

Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM)

Meeting Notes

Wednesday 2 June 2004, Council Chambers, Townsville City Council, Townsville

Present:

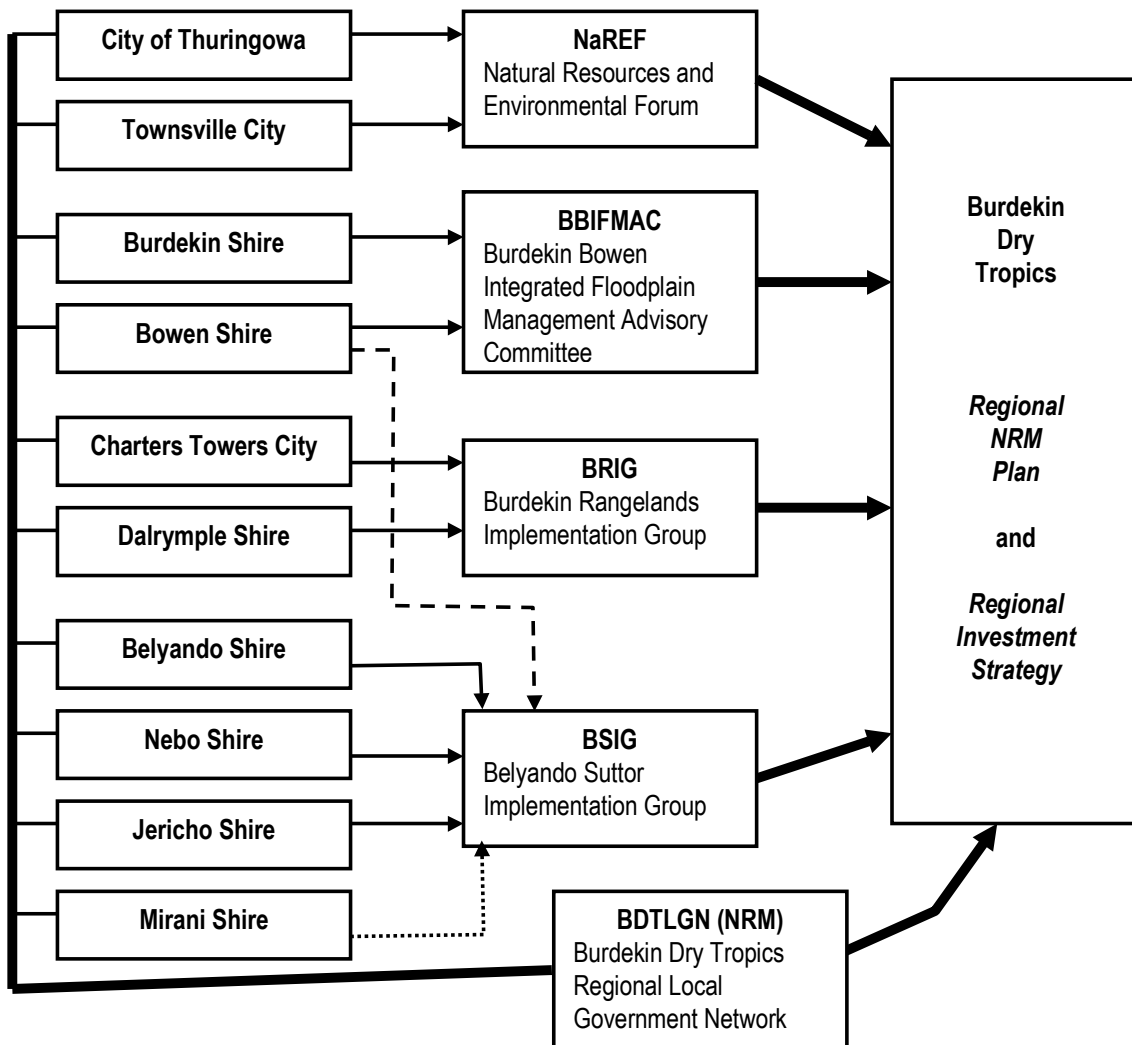
Dalrymple Shire (Cr Bill Breen, Raymon Jayo), Thuringowa City (Lyonelle Lane, Shaun Warner) Mirani Shire (Cr Dave Price) and Townsville City (Greg Bruce, Andrew Hannay, Sri Suryati – EMS), [Andrew Bengsen, Darren Alfengeest and Cathleen Crouch -TCC Preventive Programs)

Apologies:

Charters Towers City (Mick Langburne), Burdekin Shire (Mark Allpress)

1. The process for the development of the Regional NRM Plan was briefly summarised (see Figure 2) to ensure network members were clear on the intent of the plan and the 'products' produced by the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board (BDTB) to date. The BDTB has placed emphasis on the inclusion of community via the sub regional groups and while the concept is commendable it has made the plan development process somewhat unwieldily and created a certain amount of frustration for those involved. The nominal pathways for local government involvement in the Regional NRM planning process are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Local government input pathways to Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional NRM plan



The involvement of individual local governments with the sub regional groups varies considerably across the region. While sub regional groups have encouraged local governments to be involved in the planning process there is not the same degree of invitation to be involved at the regional level, as was experienced at the regional forum held in early April. The regional forum was held in the week following the local government elections.

It needs to be noted that the forum was by invitation only with the invitations extended by the sub regional groups. Local government was not invited to attend by sub regional groups. It appears that the role of local government was not understood or the involvement of local government in the community NRM planning process not considered relevant beyond the sub regional level.

However, John Gunn attended the regional forum representing the HESROC/BDTB '**Local Government Involvement in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Accredited Regional Natural Resource Management Plan Project**' (the local government project) through direct negotiation with the BDTB Executive Officer (formerly Planner), Arwen Rickert. This was the first major interaction of the emerging Burdekin Dry Tropics Regional Local Government Network (NRM) with the planning processes of the BDTB and highlighted the importance of the 'direct' pathway to the planning process (see Figure 1) through the local government network.

The short term challenge is to make the local government network an effective and efficient conduit between local government and the BDTB planning processes. This requires cooperative participation of network members to ensure communication and reporting processes are established or adapted within their Council network so that information can flow to the relevant people within their Council and from Council back through the network to the BDTB. HESROC is continuing its lobbying to secure funding for ongoing support of the local government network which will in turn assist each Council establish effective communication lines from and to the local government network.

The distinction needs to be made between local government representation on the Board and the involvement of local government in the regional planning process. They are, at present, two distinct and predominantly separate processes. It is envisaged that the network, when it is operating effectively, will be able to act as the communication arm for the two local government representatives on the BDTB to facilitate the dissemination of information from the local government Board members to the respective local governments they are representing.

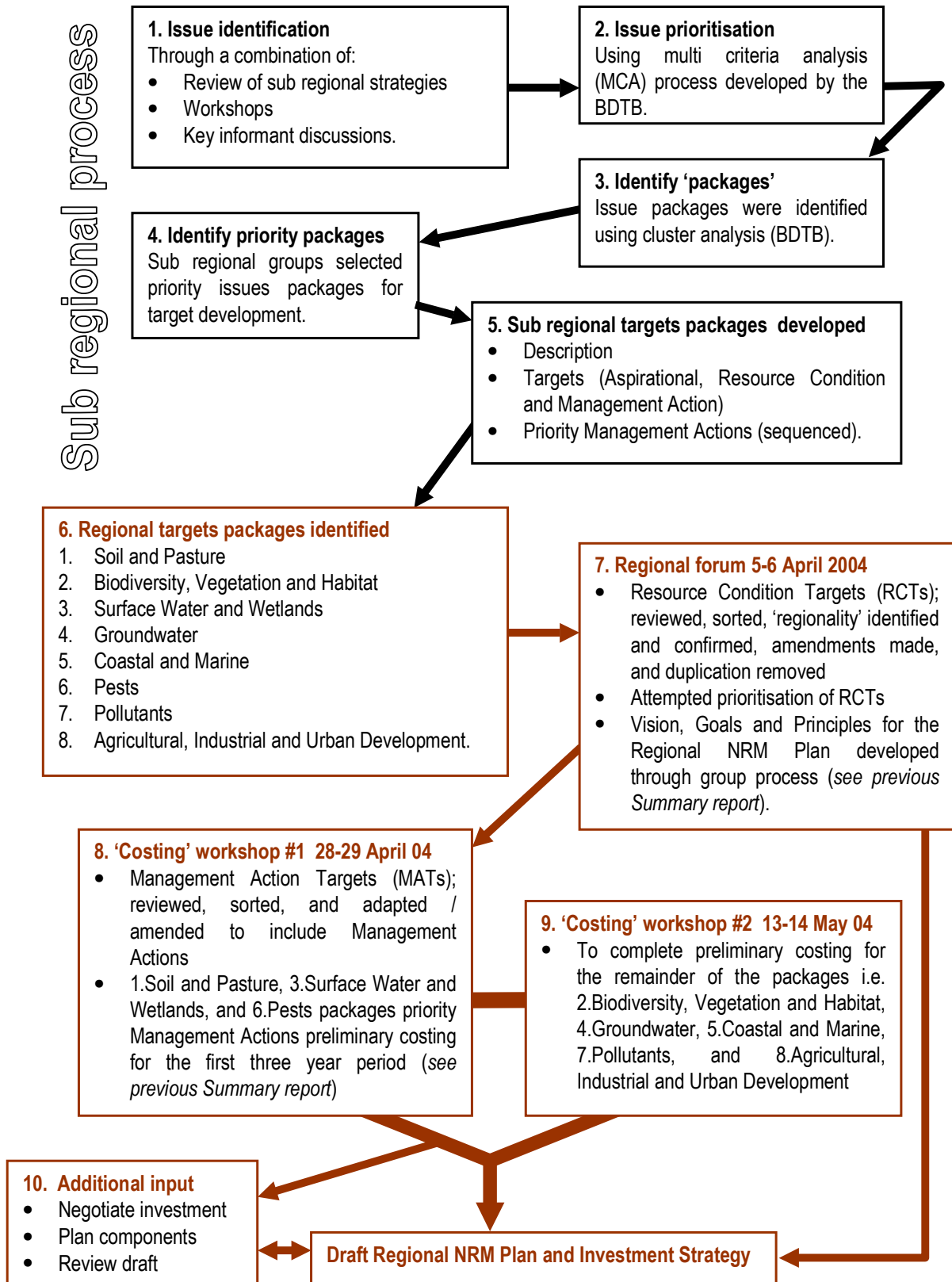
2. To date the BDTB has produced draft sections of the Regional NRM Plan (available on the Web site www.burdekindrytropics.org.au) including a 'Linkages' section, which will be updated with input provided from the HESROC Partnerships and Projects Review and the current HESROC/BDTB local government project. The 'working components' of the plan, which we had hoped to examine at the network meeting, are still being prepared. A set of draft regional 'Targets' have been made available by the BDTB however the updated costing for priority Management Actions have not been released.

The plan products produced at the regional level are an amalgam of the sub regional products. The Regional Forum (4 and 5 April 2004) focused on the Resource Condition Targets developed at the sub regional level. The targets were sorted and their relevance at the regional level confirmed or otherwise. There was not enough time at the regional forum to consider Management Action Targets or to prioritise Management Actions.

The Costing Workshops (28 and 29 April and 13 and 14 May 2004) focused on Management Action Targets. Targets were sorted and reclassified into Management Action Targets and Management Actions. The 'priority' Management Actions were then costed for first three years for inclusion in

Regional Investment Strategy supporting the Regional NRM plan. Management Actions were prioritised from the perspective of whether participants felt an action needed to be funded in the first three years.

Figure 2 Representation of the BDT regional planning process



Discussion followed including the expertise employed in refining the plan and costings. A diagram of the structure of the BDTB and relationship of BDTB staff, Board members and others involved in the planning process was sketched on the white board (see Figure 2).

“The Board has 10 voting members who contribute a range of specialist skills and geographic representation. Four government advisory members assist the Board. The structure and membership of the Board was determined during a series of regional community forums in 2000 and 2001. The entity is registered as Burdekin Solutions Ltd trading as Burdekin Dry Tropics Board”.

The current composition of the Board is:

Board member	Representative of;
Mr Kirk Smith	Chairman (resignation tendered)
Mr John Woods	Local Government Eastern councils (Thuringowa, Townsville, Burdekin and Bowen)
Vacant	Local Government Western councils (Dalrymple, Charters Towers, Belyando, Jericho [Nebo and Mirani-not included in the Constitution])
Mr Tony Chandler (Secretary)	Community - Burdekin-Bowen Integrated Floodplains Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC)
Mr Tony Allingham	Community - Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG)
Mrs Ros Kenny	Community - Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group (BSIG)
Mr Steve McDermott	Community - Townsville-Thuringowa Natural Resources and Environment Forum (NaREF)
Mrs Lesley Marshall	Community - Eastern Desert Uplands
Mr Mike Cannon	Biophysical science
Assoc. Professor Mark Fenton	Social science
Ms Chris George	Traditional Owner
Mr Phil Rist	Traditional Owner

(Source: www.burdekindrytropics.org.au and Arwen Rickert (pers.comm.))

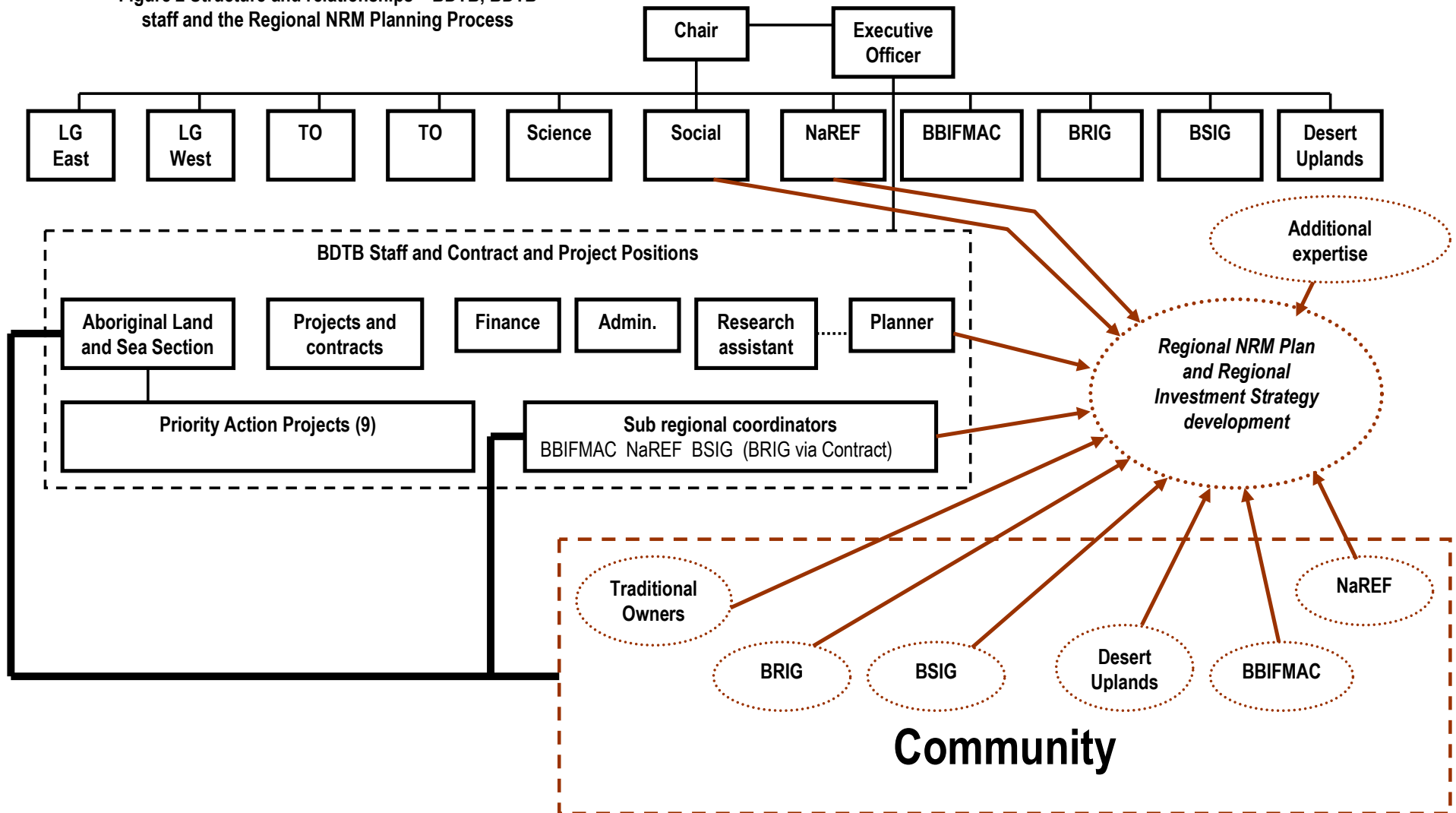
In addition there are Advisory members and advisors who do not have voting rights. Some of these are; Mr Peter Gilbey (DNRME Townsville) and Mike Bradby (DNRME Brisbane)- Queensland Government; Mr Geoff Dyne and Gale Duell - Commonwealth Government; and Mr Leigh Gray - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The Board is not directly involved in the development of the plan although some Board members have specific input and policy decisions are made by the Board based on advice from relevant sources e.g. staff members and Commonwealth and State Government advisors. BDTB staff essentially runs the plan development process. Arwen Rickert, now the Executive Officer, commenced the planning process on secondment from DNRM, and as Executive Officer still has significant input. Belinda Zunker has taken over most of the background planning work. In addition to BDTB staff Board members with significant input are Mark Fenton (Social science) and Steve McDermott (Community NaREF).

Initially the majority of planning input was via the sub regional groups with BDTB staff coordinating input, providing templates and formats, and coordinating preparation of sections of the plan by external sources e.g. Condition Reports and Regional Overviews. The workload has now shifted to BDTB staff with the amalgamation of sub regional inputs to the regional level. A consultant has been engaged to develop the Regional Investment Strategy, which is informed by components of the Regional Plan, and especially the Resource Condition and Management Action Targets, and priority Management Actions.

Changes in BDTB staff arrangements and the emphasis on amalgamating community input from sub regional groups has made the coordination of plan development, at the very least, difficult.

Figure 2 Structure and relationships – BDTB, BDTB staff and the Regional NRM Planning Process



3. After determining and prioritising issues the main focus of the planning process has revolved around 'target setting'. An explanation of target setting in the context of the plan was provided as part of the discussion. The main point of setting targets is to measure the outcomes being achieved by regional groups so the expenditure of Commonwealth funding (tax dollars) can be justified. At the local level targets will provide a guide for regional groups and be an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Types of 'targets' in the context of Regional NRM plans are;

Aspirational targets

A vision or goals for NRM in the region. Long-term 'targets' which are aspirational statements about the desired condition of natural resources in the longer term e.g. 50 years. These targets guide regional planning, and set a context for the more measurable and achievable targets.

Resource condition targets

Specific, time bound and measurable objectives (targets) relating largely to resource condition. The timeframe for achievement of these targets is likely to be 10-20 years. These targets must be pragmatic and achievable.

Management action targets

Short-term objectives (targets) spanning 1-5 years, relating mainly to management actions or capacity-building. These targets must contribute to progress towards the longer-term resource condition targets.

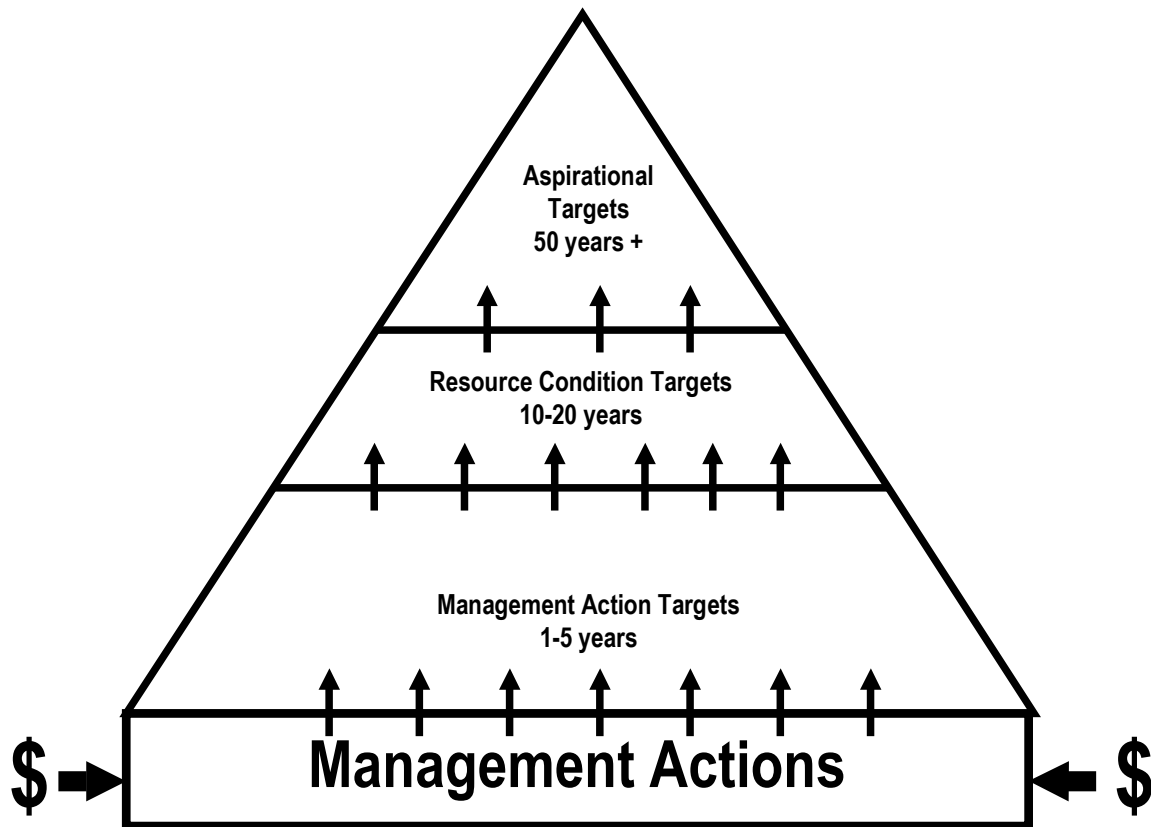


Figure 3 Hierarchy of Targets and Management Actions

Because of the emphasis placed on the target setting process the importance of determining actual management actions become somewhat obscured. The management actions will be the driving force of the Regional NRM plan leading to achievement of all levels of targets (see Figure 3). It is the management actions and associated costings that are of prime importance for the local government network to focus on as that is where partnerships, investment and funding comes into play.

4. Given the unavailability of information required to elicit feedback from network members discussion focussed on the development of process and formats for providing information for feedback and input to the Regional Investment Strategy. An example based on the 'Pests' issue/management category was used for discussion.

Example extract from Pests package

Aspirational Target

By 2050, effectively manage impacts of pest plants and pest animals on environmental, economic, social and cultural values and prevent the spread of new pests into the region by having an informed and involved community.

Resource Condition Target

By 2010, contain and reduce the infestations of priority pest plant and feral animal species identified with in Local Government pest plant and pest animal plans, specific to individual subregions.

Management Action Target

By 2007, establish a baseline for all priority pest species.

Management Actions

- Support and collate integration of current/new mapping of all priority and declared pest infestations in government, freehold and leasehold lands (**Yr 1 \$100,000, Yr 2 \$100,000, Yr 3 100,000**).
- Develop regional list of potential pest species and distribute a list of potential weed species to nursery industry (**Yr 1 \$50,000, 25% in-kind**).
- Determine feral cat and fox populations and recommend control options, based on existing information.

Management Action Target

By 2007, have a coordinated approach to pest management.

Management Actions

- Develop a Regional Pest Management Plan, which is collaborative between all Local Government Authorities in the region.
- Support active management and control of all priority, environmental and declared pests from local and state government pest management plans.
- Facilitate cooperative approaches between Local Governments, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Rail, Sunwater (**100% in-kind**)
- Support for, and development of Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres as having a key role in feral animal management.
- Track potential high-risk weed seed spread by advising local governments of cross shire stock movements through the DPI weigh bill system.

(Note: The costs and in-kind figures (**in bold**) are from notes taken at the costings workshop 28-29 April 2004)

Network members agreed that the format used to present the targets was workable and that it would be desirable to meet as a group to go through all the management actions and costings when they become available. This would allow discussion of; the meaning of the management actions, local government

programs and needs, and potential for integration and value adding. Material will be distributed through the network in advance of future meetings.

For clarification on any points about the planning process and the local government network please contact:

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