Need 2 reps – they can support each other. If you have 1 ATSIC rep and another person, can have two reps. Should probably have someone from Gurang Land Council too. The most important thing is they really need to attend all the meetings. (Vera Webber)
- One is a start – but there should be at least two, so that they can bounce ideas off each other. (Phyllis Lea)

#### **Need an underlying structure, a larger advisory group/body, to support/elect the rep (3)**

- It probably won't work – will need representatives from all of the main groups. (Delphine Howden)
- Only 1 rep is difficult. 1 or even 2 Board Reps will only work if they have a solid underlying structure, supported by all groups in the region. Eg 2 reps from each family or clan group to make up an Advisory Group, that Advisory Group needs clear terms of reference and proper resources to work with their own family/clan groups and report back. (Noel Pope)
- No, 1 rep can't work unless that person is elected through a big meeting of all indigenous people in the region and is funded to properly communicate and report back to everyone. Big job. (Tony Dalton)

#### **Gender equity (3)**

- I'm against that – you can't have just one voice – you at least need a man and a woman. (Lillian Mi Mi)
- I don't like it. You need 2 reps – one man, one woman. (Beryl Gambrill)

- No way in the world. It should be 50/50. May as well have none at all if you can only have one – should try to have 2 men and 2 women. (Mavis Hawkins)

### **No reason (3)**

- Need at least 2 reps on the regional body. (Jason Brown)
- You can shove that up your jumper. One person is not going to talk for me. (Maree Wilkinson).
- One won't be enough. (Connie Johnson)

### **One rep might be okay ... (2)**

- I'd like to see 2 – don't want too many. You know, maybe 1 would be okay actually. (Charles Broome)
- If have 1 person, but they're someone who could work with others, respect others, then it might work. Need to be honest. If didn't speak for others' country, but looked at shared/regional issues, then 1 could work. A bigger group, like a council, they could make the rules, pick the representatives, so long as you had the council working properly. The rep would have to understand they work for the whole community, not their own country. (Harry Hill)

## **C14.6 Q12 Involvement with the work of the BMRG**

*Would you like to be involved with the work of the BMRG?*

- No – 1 (Eve Fesl)
- Yes - 6
- Yes, already a member – 7
- Yes, interested in becoming a member - 3
- Yes, signed up as a member during the interview – 7 (+ Charles Broom signed up his two sons as well as himself)
- Maybe - 1

## **C14.7 Q13 – Regional Forum**

*Would you like to attend a regional forum to discuss indigenous representation issues?*

- Everyone said yes  
(Except Eve Fesl)

## **C14.8 Q14 – Prior knowledge of the BMRG**

*Have you heard of the BMRG before our meeting? Did you know much about its work*

- Yes – 14 (3 of these said yes, but didn't know much about it)
- No – 10

## Appendix CI: List of Meetings

### Meetings

BMRG presentation was given at all meetings

- Q = questionnaire completed
- Notes = not full survey questionnaire, but took notes about selected issues group were interested in/had time to discuss
- Referral = just referrals provided

Who	Clan/group	Meeting	Date
Norm Barney and Frances Gala, Scrub Hill	Butchulla	Q	16/8
Davina Monroe	Scrub Hill	Notes	16/8
Delphine Howden	Butchulla	Q	16/8
Sue Shanks		Referral	17/8
Noel Pope	Wulli Wulli	Q	18/8
Jason Brown & Adrian Little	Taribelung Bunda	Q	19/8
Bundaberg Health Action Group		Referral	20/8
Malcolm Burns	Butchulla	Q	23/8
Maree Wilkinson and Dot Morland	Butchulla	Q	23/8
Colin Johnson	Gooreng Gooreng	Q	14/9
Lillian Mi Mi	Wakka Wakka	Q	14/9
Roberta (Connie) Johnson	Gurang	Q	15/9
Lois Blackman	Gooreng Gooreng	Q	15/9
Yvonne, Oscar, Una Chapman	Wakka Wakka Eidsvold	Q	16/9
Eve Fesl	Gubbi Gubbi	Q	20/9
Beryl Gambrill	Wakka Wakka	Q	22/9
Warren Collins	Cherbourg Council	Q	22/9
Cherbourg Land Management Team	Cherbourg Council	Notes	23/9
Colin Purcell	Emu Farm	Notes	23/9
Jo Button	Wakka Wakka	Notes	23/9
Colin Fewquondie & John Murungie	Silver Lining Foundation	Notes	24/9

<b>Who</b>	<b>Clan/group</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Mavis Hawkins	Wakka Wakka Jinda	Q	24/9
Charles Broome	Taribelung Bunda	Q	27/9
Des Cowburn	Gayndah Shire Council	Q	27/9
Harry Hill	Wakka Wakka Gayndah	Q	28/9
Tony Dalton	Gubbi Gubbi	Q	28/9
Kevin Clancy	Wulli Wulli	Q	30/9
Maryborough Elders Group	Butchulla	Q	30/9
Mike O’Neill	Silver Lining project	Notes	1/10
Lurl Henderson	Lonweigh	Q	20/10
Phyllis Lea	R Councillor	Q	20/10
Vera Webber	R Councillor	Q	20/10

## Appendix CII: Questionnaire/survey questions

### Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM Indigenous Engagement Program Survey Questions for Indigenous Groups

*Note: The numbered questions were asked, and the dot-point prompts were only offered if people had difficulty answering the questions.*

#### BACKGROUND

1. Can you tell me something about yourself, and your group?
  - Where are you from?
  - Where's your country?

#### ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

2. Can you tell me about environmental and cultural heritage issues of interest and concern to you/your people?  
For example:
  - Cultural heritage - such as site access and management
  - Environment protection – river care, weeds, biodiversity
  - Native Title, land ownership, ILUAs, other land based issues
3. Are you currently involved in any environmental or cultural heritage management projects?  
For example:
  - Looking after sites of cultural and environmental importance
  - Working in partnership with other groups on land/environmental projects
  - Managing land owned by indigenous groups
4. What are your goals and aspirations regarding environmental and cultural heritage management? (This might include general ideas and goals, as well as specific projects)  
For example:
  - Getting better access to sites of cultural and environmental importance
  - Getting resources to manage areas better
  - Working with the local council to protect a specific place
5. What are some of the problems or barriers, stopping you from working on current or proposed projects of importance to you?  
For example:
  - Lack of money?
  - Lack of human resources/capacity to do the work? Other?

## **CAPACITY**

1. How do you feel about the capacity of your group/organization to do the environmental and cultural heritage projects it wants to do? What would you change if you could?  
For example:
  - Individuals – do they have the skills, training, confidence, support they want/need?
  - Organisations – do you have the funding and other resources you want/need to do your job?

## **REPRESENTATION**

7. Have you been involved in other consultation processes regarding environmental issues/projects?
  - What was good about them?
  - What was not so good about them?
8. Do you think it's important that indigenous people have their ideas and voices heard on environmental and land management issues?
9. What are your ideas about the best way for indigenous people's opinions to be heard?
10. Do you think representation on the BMRG board would be helpful for indigenous people?
11. What do you think about the idea of having one indigenous representative on the BMRG board?
  - If you think it's okay:
    - How do you think that person should be selected/elected?
    - What kind of resources do you think will be necessary for this structure to do its job well?
  - If you don't think it's okay:
    - Why not?
    - What other structures do you think would be appropriate?
    - What kind of resources do you think such a structure will need to do its job well?
12. Would you like to be involved with the work of the BMRG?
  - If no, why not?
  - If yes, how would you like to be involved?
13. Have you heard of the BMRG before our meeting? Did you know much about its work?
14. Who else do you recommend I talk to?