

Improving the methodology for wetland condition and risk assessment in Queensland project

BACKGROUND

The Queensland Wetland Programme (QWP) has developed and implemented several projects to increase the capacity of Queensland to monitor wetlands. As a result of these projects, Queensland will be able to monitor and report on wetland extent, condition and risk. This project is specifically tasked with trialling and improving the 'framework for assessing the health of, and risk to, Queensland's lacustrine (lake) and palustrine (swamp) wetlands' developed through the QWP.

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of this project is to:

1. develop computer interfaces which add functionality to the VPSIRR software (i.e. score calculation software) to allow the automated input of data and export of results so that all wetlands within an area (e.g. catchment) can be assessed simultaneously;
2. trial and refine indicators in a variety of wetland types and situations;
3. produce condition and risk assessments of wetlands (report cards at the individual wetland through to catchment scale) in three catchments (one within the Murray Darling Basin, Burnett Mary NRM region and Great Barrier Reef Catchment); and
4. compare the results of the Queensland wetland assessment framework with that of the FARWH to move forward in regard to the national agenda of developing a national assessment of wetland extent and condition.

THE PROCESS

This project will be implemented as follows:

1. Monitor wetlands, by:
 - Identifying a variety of wetland types via the QWP classification and mapping tools as test sites
 - Developing and implementing specific monitoring programmes for identified indicators and wetlands
2. Refine wetland indicators, by:
 - Reviewing results and amending indicators, protocols and/or methodologies where necessary
3. Automate data input and result output, by:
 - Developing computer interfaces which allow previously collected and stored wetlands data to be inputted into the VPSIRR software and the software outputs to be reported spatially
4. Produce report cards, by:
 - Reviewing the software outputs and data acquired to produce report cards for three catchments and for individual wetlands within those catchments
 - Upload report cards to SoE online
5. Examine different wetland assessment frameworks, by:
 - Comparing the results obtained via the Queensland framework with that using the FARWH framework. Examine and report on the pros and cons of each framework (e.g. repetition of data analysis, issues of having two reports using the same data (do they disagree or not), with regard to reporting at various levels (i.e. local, catchment, state and national)).