

Part A. Basis for Management

Note: This section of the 2005 Revised Plan has been substantially updated to reflect changes in legislation, land tenure and the management environment between 1994 and 2004.

Introduction

Fraser Island, the Cooloola sandmass, Noosa North Shore and the waters of Hervey Bay and Great Sandy Strait form the Great Sandy Region. The Region covers about 840,000 hectares of south-east Queensland and is shown on Map 1.

Until the 1990s the Region was immersed in controversy over the future of sand mining and logging. The decision by the Commonwealth Government in the mid-1970s not to issue export licences for mineral sands from Fraser Island was the first of many signals of profound change.

The Region's long history of timber-getting is over. What little remains of the Kin Kin Scrubs is represented in the Cooloola Section of the Great Sandy National Park; but the forests of the sandmass of Fraser Island and central Cooloola have been logged, though never cleared.

Indigenous cultural association with the Great Sandy Region remains. Gradually, recognition of and respect for the Region's Indigenous cultural heritage by non-Indigenous Australians is being achieved.

The Region's past has been challenged and transformed by a community desire to protect its natural qualities and values. The Region is the setting for the lives and activities of many people. Some have driven the process of change, some have been caught up and become a willing or unwilling part of the process, and some have been attracted by new opportunities emerging.

The Queensland Government recognised an obligation to assist the community to direct the Region's future. To resolve the many issues relating to the Region, a Commission of Inquiry was appointed in 1990 to report and make recommendations with respect to:

"... the conservation, management and use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region, in the public interest, with due regard for environmental, recreational, cultural, social, economic, industrial and any other material considerations and the interests of potentially affected individuals."

The final report of the Inquiry was presented to the Queensland Government in May 1991. It recommended that the Great Sandy Region be

nominated for World Heritage listing, that a comprehensive management plan be prepared and that legislation to co-ordinate the management of the entire Region be developed.

The preparation of this Management Plan in 1994 was guided by information in the documents published and produced for the Commission of Inquiry, other published material, existing management arrangements and existing government policy. The aspirations of local communities and user groups assessed through extensive public consultation were also considered in the preparation of the 1994 Management Plan.

Plan review

Since the release of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan in 1994, management of the Region has been affected by many changes—including new legislation and government policy, changed patterns of use, advances in technology, improved management systems and structures, and changes in tenure.

A mid-term review of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan was a requirement of the 1994 Management Plan and was conducted between 2001 and 2004. The review's primary aim was to ensure the Plan remained relevant to current conditions: it did not alter the fundamental directions and desired outcomes of the 1994 Plan. Background information, management guidelines and actions were updated where changes in the management environment were significant, or where new information from studies, research and monitoring activities was available. This revised Plan incorporates the findings of that review.

It is proposed that a full review of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan will be conducted in 2010. There is an intention to establish the Great Sandy Region Management Plan as a rolling strategic plan to guide the management of the Great Sandy Region beyond the year 2010.

Understanding and implementing the Great Sandy Region Management Plan

The Plan defines the desired outcomes and actions for each of the 63 sub-strategies (subjects in the 1994 Plan) in four broad strategy areas. Over 550 actions outline the next level of planning and policy development or management activity.

Information within this document is presented in two parts. Part A provides a basis for management. Part B focuses on the four broad strategy areas:

- natural and cultural resource management;
- community infrastructure and development;

- recreation, tourism and visitor use; and
- sustainable resource harvesting.

Within each strategy area, each subject is dealt with in the following format:

<p>Subject heading</p> <p>Subject name and number for reference purposes.</p> <p>See <i>also</i>: Specifies other subjects within the Plan that address similar matters.</p> <p>Background information</p> <p>Information that provides a context for the outcomes, guidelines and actions. The background to each topic has been updated to be current at 1 January 2005.</p> <p>Desired outcomes</p> <p>The desired condition of one or more specific attributes of the subject, to be achieved by or before 2010. These are unchanged from the 1994 Plan unless indicated by *.</p> <p>Guidelines and actions</p> <p>Guidelines to be followed and actions to be undertaken to bring about the desired outcome. These are unchanged from the 1994 Plan unless indicated by * for a new or substantially revised guideline or action.</p> <p>Existing situation</p> <p>The current condition relating to each strategy area. This section has been updated and indicates progress and changes since 1994</p> <p>NOTE: To maintain the detail in the 1994 Plan and to ensure transparency to the community, this revised Plan shows almost all actions and guidelines from the 1994 Plan. (Actions and guidelines have been added or changed only to update current terminology or administrative arrangements.) This means that in many cases actions listed in this revised Plan have been partly or totally completed. Refer to the 'existing situation' section to see what has been achieved. Guidelines are generally policy statements which remain in force.</p> <p>For ease of reading, actions and guidelines have been numbered and some similar actions have been consolidated.</p>

Since the 1994 Plan was released, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has established two monitoring and reporting systems: the Great Sandy Implementation Database and a monitoring and management effectiveness project.

1) Great Sandy Implementation Database

The Great Sandy Implementation Database monitors the extent of implementation of the 1994 Plan. Reports regularly assess progress towards the actions in the 1994 Plan, based on information collected from relevant staff and management agencies. Actions have been categorised in relation to a number of attributes, including priority, action category and descriptor. The system has considerable potential as a planning tool for the preparation of work programs and budgets tied directly to actions in the Plan.

2) Monitoring and management effectiveness project

A monitoring and assessment project has been developed for the Fraser Island World Heritage Area. Management outcomes have been addressed through a series of monitoring programs that address the desired outcomes of the 1994 Plan. The 63 sub-strategies (subjects in the 1994 Plan) have been used as the basis for developing a broad outline for a comprehensive monitoring program. Specific monitoring projects have been developed for priority areas.

QPWS will take a lead role in managing both monitoring and reporting systems. Both systems require some improvements. In particular, the management systems will be linked with business planning, budgeting and reporting. A co-ordinated approach from all government agencies and management authorities is required to manage the monitoring and reporting systems, in particular the Great Sandy Implementation Database, and the workload involved in data collection and analysis will be shared.

Regular reports have been prepared as a result of both these monitoring and evaluation programs, allowing managers to track the extent of implementation at different levels or against different attributes. The information enables planners and managers to review management practices and resource allocation and provide feedback into different parts of the management cycle.

Management background and regional setting

Boundary

The Region's boundary in the 1994 Plan coincided with the core area identified by the Commission of Inquiry into the conservation, management and use of the Great Sandy Region in 1991. Freehold mainland coastal properties with boundaries extending below high watermark are excluded from the Region.

Boundaries of the Great Sandy Region and Fraser Island World Heritage Property are shown on Map 1.

It is now apparent that a number of protected areas (including recent gazettals) and other reserves adjacent to the Region contain fine examples of natural and cultural heritage values complementing those in the Region. It may be advantageous to adjust the Region's boundaries to include these areas. This will be further considered at the full Plan review in 2010.

Land tenure and management status

In 1994 the Region consisted of 230,000ha of terrestrial land, with the remaining 610,000 ha comprising marine and intertidal areas. The Region's 840,000ha included four national parks, eight environmental parks (now renamed conservation parks), seven portions of State forest, two marine parks, seven fish habitat reserves, two wetland reserves (now renamed Fish Habitat Areas B), six parcels of Commonwealth land, five townships, vacant Crown land (now known as unallocated State land), Crown reserves, leasehold land and more than 960 freehold properties. In the Great Sandy Region, several native title claims have been lodged. No native title determinations exist in the Region and mediation of these claims is expected to commence shortly.

Protected areas

The terrestrial protected area estate in the Region in 2004 totals over 240,000ha including tidal lands, foreshore unallocated State land and reserves. Many protected areas have been extended and/or amalgamated and the Great Sandy National Park, which has been created since 1994, covers approximately 220,000ha. Categories of protected areas have been altered consistent with the *Nature Conservation Act 992* and today the Region encompasses six conservation parks, two resources reserves, three State forests and one nature refuge (See Table 1).

Recreation area

The Inskip Peninsula Recreation Area has been declared under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 988*.

Great Sandy Marine Park

A proposal is under consideration to amalgamate the two existing marine parks Woongarra and Hervey Bay and to include these areas with all other appropriate tidal areas (land and water) within the Great Sandy Region into one marine park. The two marine parks currently have individual zoning plans to protect turtle nesting areas, and whales during their

Land type - terrestrial	Approximate area(ha)
National park Great Sandy National Park	220 000
Conservation park Mon Repos Great Sandy Conservation Park Sheep Island Goat Island Sandy Cape Double Island Point	45 658 6 20 3 4 736
Resources reserve Cooloola (Noosa River) Great Sandy	117 58 175
State forest Poona Creek Area (SF915) Buttha Creek Area (SF915) Fraser Island (SF3)	35 50 34 119
Forest reserve Womalah Forest Reserve	193
Nature refuge Una Corbould	480
Freehold parcels (not including Una Corbould Nature Refuge) Susan River mouth Moon Point freehold Kingfisher Bay Tarangau Noosa North Shore (total) Other (unspecified)	370 250 64 686 917 423 2 710
Leased crown land Urangan Boat Harbour Inskip Peninsula Orchid Beach Other (unspecified)	37 266 8 29 340
Reserves Bingham reserves Inskip Local Government sewerage reserve Noosa North Shore aircraft landing reserve Noosa North Shore quarry reserve Inskip Point Harbour Purposes reserve Urangan Foreshore Reserve Other (unspecified)	700 43 430 43 125 632 127 2 100
Unallocated State Land Inskip Peninsula/Rainbow Beach USL Happy Valley USL Eurong USL Teewah USL Noosa North Shore USL Como USL Mangroves, islands and tidal areas USL (mostly covered by Fish Habitat Areas) Other (unspecified) USL	2 113 327 268 44 125 391 10 630 100 14 000
Subtotal - terrestrial (including tidal lands, foreshore USL and reserves)	240 853
Land type - marine	Approximate area (ha)
Marine Park Woongarra Hervey Bay	10 713 197 757 208 470
Fish habitat areas Beelbi Burrum Susan River Maaroom Kauri Creek Tin Can Inlet Fraser Island Elliott River Kinkuna	1 416 4 400 4 497 22 857 7 010 1 442 7 904 803 136 50 465
Unspecified marine areas	350 000
Subtotal marine	608 935
Total (Terrestrial and marine)	849 788

Table . Land status in the Great Sandy Region in July 2004.

migration. This proposal is subject to a separate planning process. It is consistent with the requirements of the 1994 Plan, the Queensland Government commitment to establish border-to-border marine parks along the Queensland coastline, and the need to review existing Marine Park zoning plans.

Dugong Protection Area

A Dugong Protection Area has been declared over the Great Sandy Strait and parts of Hervey Bay under the *Fisheries Act 1994*. This action has given greater protection to protected species and critical habitat in the Region.

Fish Habitat Areas

Additional Fish Habitat Areas have been declared over parts of, and in the vicinity of the Theodolite Creek and Coonarr Creek estuaries (Kinkuna FHA-02); and over parts of, and in the vicinity of the Elliott River (Elliott FHA 052). The declared Fish Habitat Areas and the regional system of these areas are under an ongoing review within the DPI&F.

The status for land tenure within the Region at July 2004 is shown in Table 1 and Map 2.

Surrounding land uses

Land uses adjacent to the Great Sandy Region are an important consideration of management as they have the potential to impact significantly on the values of the Region.

A number of towns and other settlements are adjacent to the Region. Major centres include Noosa Heads, Noosaville, Tewantin, Tin Can Bay and Hervey Bay, which in addition to urban centres are tourist destinations of major regional significance. Numerous smaller townships are also located adjacent to the Region.

The Wide Bay Military Reserve occupies about 200sq km of coastal land adjacent to Tin Can Inlet. Land management has improved in the Wide Bay Military Training Area, through the implementation of an integrated environmental management program developed for the area.

Protected area estate and State forest pine plantations are also significant tenures adjacent to the Region. The remainder of the western boundary abuts rural properties including cane farms, mixed grazing, small crops including high value crops such as macadamia nuts and lychees, small hobby farms and rural allotments.

The entire northern and eastern boundary of the Region adjoins marine areas, where extensive commercial and recreational fishing occurs.

Land use in much of the Region has not changed dramatically since 1994. However, consistent

with the trend in south-east Queensland, there has been a steady increase in population and residential development in parts of the Region, in particular the Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay locality and many of the coastal settlements adjacent the Great Sandy Strait and Hervey Bay. Consequently, community services and facilities and new industry to support development and meet demands are also increasing. This development places extra pressure on the natural and cultural resources and the unique scenic and recreation values of the Region.

The Cooloola State Land Audit project aims to analyse the capability and suitability of State land (unallocated, leasehold, reserve) in the vicinity of Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach on the Cooloola Coast, in order to provide recommendations to Government on the preferred future sustainable use of this land.

In the catchments of major rivers flowing into Great Sandy Strait and Hervey Bay, land use practices have been evolving to meet a combination of new economic, social and environmental demands.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) has issued a number of aquaculture authorities for areas in the Great Sandy Region and is assessing others. These authorities include oyster-farming areas that have existed in the Region for more than 100 years, a beche de mer sea ranching approval and a sea scallop sea ranching trial. Similar proposals are pending in several areas within the Region. It is anticipated that other land use and development proposals of this intensive nature will continue as the Region's growth trends continue.

Legislative requirements

State Legislation

The Queensland Government, through the Environmental Protection Agency/Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (EPA/QPWS), seeks to manage and protect Queensland's natural environment and its associated ecological, economic and social values consistent with a number of statutory instruments.

Key legislation administered by the EPA/QPWS includes:

- *Nature Conservation Act 992*;
- *Environmental Protection Act 994*;
- *The Marine Parks Act 982*;
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 995*;
- *Forestry Act 959*;
- *Queensland Heritage Act 992*; and
- *Recreation Areas Management Act 988*.

Regulations, policies, management and conservation plans and zoning plans have been prepared under this legislation.

Legislation administered by other State agencies also provides natural and cultural resource protection and a basis for sustainable development and resource use and includes:

- *Fisheries Act 994* (protects and manages aquatic resources);
- *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* (provides for the management of weeds and pest animals);
- *Water Act 2000* including Riverine Protection Provisions (provides a new legislative basis for the sustainable planning and management of the State's water resources);
- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (replaces the repealed *Cultural Record [Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estates Act 988]* administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines [NR&M]); and
- *Vegetation Management Act 999* (makes vegetation clearing on freehold land an assessable development under the *Integrated Planning Act 997*).

The *Integrated Planning Act 997* (IPA) forms the foundation of Queensland's development assessment legislation. It combines approximately 60 separate approval systems into a single Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) that is jointly administered by State and local governments. Not all State legislation is integrated into this development assessment system, for example the *Marine Parks Act 982* and the *Fisheries Act 994*.

The current legislation above provides enhanced protection and a basis for management in the Region. Separate legislation to co-ordinate resource management and administration in the Region will not be drafted.

Commonwealth legislation

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 999* (EPBC Act) is administered by the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage. This legislation is concerned with the management and conservation of matters of national environmental significance. Matters of national environmental significance include World Heritage Properties, National Heritage Places, Ramsar Wetlands, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species, the Commonwealth marine environment, and nuclear actions. The Act outlines a number of management and administrative requirements that need to be met in response to this legislation.

The Act establishes an assessment and approvals process for actions that are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance. Any action that is likely to have a significant impact on one or more of these matters should be referred to the Australian Government for approval. Actions listed in the management plan may fall into this category and will be referred.

The Act and its regulations also outline guidelines and principles for management and planning for World Heritage, National Heritage and Ramsar Wetlands, and provide for establishment of bilateral agreements between the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Management and administration

The Queensland Government, the Commonwealth Government and local governments are all involved in the management and administration of the Region. Within each level of government, individual management agencies have dedicated roles and specific responsibility for various matters. The 1994 Plan requires each agency to take a lead role in policy development, planning and day-to-day management, according to its responsibilities, either individually or in co-operation with other agencies.

QPWS will be responsible for the co-ordination and the monitoring of implementation of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan. The roles and responsibilities of key State and Commonwealth Government departments regarding management in the Region will be clearly identified in the Plan where appropriate.

The Great Sandy Region includes parts of seven local government areas: Noosa, Cooloola, Tiaro, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Isis and Burnett. Further details on approximate land areas of local government authorities within the Great Sandy Region are provided in Table 2.

Local government authority	Approximate land area of local government authorities within the Great Sandy Region in hectares
Noosa Shire	16 712
Cooloola Shire	52 635
Tiaro Shire	77
Maryborough City	68 065
Hervey Bay City	108 630
Isis Shire	Intertidal and marine areas only
Burnett Shire	55

Table 2. Approximate land area of local government authorities within the Great Sandy Region.

Local governments are responsible for the development and administration of planning schemes under IPA. In many cases local governments have undertaken planning studies and developed management plans, as part of planning schemes, to deal with specific issues and areas of particular interest. Planning schemes are required to take into account policy, guidelines and actions identified in the Great Sandy Region Management Plan.

Under the IPA, the assessment system IDAS has been established. It is designed to provide a single legal administrative framework and step-by-step process for the assessment and approval of development applications in Queensland. Not all State legislation has been integrated into this common regulatory system.

There is now a greater recognition that management agencies and systems must recognise the rights and interests of Traditional Owners. Opportunities for co-operative management and partnerships between Traditional Owners, government, industry and the community are increasing throughout the Region. QPWS has a legislative obligation under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to manage parks in co-operation with Traditional Owners.

New regional natural resource management arrangements include a government policy direction, which supports regional devolution and establishment of natural resource management bodies such as the Burnett-Mary Regional Body for Natural Resource Management. A network of regional NRM bodies has been established and is funded under the

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) and the National Heritage Trust Extension programs to achieve healthy natural resource management regional arrangements. The regional body role has been to develop an NRM plan and to facilitate the implementation of the plan. These plans incorporate existing natural resource plans, fill planning and management gaps and contain targets for managing the condition of natural resources. Queensland and Australian Government accreditation of these plans requires the regional NRM bodies to gain collective agreement on plan implementation with relevant stakeholders. Landcare and catchment groups within the Great Sandy Region are actively involved in contributing to the Plan development and implementation. The Queensland Cabinet is reviewing the progress of these emerging arrangements (DNR&M 2004).

Regional Co-ordination Groups (RCGs) are composed of senior management level representatives from the core State Government agencies working to implement the NAPSWQ, the Australian Government Regional NRM Team plus other government agencies that have an interest in a particular region's NRM issues. The

purpose of the RCGs is to foster strong community government partnerships, co-ordinate whole-of-government processes and policies and resolve policy inconsistencies at the regional level. National participants supporting Queensland's state and regional efforts in regional NRM are the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage (NRM&E, 2004).

Complementary planning

The 1994 Plan provides a combination of strategic and specific management prescriptions to guide management in the Great Sandy Region. The 1994 Plan also recommends the preparation of more detailed strategies, such as a walking track strategy and a fire management strategy, which represent the next level of planning. These planning instruments should provide more specific guidance for development, activities, regulatory matters and other management requirements.

The next level of planning has now been identified and highlighted more clearly. The next level of planning will include:

- other statutory plans, including State planning policies, management plans and planning schemes;
- region and area plans, including fire and visitor management strategies including

Regional Growth Management Framework planning, Local Government Regions of Councils (ROC) arrangements and regional arrangements including the Burnett- Mary Regional Body, etc; and

- issue-specific plans for smaller areas, for example pest species control plans, community fire protection plans and development plans for key recreation areas.

Management planning

Statutory management plans and zoning plans form part of the next level of planning in the Region.

Management plans are required for:

- protected areas declared under the *Nature Conservation Act 992*; and
- recreation areas declared under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 988*.

The *Marine Parks Act 982* provides for the development of zoning plans and management plans for a marine park or areas within a marine park. Statutory zoning plans are in place for the Hervey Bay and Woongarra Marine Parks.

Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 999*, management plans should be prepared for:

- a World Heritage Property listed under the World Heritage Convention; and
- a Ramsar Wetland designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (also known as the Ramsar Convention).

These plans may be covered by one management document that addresses the issues specific to each listing.

A management plan under the *Nature Conservation Act 994* has been developed for the Great Sandy Conservation Park, an area of approximately 658ha incorporating a number of islands and headlands in the Great Sandy Strait. The current planning process for the proposed Great Sandy Marine Park (Northern Section) may develop statutory zoning and/or management plans. In the absence of a management plan for a specific protected area or recreation area in the Region, the management guidelines and actions in the Plan that relate to those areas will be used to guide management. Every attempt will be made to incorporate these into statutory management plans as they are developed under the respective legislation.

Marine area management and coastal protection

The *Marine Parks Act 982* gives statutory effect to the planning and management of existing

marine parks and the proposed Great Sandy Marine Park.

The *Coastal Protection and Management Act 995* is the statutory instrument that describes how the coastal zone and its resources will be managed. From 20 October 2003, amendments to the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 995* have required coastal development applications to be assessed using IDAS within the IPA.

The amendments streamline approval processes for development applications in the coastal zone. Instead of needing separate approvals under the *Harbours Act 955*, the *Canals Act 958* and the *Beach Protection Act 968*, applicants can submit a single application dealing with the relevant planning, building and coastal management components of their development proposal. The assessment process also considers coastal management policies such as the *State Coastal Management Plan Queensland's Coastal Policy (2001)* and any applicable regional coastal management plans.

DPI&F is developing fisheries management plans for all of the State's fisheries as subordinate legislation to the *Fisheries Act 994*. The documents 'Conservation and management of whales and dolphins in Queensland 1997-2001' and 'Conservation and management of the dugong in Queensland 1999--2004' (which incorporates a recovery plan for the conservation of dugong in Queensland) have been prepared under the *Nature Conservation Act 992* and regulations under the Act. These conservation plans outline management strategies required to achieve the protection and recovery of the species groups.

The *Fisheries Act 994* provides for the management of the nine existing declared Fish Habitat Areas within the Management Plan area, and the protection of all marine plants within this area. Zoning plans are the principal tool of management used to achieve the objectives of conservation and reasonable use in a marine park through designating zones, special management areas and specifying which activities can occur 'with', 'without' a permit or are 'prohibited' in a particular zone.

Catchment management

A number of programs and initiatives address catchment and water resource management issues in the Region and provide a framework to co-ordinate work towards long-term sustainable use of natural resources on a catchment basis. In the 1990s, the Australian Government introduced Integrated Catchment Management (ICM), which recognised the necessity to involve community to achieve positive NRM outcomes.

Today regional arrangements supported under the National Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality builds on the recognition that positive NRM outcomes cannot occur without widespread community support and involvement. Both the Burnett and Mary Rivers have been identified as 'catchments of concern' and the Burnett-Mary Regional Body for Natural Resource Management has been established to achieve regional natural resource management arrangements. The regional body aims to gain collective agreement on NRM plan implementation with relevant stakeholders in the region. Catchment management strategies are being prepared, and development and monitoring activities are being implemented to better protect the major river catchments in the Region (NRM&E 2004).

Water resource plans are statutory plans under the *Water Act 2000*. Water resource plans provide a blueprint for the sustainable use of river water while ensuring that environmental needs are met. A water resource plan exists for the Burnett River catchment and planning has commenced for the Mary Basin Water Resource Plan.

Management and administrative advice

Advisory committees and reference groups play a very important role maintaining a balanced and participative approach to decision-making and strategic direction in natural resource management and presentation. Their terms of reference range from the provision of advice on technical and community matters, to the assessment of development applications.

Groups include:

- Fraser Island World Heritage Area Management Committee;
- Fraser Island World Heritage Area Scientific Advisory Committee;
- Fraser Island World Heritage Area Community Advisory Committee;
- Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee;
- Hervey Bay Marine Park Permits Advisory Committee;
- Maritime Infrastructure Working Group; and
- Reference and working groups to assist with other planning tasks including the new marine park planning process.

Heritage registers

Register of the National Estate

The register lists natural and cultural heritage sites of significance and is administered by the Commonwealth Government. An assessment may be required for development activities that

have the potential to impact on listed sites on Commonwealth land, or if the action is undertaken by a Commonwealth agency. Fraser Island, Great Sandy Strait, Woody Island and the Cooloola area are listed on the register as natural heritage sites. Nine Indigenous and five European/non-Indigenous) cultural heritage sites have also been listed in the Region.

A Commonwealth Government heritage legislation package has established a new national heritage system. The EPBC Act has been amended to include new provisions for the identification, protection and management of places of national heritage significance. The heritage values of these places will be protected to the limit of the Commonwealth's constitutional powers. Any action that is likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage values of a National Heritage place will require assessment under the Act. Under these amendments, the Register of the National Estate will continue to exist in a modified form, which will allow for adding and removing places from the Register. Information about places on the Register will be maintained as a publicly accessible database of Australia's natural and cultural heritage places and will be used for the identification and protection of heritage.

Queensland Heritage Register

The Queensland Heritage Register (established under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*) is a list of places, natural formations, buildings and sites of cultural heritage significance in and to Queensland. All works (other than minor maintenance works) undertaken within the boundary of places entered in the Queensland Heritage Register require approval from the Queensland Heritage Council.

Places entered in the Queensland Heritage Register are Woody Island Lighthouses and ancillary building site, Double Island Point Lightstation, Sandy Cape Lighthouse and the South Sea Islander Wall. Places identified during the Regional Forest Agreement process (but not yet entered) include Harry's Hut, Mill Point and Pettigrew's tramway complex. The National Heritage Trust also maintains a list of significant cultural heritage places.

As part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement, a cultural resource assessment project identified a number of European/non-Indigenous cultural sites as meeting National Estate criteria. In the absence of a Regional Forest Agreement with the Commonwealth, these sites have not been listed, but they have been recorded in an interim register with the EPA.

International conventions

Australia is a signatory to a number of international conventions and agreements, including:

- World Heritage Convention;
- Ramsar Convention;
- Bonn Convention on migratory species,
- China and Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA); and
- Japan and Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA).

Under international convention, Australia has responsibilities in regard to these matters of international environmental significance.

World Heritage Convention

Australia, through the Commonwealth Government, has an international obligation under World Heritage Convention to ensure the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the natural and/or cultural heritage of Australia's World Heritage properties. These are sites recognised under the Convention as being of universal significance because of their outstanding natural and/or cultural values.

Fraser Island is a World Heritage property. It is one of 16 such properties in Australia, five of which are totally or partially located in Queensland. Fraser Island is recognised for the outstanding universal value of its ancient and magnificent sand dune systems (ongoing geological and biological processes), and its spectacular forests and fresh water lakes (superlative natural phenomena).

The current Fraser Island World Heritage Area property is listed under the previous criteria for World Heritage assessment (currently summarised in the 1994 Plan). The World Heritage Area is more extensive than the Fraser Island Section of Great Sandy National Park. It incorporates the whole island to high water mark plus a marine component to a distance of 500 metres offshore.

The criteria for World Heritage assessment have been modified since the original nomination of the Great Sandy Region and the subsequent listing of Fraser Island. A recent scientific review considers that Fraser Island demonstrates 'outstanding universal value' within all four of the new natural heritage criteria for World Heritage listing (FIWHASAC 2003). The four new natural heritage criteria for World Heritage listing include;

1) ongoing geological and geomorphic processes,

- 2) ongoing ecological and biological processes,
3) natural phenomena and areas of exceptional natural beauty and
4) biodiversity and threatened species.

A separate review also concluded that the Cooloola section of Great Sandy National Park also meets these four criteria (FIWHASAC 2003). A World Heritage nomination is presently being prepared with the object of extending the present property to include the Cooloola area and certain adjacent areas.

Management of World Heritage areas

The Queensland Government, through the EPA/QPWS, manages the Fraser Island World Heritage property. Certain funding assistance for strategic and priority projects is provided by the Commonwealth from the Natural Heritage Trust.

In addition to the obligations under the World Heritage Convention, the EPBC Act encourages management plan preparation for World Heritage Properties. The Act requires that the Commonwealth use its best endeavours to ensure the preparation and implementation of a management plan that is not inconsistent with Australia's World Heritage management principles, which were established by regulation under the EPBC Act.

The Great Sandy Management Plan, in conjunction with management strategies and guidelines relating to the Fraser Island World Heritage Property, will be used to guide management there until a property-specific management plan is prepared.

A Fraser Island World Heritage Community Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee have been established to provide advice on a wide range of issues to the Management Committee and, where appropriate, to Ministerial Council. Committee members represent a range of stakeholders and the scientific community and voluntarily contribute their time to assist management at all levels. The Management Committee includes representation from two local governments, the tourism industry, the Commonwealth and QPWS, plus the Chairs of the two advisory committees.

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention)

Ramsar Wetlands are sites recognised under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) as being of international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology. This international treaty encourages the wise use of wetlands to ensure their conservation.

The Great Sandy Straits, Tin Can Bay and parts of Hervey Bay were listed under the Ramsar Convention in 1999, primarily for the protection and conservation of waterfowl and wader habitat. Under the international convention, Australia has a number of responsibilities in regard to Ramsar areas.

The EPBC Act encourages (State) management plan preparation for inclusion in Ramsar management plans. The Act requires that the Commonwealth use its best endeavours to ensure the preparation and implementation of a management plan that is not inconsistent with Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention or the Australian Ramsar management principles (also in regulations to the EPBC Act).

Management strategies, guidelines and actions in this Plan relating to the Ramsar Wetlands will be used to guide management until an accredited Ramsar management plan for the property that incorporates those elements is prepared.

Native title and Indigenous rights

The Queensland Government recognises that native title interests may exist over many areas in the Region, including protected areas. Native title is recognition in Australian law of Indigenous Australians' rights and interests in land and waters according to their own traditional laws and customs. The *Native Title Act 1993* (C'wth) provides a process where Traditional Owners can apply to the Federal Court to have their traditional rights recognised by law. The *Native Title Act 1993* was declared in 1993 but not enacted until after the 1994 Plan was released.

Where a native title claim is lodged, the Queensland Government is committed to working with the claimants to reach a mediated resolution. In the Great Sandy Region, several native title claims have been lodged. No native title determinations exist in the Region and mediation of these claims is expected to commence shortly. There is an overlapping claim over one section of the Mary River and over some intertidal areas in the Great Sandy Straits.

Notification and a negotiated agreement with claimants may be required for certain activities over land and water. The Queensland Government has processes in place to meet these requirements. The Queensland Government is committed to working with and involving Traditional Owners in the management of land and water where native title rights or Indigenous interests exist. Traditional Owners'

aspirations regarding their involvement in management of public lands are yet to be fully determined.

Regional values

Natural values

The Region's extent, diversity, isolation and relative freedom from disturbance allow for the continuation of interrelated and interdependent ecosystem components required for viable populations of species and for continued maintenance of all biological, ecological and evolutionary processes.

The Great Sandy Region contains the oldest and largest number of independent coastal dune systems recorded in the world, as well as the oldest known time sequence of soils (podzols) with giant profiles more than 25m thick. The major vegetation patterns change with increases in soil leaching and progressive and retrogressive vegetation successions are evident. The Region preserves and demonstrates the active processes where dunes form, soils develop and vegetation changes.

The Region has many lakes including the world's largest and highest perched dune lakes, and the outstanding Noosa River system, all relatively undisturbed by development.

The Great Sandy Strait is one of the few passage landscapes in Australia. Passage landscapes occur where offshore islands are sufficiently close to the mainland to block the outflow of a substantial river system. This forms a double-ended estuary, characterised by shifting patterns of mangroves, sandbanks and mud islands. The lower Noosa River is a comparatively rare example in the subtropics of a choked coastal lagoon system developed entirely on sand.

The coral reefs of the Woongarra coast are the most southerly coastal fringing coral reefs on the eastern Australian mainland. They are remarkable because of the highly turbid situation in which they exist. They support a high diversity of nudibranchs (colourful marine snails without shells).

The habitats of a number of internationally and nationally threatened terrestrial and marine animals and plants occur within the Region. The marine areas and associated tidal wetlands of Hervey Bay, and the Great Sandy Strait and adjacent beaches support and harbour a diversity of marine life. Species include seasonal populations of humpback whales, dugong, dolphins, turtles, and trans-equatorial migratory wading birds which depend upon the Region for roosting and staging during their

annual migrations. The Great Sandy Strait is recognised as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. Woodlands and forests provide habitats for several species of migratory and sedentary birds.

Other rare, endangered or threatened species within the area include but are not limited to the ground parrot *Pezoporus wallicus*, the false water rat *Xeromys myoides*, Mangrove butterfly *Acrodipsas illidgei*, several species of acid frogs *Litoria spp.*, the shrub *Boronia keysii* and the climber *Glycine argyrea*. Also of particular conservation value in the Great Sandy Region are stands of satinay *Syncarpia hillii*.

Cultural heritage values

Indigenous heritage values

Acknowledgement. This revised information relating to the Indigenous and cultural heritage sections of this Plan has been prepared with the help of many of the Traditional Owners in the Great Sandy Region. It is their country, their law and their story.

It is recognised there are two distinct groups of Indigenous people in Queensland; Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. For the purposes of this text, Aboriginal people (including native title holders and native title claimants in the absence of a native title determination) of the Great Sandy Region will be referred to collectively as Traditional Owners.

Indigenous people in the Region are the custodians of their cultural heritage. Indigenous cultural heritage in the Region is made up of both the physical and intangible (spiritual) elements. These elements combine to explain traditional law and cultural links to the past and to guide social and lifestyle activities and custodial obligations. There are many significant sites in the Region, containing material items, stories and spiritual ownership, linked to traditional laws, custom and spiritual connection and a continued responsibility towards the maintenance of land and sea resources.

Considerable archaeological research has been conducted throughout the Great Sandy Region, particularly along the coastal fringes. In a number of areas research has been limited and further work is needed. Recent archaeological work on Fraser Island indicates that Indigenous people have lived and used the area continuously for more than 6000 years. According to Traditional Owners, connection to country extends well beyond 6000 years to the time of dreaming, since time began. A diverse range of archaeological material has been found in the Region. This material left behind by past traditional and lifestyle activities is the physical

evidence of continuous cultural connection to the Region.

Archaeological sites are only one component of cultural heritage, as values extend beyond the physical remains of the past and include non-archaeological values such as places of great spiritual significance. An example of a place of great spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners of Fraser Island is Indian Head. Cultural heritage also includes the present day concerns of Traditional Owners regarding recognition of knowledge about key species and their management, as well as concerns regarding development and resource use, and impacts on key species, etc.

The Region contains a number of places listed in the Register of the National Estate as being of Indigenous significance. Most of these are located on the coastal zone of the ocean beach and include:

- Bogimbah Mission site;
- Canoe tree (western side of Fraser Island);
- Lake Bowarrady and surrounds;
- Lake Wabby and surrounds;
- Mannann Beach midden complex;
- South Teewah Beach shell middens;
- Booral midden fish trap site complex;
- Poyungan midden; and
- Corroboree Beach midden complex.

The Region contains 450 to 500 recorded archaeological sites of Indigenous significance, including numerous shell midden sites, stone artefact scatters, burial sites, scatted trees, stone quarries, grinding grooves, stone-walled fish traps and ceremonial bora rings.

Sites are considered of national significance, as they provide valuable insight into the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of Indigenous people in the area. These sites and the stories associated with them are significant also in the sense that they exist as important connections to traditional law and culture for Indigenous groups in the area. The significance of many known Indigenous sites is yet to be fully identified and assessed.

A number of very significant sites are found along rivers and the coastal zone of the mainland. Although they do not technically lie within the Great Sandy Region, they should be seen in the context of values within the Region. These sites also represent the important links between Indigenous lifestyle and connection to aquatic resources and other values in the Region. Bool Creek on Fraser Island is the site of the first recorded encounter between the Indigenous people of the Great Sandy Region and Europeans (Matthew Flinders) in 1802.

The Queensland Government recognises Indigenous people's traditional rights to land and has endorsed policies and enacted legislation to facilitate the grant of land title under the *Land Rights Act 99*. Under the *Native Title Act 993*, the Commonwealth Government recognised Indigenous people's rights and interests to areas of land or water that are significant to them.

The Queensland Government has introduced a new heritage regime in respect to Indigenous cultural heritage (the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*), which provides greater recognition to Indigenous assessment of significance and involvement in decision-making in regard to cultural heritage management.

Non-Indigenous heritage values

Evidence of European activity over the past 200 years is an important component of the cultural value of the Great Sandy Region. It is estimated that logging in the Region began in the 1840s. It was not until after Fraser Island was declared a forest reserve in 1908 that logging began in earnest, both on Fraser Island and in the Cooloola area. The history of logging and associated facilities and activities is illustrated by the remnants of timber cutting camps, sawmills, tramways, jetties, wharves, log dumps and hundreds of other miscellaneous and isolated items.

Sites relating to agricultural and pastoral pioneering activities in the area are locally important. During the 1880-90s, Pacific Islander (Kanakan) people were brought to the Port of Maryborough, which had its quarantine station on Fraser Island, to be used as labourers to clear land and work the sugar plantations in the Region. Conditions for these workers were hard, with regular reports of inadequate food and medical attention. In 1901, legislation was passed prohibiting the entry of any further Islanders into Australia. Kanakas were repatriated to their islands of origin from 1906, although some stayed in the area. Several historical features within the Region can be traced to this group of people, including an historic basalt stonewall at Mon Repos Conservation Park.

The North White Cliffs and Bogimbah localities on Fraser Island have significant post-contact cultural importance for Indigenous groups in the Great Sandy Region and throughout Queensland, as well as for many European activities in the past. The secret World War II 'Z Force' commando training site at North White Cliffs on Fraser Island is of national significance.

The remains of sand mining operations, which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, provide evidence of a time when the Great Sandy Region was one of the world's leading producers of mineral sands such as rutile and zircon.

The Region contains more than 50 shipwrecks of varying significance (including the *Maheno* and *Cherry Venture*), together with five lighthouses and two light stations dating from 1866 that are considered to be of State significance and are on the Register of the National Estate.

Recreation values

The Great Sandy Region is recognised as an area which provides recreational opportunities ranging from the regionally significant urban-social experiences of the townships and resorts to the solitary natural experiences of the remote beaches, forests, lakes and streams.

Fraser Island and Cooloola provide some of the best areas for coastal four-wheel-driving in eastern Australia. The Great Sandy Strait, Hervey Bay, the Noosa River system and the ocean waters from Sandy Cape to Noosa are regarded as recreational fishing areas of national significance. These waterways offer a range of boat-based recreation opportunities including sailing, sail boarding, pleasure boating, skiing, canoeing and boat-based camping.

Opportunities exist for scuba diving on coastal fringing reefs of the Woongarra coast, coral beds, sponge gardens, rock shelves around the islands at the northern end of the Great Sandy Strait and on the artificial reef off Woody Island. People can witness the behaviour of marine mammals at close quarters including the nesting and hatching of turtles at Mon Repos and the behaviour of humpback whales in the Hervey Bay Marine Park.

Some locations within the Region are highly regarded by local communities for the recreation opportunities they provide. The Region is also valued for its opportunities for picnics, short walks, photography, relaxation and nature appreciation.

The Region has the potential to provide bush walking opportunities and other specific activities such as hang-gliding over coastal sandmasses, which are generally not available elsewhere.

Economic values

Commercial tourism and commercial fishing within the Great Sandy Region are important to the economic base of the Great Sandy Region, providing direct and indirect employment. Tourism in the Region generates substantial economic benefits and employment, particularly

in adjacent communities and throughout the tourism and travel industry.

The Region provides opportunities for honey production and recreational fishing and associated activities also make a significant contribution to the regional economy. Honey production is limited to areas other than national parks.

Located towards the northern limit of the Region is the Port of Bundaberg. Commodities of regional economic importance are shipped through the Port, principally sugar and petroleum.

The known mineral sand and timber resources of the Region are no longer available for exploitation in response to major environmental decisions following exhaustive inquiry processes.

Research and education values

Natural processes are able to continue relatively undisturbed within the Great Sandy Region providing opportunities for research, the results of which are in some cases of international significance.

Opportunities to share the increased awareness and understanding resulting from this research are significant at the local, state, national and international level. Opportunities are available for formal and informal education using the Region as a natural museum and classroom.

Scenic and aesthetic values

Within the Region, outstanding landscapes of exceptional beauty include long uninterrupted sweeps of ocean beach. The spectacular dune landscape is interspersed with numerous sandblows. With more than 40 freshwater dune lakes of diverse size, elevation, shape, depth and colour, and surrounding vegetation, Fraser Island is regarded as a 'lakeland' of remarkable beauty and interest. The extensive wallum and heathland communities, the calm dark waters of the Noosa River and the estuarine environments of Great Sandy Strait are significant scenic attractions adding to the value of the Region.

Existence, bequest and inspiration values

People derive satisfaction from simply knowing that places such as the Great Sandy Region exist, even though they may never visit it. Bequest values are motivated by benevolence and relate to the satisfaction individuals derive from the transfer of the values of the Great Sandy Region to future generations. The outstanding beauty and natural forces of the Region are inspirational for people throughout

the world and allow for contemplation of humanity's place in nature.

Water catchment values

The sandmasses of Fraser Island and Cooloola contain extensive reserves of high quality groundwater. The townships and areas of settlement within the Region depend upon these groundwater supplies. The interaction between surface and groundwater has a fundamental influence on the ecological and geomorphological processes of the Region.

Purposes of management

The Great Sandy Region will continue to be managed for the following purposes:

- to protect, conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit to future generations the physical landscape, biological, cultural heritage and other significant values of the entire Great Sandy Region, together with the components and processes required for their continuance;
- to meet Australia's international obligations under the World Heritage Convention for the protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the Fraser Island World Heritage Property;
- to provide meaningful opportunities for Traditional Owners to be involved in and consulted about the planning and management of the Great Sandy Region;
- to foster a secure community setting for people living in the Region;
- to allow for the provision of essential and appropriate public utilities, services and structures for the residents of, and visitors to, the Great Sandy Region consistent with the protection of the Region's values;
- consistent with the protection of values, to provide a diversity of high-quality recreation opportunities to ensure that the widest possible cross-section of the community is able to experience and appreciate the Great Sandy Region, commensurate with their needs, interests, capabilities and expectations; and
- to ensure that development and resource harvesting activities occurring within the Great Sandy Region are conducted in an ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable manner.