

June 2004

Integrating coastal and marine park management into regional NRM plans



Guiding Integration

This module supports the Regional NRM *Guidelines for developing a Regional Natural Resource Management Plan and Regional Investment Strategy in Queensland*.

Coastal planning

Integrated coastal zone management brings together the environmental, social, cultural and economic elements that comprise the natural and built environments of coastal catchments including estuarine and marine environments. Integrated coastal zone management is supported by State policies and legislation.

Findings from the State of the Environment Queensland 1999 Report (www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/state_of_the_environment/) show that the condition of Queensland's coastal resources is generally good, however some coastal resources continue to decline.

The State Coastal Management Plan (SCMP) and Regional Coastal Management Plans (RCMP) are prepared under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*. These plans have the effect of State Planning Policies under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* i.e. the SCMP and RCMPs must be considered in development assessment and when making other plans such as local government planning schemes, infrastructure and regional plans.

Where coastal management issues are relevant to regional NRM plans, the NRM plans must ensure consistency with and support State and Regional Coastal Management Plans.

Current initiatives in coastal planning

There are four main instruments that should be taken into account by NRM Regional Plans:

1. State Coastal Management Plan

The SCMP sets the State level direction and policy framework for coastal management. Broad-scale coastal resources, their values and pressures impacting on those values are identified in Chapter 1. The SCMP contains ten topic areas, each with a coastal management outcome, principles and policies. Topics of relevance to NRM include:

- Identifying areas of State significance for coastal management;
- Targets for improving sewage treatment works that discharge to coastal waters;
- Climate change issues as part of managing physical coastal processes;
- Protecting coastal wetlands;
- Retaining and managing vegetation in riparian corridors;
- Rehabilitating, restoring and enhancing degraded coastal resources; and
- Sharing information between government agencies and with industry and the community.

State and local governments must incorporate the SCMP in all planning and development assessment decision-making. To meet the regional NRM plan accreditation criteria, NRM regional bodies must ensure that the SCMP and any relevant RCMP measures are considered and complemented by NRM regional plans.

Opportunities for integrating NRM and coastal planning processes include sharing of information on issues such as dune erosion, rocky foreshores, migratory birds, rare and threatened coastal species and coastal wetlands. This information and its interpretation

should be shared among State agencies, local government and regional NRM bodies as required. Where a RCMP is not yet available, the SCMP should be incorporated into the development of a regional overview, aspirational targets and resource condition targets. Figure 1 is a summary of the relevant links between the stages of NRM and coastal plans.

2. Regional Coastal Management Plans

Regional Coastal Management Plans (RCMPs) operate in conjunction with the State Coastal Plan and include specific policies and information for the application of State Coastal Plan policies to geographic areas. Regional coastal plans contain spatial information such as resource and interpretive maps.¹ A RCMP is, and has effect as, a State Planning Policy that local governments must incorporate into local government planning schemes and development assessment.

Regional coastal plans define the boundaries of areas such as coastal management districts and key coastal sites. The coastal management district identifies areas where the EPA has concurrence agency or assessment manager powers for development assessment under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*.

Key coastal sites guide decision makers to identify desired coastal management outcomes and provide detailed information on coastal resources and values.

Regional NRM plans should incorporate RCMP policies, sites and information in developing management actions and targets. The web site www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/coast_and_oceans/coastal_management/regional_coastal_management_plans identifies boundaries of RCMPs. The web site www.nrm.qld.gov.au/regional_planning identifies the regional boundaries for Regional NRM Plans.

3. Marine Parks

Under the *Marine Parks Act 1982*, Marine Parks are established over tidal lands and waters to protect and conserve specific areas. These parks allow for the planned multiple-use for many different activities and uses.

Marine parks protect habitats including wetlands, seagrass beds, mudflats, sandbanks, beaches, rocky outcrops and fringing reefs. Marine park boundaries include the tidal water and land, subsoil and airspace above the boundaries. Flora and fauna within the boundary are also part of the marine park.

Management objectives common to all marine parks are:

- To protect and preserve plants and wildlife, ecosystems and features of special scientific, archaeological or cultural importance;
- To encourage natural history appreciation and awareness; and
- To ensure the marine park remains a diverse, resilient and productive ecological system while allowing user groups to access its resources.

Each marine park has a zoning plan that defines the zones and prescribes activities allowed within each zone. Designated areas allow for special management of some locations within zones. Regulations provide the criteria for assessing applications for permission for particular

¹ State coverage of Regional Coastal Plans are outlined in the *State Coastal Management Plan- Queensland's Coastal Policy*

activities. Marine park management plans may also be developed to provide more specific management for particular areas or zones.

Management of activities or areas adjacent to marine parks needs to take into account the impacts on the marine park and any related marine park plans. Marine park management plans may contain management targets and performance indicators to monitor the impacts of activities that must be considered by NRM planning as part of the identification of critical environmental values of the marine environment. The plans may also assist in the identification of areas for target setting and management action. Figure 2 is a summary of the links between regional NRM planning and planning for marine parks.

Some areas are also protected under the *Fisheries Act 1994*² and the *Fisheries Regulation 1995* that include provisions stipulating the conditions for 'management, use, development and protection of fisheries resources and fish habitats, and the management of aquaculture activities, and for related purposes.

For further information on Marine Parks, visit the EPA/QPWS website www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_forests/marine_parks

4. Reef Water Quality Protection Plan

A joint initiative of the Queensland and Commonwealth governments, the *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan for catchments adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area* October 2003 provides coordinated actions addressing the risk to the Great Barrier Reef from declining quality of water entering the reef. In particular, the plan addresses diffuse sources of pollutants entering waterways in the reef catchment by focussing on chemical, sediment and nutrient pollutants arising from land use activities, and the rehabilitation and conservation of areas that have a role in removing water-borne pollutants.

The Reef Plan addresses these elements through:

- Improving decision-making in land use planning;
- Adopting sustainable production systems;
- Rehabilitating damaged wetlands and riparian areas; and,
- Conserving existing wetland and riparian areas.

Relevant NRM regional bodies are required to undertake a number of actions under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, including actions on developing appropriate resource condition targets, partnerships, research projects and developing education programs. The Reef Plan objectives (page 6) are relevant to setting aspirational and resource condition targets in regional NRM plans. For a detailed outline of how the above commitments can be addressed by regional NRM plans see module "Addressing the Reef Water Quality Plan in Regional NRM Planning".

The *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan for catchments adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area* can be viewed at www.deh.gov.au/coasts/pollution/reef or www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/reefwater

² *Fisheries Act 1994* can be downloaded from <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Legislation.htm>.

Linking coastal and regional NRM planning

Issues that affect the integration and coordination opportunities between planning for coastal management and marine parks and regional NRM planning include:

- Public consultation for improved dialogue with regional NRM bodies on integration opportunities which could form the basis of agreed management actions;
- Coastal and marine park planning and regional NRM planning use similar data and suffer from similar information gaps;
- Development of targets in each instrument must be complementary;
- Regional NRM bodies and coastal stakeholder group liaison including Regional Consultative Groups (regional coastal plans);
- Opportunities for improved indigenous involvement;
- Any regional coastal plans currently in draft form may be modified by their respective Regional Consultative Groups following the public submission/consultation phase;
- In areas where regional coastal plans are not drafted or finalised, the regional NRM plans may provide direction for future coastal planning; and
- Geographic boundaries between regional NRM plans and other plans/planning processes may or may not align. Cooperation across geographic boundaries will need to be negotiated.

Current status of Regional Coastal Management Plans (March 2004)

Curtis Coast -	Plan finalised.
Cardwell-Hinchinbrook -	Plan finalised.
Wet Tropics -	Plan finalised.
South-East Queensland -	Preliminary draft for internal and RCG consultation only.

Regional coastal management plans can be viewed at

www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/coast_and_oceans/coastal_management/regional_coastal_management_plans

Coastal Management inputs to Regional NRM Plans

Figures 1 and 2 summarise the likely links of coastal management plans and Marine Park planning outputs respectively to regional NRM plans. These summaries do not necessarily list all possible links to regional NRM plans.

Figure 1: Regional NRM links to State and Regional Coastal Management Plans

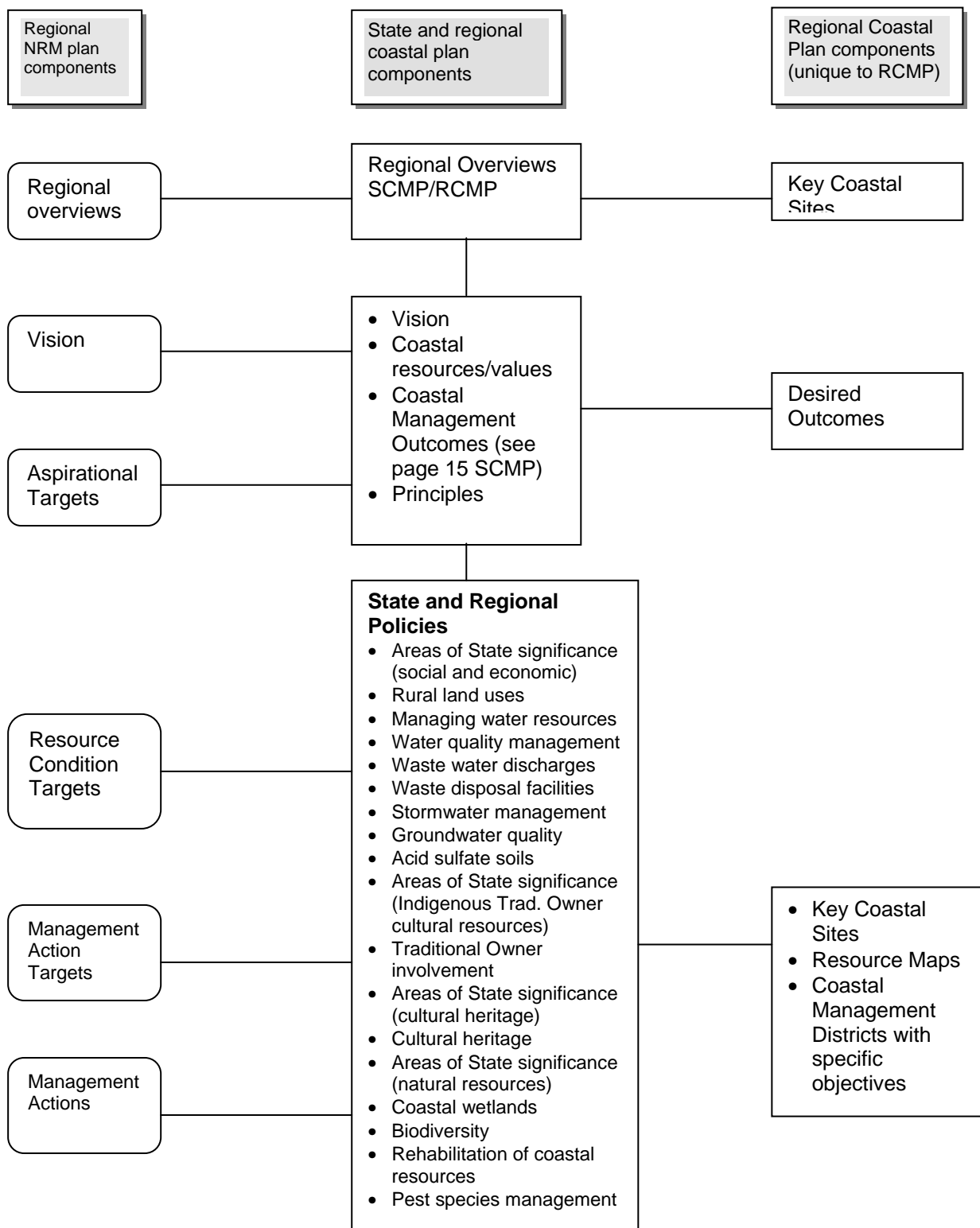
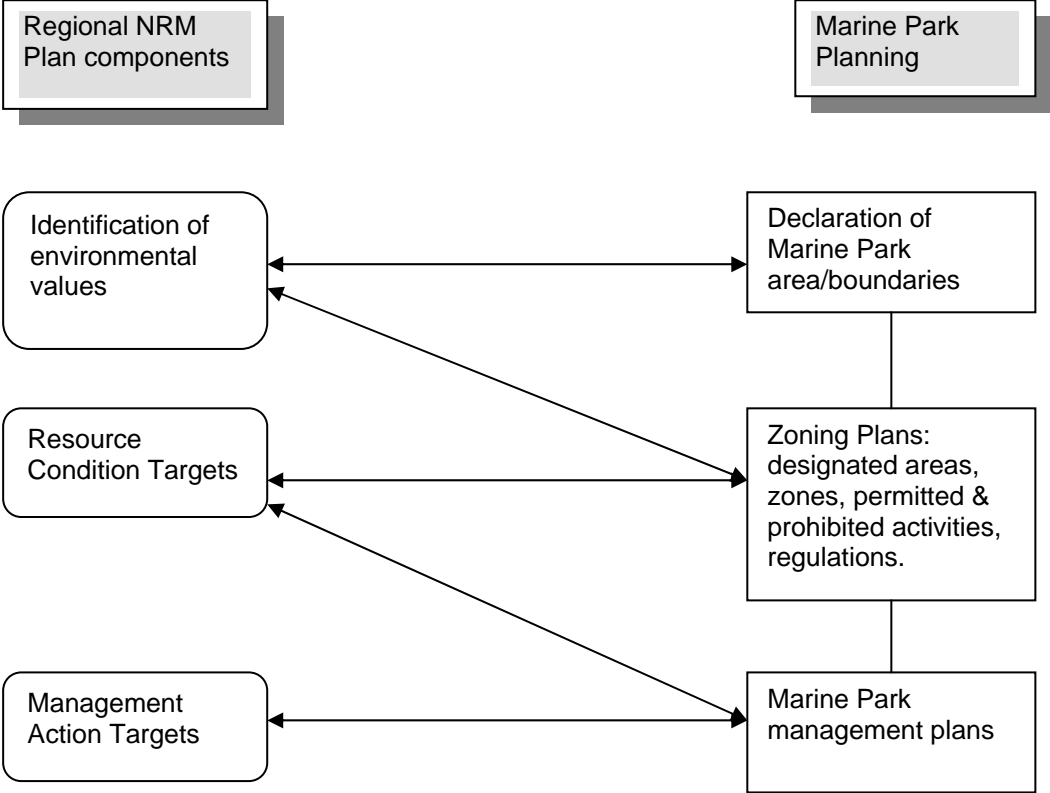


Figure 2: Regional NRM links to Marine Park Planning



Links to related planning

Coastal management plans complement other statutory and non-statutory plans including regional vegetation management plans, water resource plans, conservation and management plans for protected areas, marine park zoning plans, fisheries management plans and recreation area management plans. Most are the subject of other modules in this series.

Also relevant to coastal management are a range of **non-statutory plans** including integrated catchment management plans, regional growth management strategies, species management plans and regional and local government waste management strategies. South-East Queensland also has the benefit of a major water quality monitoring and implementation project, **Healthy Waterways**, establishing cooperative arrangements between government and community addressing waterways issues in Moreton Bay and its catchment.

Many of the planning processes have common objectives, information needs and planning measures. Opportunities may exist across projects such as:

- Research priorities including vegetation condition and loss, wetland condition and loss, environmental values and water quality;
- Development of common performance indicator sets;
- Opportunities for mutual support and implementation through the planning system, including State planning policies; and
- Opportunities for joint efforts with local government on planning scheme development and monitoring.

EPA products and services

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed the *Directory of Products and Services for regional natural resource management, planning and implementation* that provides guidance on the range of information and advice available from EPA to support the making of NRM plans. Where there is an existing coastal management planning process under development or in place, the background and synthesised data is available to regional bodies. Outputs of regional coastal planning processes for example include:

- A vision for the regional coastal area in question;
- Identification and documentation of data sets used to establish coastal plans;
- A synthesis of coastal resources, values and pressures;
- Regional policies to implement the State Coastal Plan policies through the provision of a regional context.

The *Directory of Products and Services for regional natural resource management, planning and implementation* can be found at www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications?id=735

Important contacts and support

Marine parks contacts

State-wide: Director, Planning Actions (07) 3227 6522

Regions: Cleveland (07) 3821 9003
 Gladstone (07) 4971 6515
 Cairns (07) 4046 6677
 Townsville (07) 4722 5243
 Airlie Beach (07) 4946 7022

Regional Coastal Management Plans	<i>Curtis Coast/Wide Bay</i>	<i>Cardwell Hinchinbrook</i>	<i>Wet Tropics</i>	<i>South-East Queensland</i>
Address	Principal Planner Coastal Planning EPA PO Box 3130 Rockhampton Shopping Fair QLD 4701	Principal Planner Coastal Planning EPA PO Box 5391 Townsville MC QLD 4810	Principal Planner Coastal Planning EPA PO Box 2066 Cairns Qld 4870	Principal Planner Coastal Planning EPA PO Box 155 Brisbane Albert Street QLD 4002

State Coastal Management Plan	Manager (Planning Team) Planning Division Planning Actions Branch EPA PO Box 155 Brisbane Albert Street QLD 4002 Telephone: (07) 3227 6884			
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- Cardwell.Hinchinbrook.RCMP@epa.qld.gov.au
- Wet.Tropical.Coast.RCMP@epa.qld.gov.au

Websites

Healthy Waterways

- www.healthywaterways.env.qld.gov.au/

Environmental Protection Agency – Coasts and Oceans

- www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/coast_and_oceans/