

**June 2004**

# **Supporting integration of Regional Vegetation Management Planning & regional NRM plans & arrangements**



## Guiding integration

This module is a supporting document to the *Regional NRM Plan Guidelines*<sup>1</sup>. It provides direction for regional bodies and regional agency planners, on practical approaches for improving integration between their planning activities.

In the short term, these identified approaches should guide regional bodies in developing a plan that meets **accreditation criteria** for demonstrating integration requirements<sup>2</sup>. This module also identifies some more general integration and coordination opportunities that could support longer-term healthy regional arrangements for NRM planning.

Broadly speaking, 'integration' in planning can include bringing together social, economic and environmental considerations in terms of decisions, information and stakeholders and, coordinating with other planning processes, organisations and between local, regional and broader scales.

Steps towards better integration are already occurring through the RVMP and Regional NRM planning processes. These include coordination between agencies at the regional scale for technical support; involvement of conservation, production and social interests in planning; and, participation of regional community-based planning organisations in RVMPs in most regions. This module provides guidance for building on these existing efforts and acknowledges that responsibility for ongoing integration and coordination rests with all planners; both statutory and community-based.

The guidance provided here however, does not change the existing status, roles or responsibilities of statutory regional resource planning but identifies opportunities and benefits arising from community-based regional planning and these statutory processes working more closely together.

## What is Regional Vegetation Management Planning?

Regional Vegetation Management Plans, developed under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, provide a local (bioregional) context for implementing the State Policies for vegetation management. Community involvement at all stages during the development and introduction of the vegetation management framework has been critically important. About 350 community members are or have been involved in developing 23 plans across the State. These plans have been developed by stakeholder-based *Regional Vegetation Management Committees* and *working groups* in each bioregion (see attachment A), supported by agency coordinators, planners and technical advisors.

The RVMPs are based on specific objectives for each region, reflecting State policy on vegetation management, and will include information on:

- location, type and status of vegetation (regional ecosystems) within a region, including areas that are of high nature conservation value or those that are vulnerable to land degradation

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Developing a Regional Natural Resource Management Plan and Regional Investment Strategy in Queensland, May 2003 (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> See – Table 6, Consistency with other planning processes and legislative requirements including Government planning and policy frameworks, Guidelines Module 2.

- identification of areas that should be retained and/or managed in a particular way, based on a community-agreed approach
- local leasehold guidelines and codes for assessing vegetation clearing applications on both freehold and leasehold land in the region. These will address locally relevant issues e.g. weeds, salinity control, revegetation.

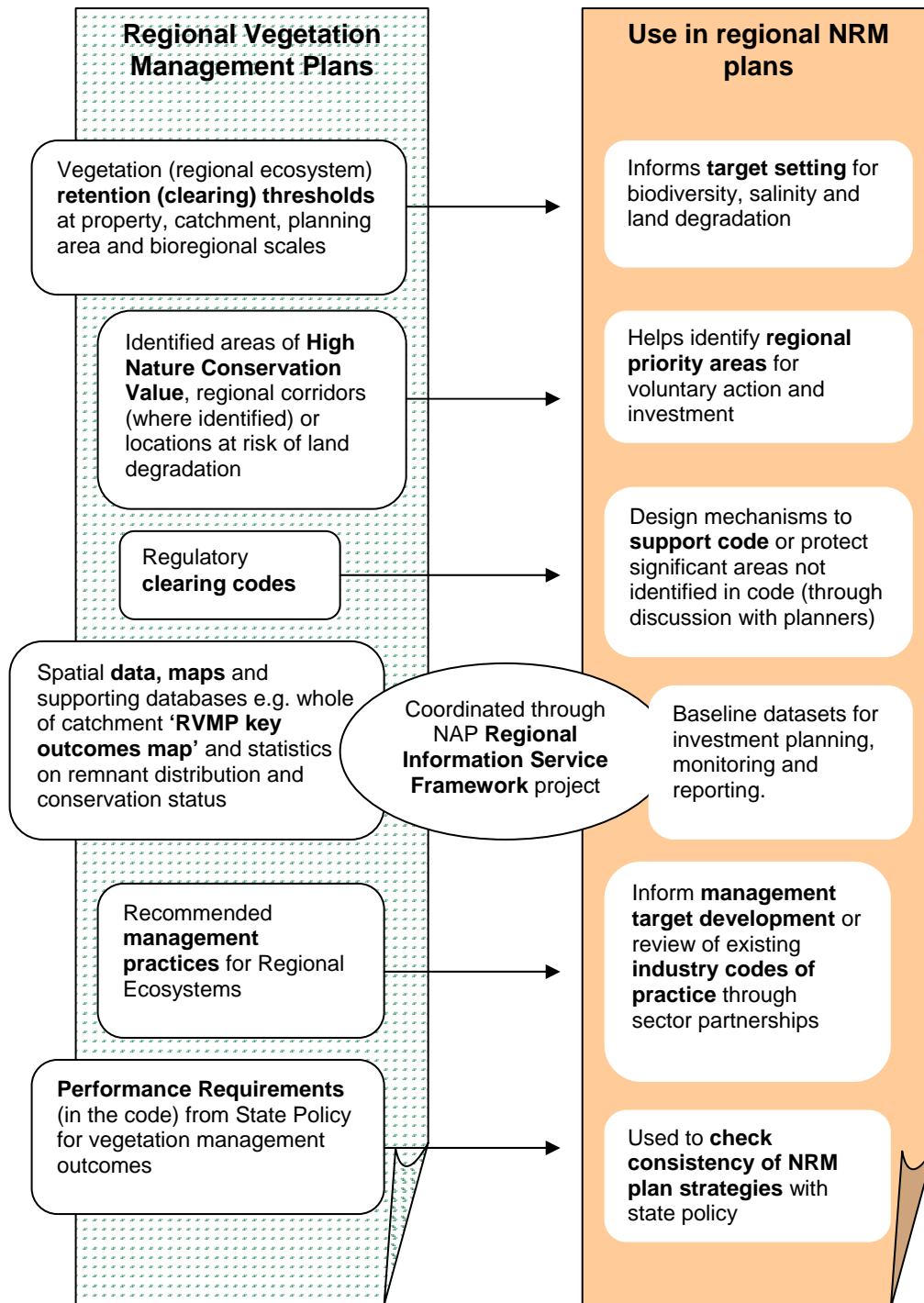
How will RVMPs be used?

- To provide guidance for vegetation management activities in the region for landholders, local and state government agencies and others
- To assess applications to clear vegetation within the region
- To record areas declared to be of high nature conservation value or to be vulnerable to land degradation
- To provide information to private property owners and give a regional context to property vegetation management plans
- To provide locally relevant good practice guidelines.

Regional Vegetation Management Plans are currently in preparation, and it is expected that public consultation will be conducted on most RVMPs early in 2003. Plans are being developed throughout Queensland and will be posted on **ResourceNet** as they become available at <http://nrm.qld.gov.au/vegetation/rvmp.html>.

## Key inputs to your regional NRM Plan

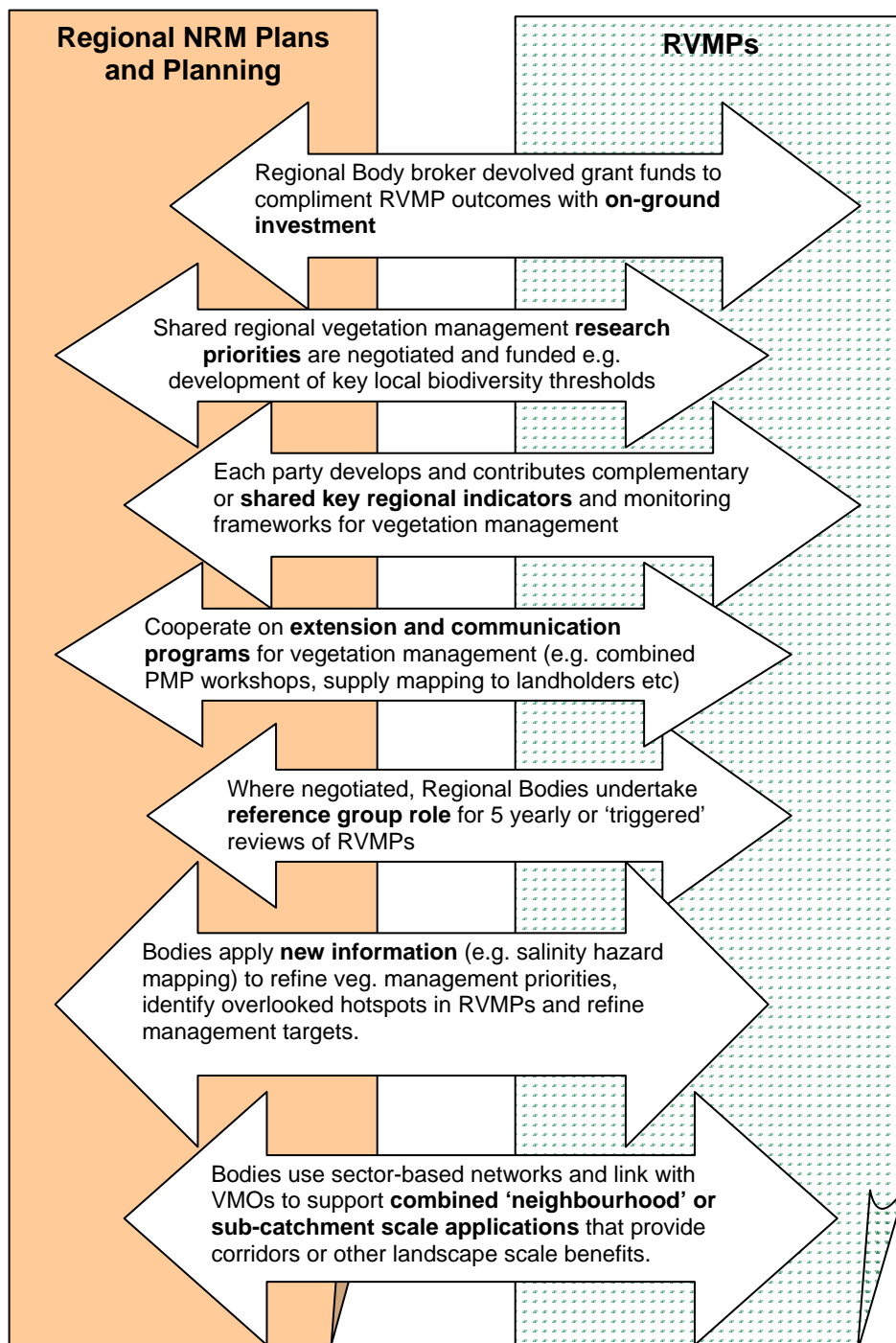
Although RVMPs may differ between regions to some extent, there are a number of important parts or products from RVMPs that should be considered as *inputs* into a Regional NRM Plan. Figure 1 below identifies some of these key inputs (left) and describes how they could be applied in the regional NRM Plan (right).



**Figure 1:** Key inputs for developing Regional NRM Plans

## Other links to consider *between* plans

There may also be a number of broader services or links between planning activities or scope for longer-term cooperation. Most of these would require discussion and negotiation between the agency and community-based planners in the regions. Figure 2 below outlines some of these broader links.



**Figure 2:** Broader or longer-term links between Plans requiring negotiation

## Barriers and issues to be resolved

Below are barriers or issues that may need to be resolved to improve integration and coordination between RVMPs and Regional NRM plans. These have been identified by RVMP planners and Regional NRM body members participating in the RVMP development process, including:

- RVMPs are still currently in draft form and are likely to be modified by the RVMCs following the public submission / consultation phase<sup>3</sup>.
- The on-going form and function of Regional Vegetation Management Committees is yet to be determined and likely to be different between planning areas.
- RVMP planning teams' contribution to NRM plan development (in terms of resources and time) still needs to be negotiated between regional agencies and regional bodies, as do the critical or priority integration activities / tasks at the regional level.
- Most NRM planning regions contain several RVMPs within their catchment/regional boundary. In some regions these plans may use different scale thresholds or different applications of the code
- In regions where the RVMPs have been drafted, the recommendations combine the best available scientific and technical information, interpreted within certain limits of RVMC negotiated socially acceptable outcomes. As a result, regional bodies need to be aware that the plans may not always recommend or provide the best possible management advice from a purely scientific or technical perspective.

## Other opportunities for better integration

1. Some suggested approaches or steps that could be taken to progress the integration and coordination opportunities between Regional Bodies and agency vegetation planners include:
2. During the RVMP 'public consultation period' regional vegetation planners increase dialogue with regional NRM bodies on integration opportunities, potentially leading to a shared integration 'work plan'. E.g. in most regions some initial investment and resourcing will be required to 'clip' together key RVMP outcomes and mapping in those regions.
3. Also considerable opportunity for regional bodies during the draft RVMP submission and review phases to use this time to assess opportunities and negotiate with vegetation planners and RVMCs.
4. Explore possible contributions of NAPSWQ State Investment Proposals (e.g. Regional Information Service, Social Assessment and Market Based Instruments projects) to support integration efforts.
5. Follow the development of Traditional Owner regional NRM reference group in the Burdekin as one possible approach for improving indigenous involvement in RVMP and Regional NRM plan development. There is real potential for joint investment in common indigenous networks.
6. Maintain RVMC technical advisory panels to support the transfer of outputs into NRM planning process – possibly through a series of targeted workshops.

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<sup>3</sup> The NAP Bilateral Agreement states - 'Queensland will use its best endeavours to ensure that RVMP covering the Priority Investment Regions are completed to inform the development of NRM plans. In accordance with the accreditation criteria once Regional Vegetation Management Plans are completed, NRM plans (including vegetation targets and strategies for their achievement) will be reviewed and revised if necessary to ensure consistency.' In the NAP priority regions, the relevant plans for all four regions will be finalised by June 2003'.

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7. Build operational links between regional NRM body implementation officers and agency vegetation and pest management officers
8. Initiate discussions on mutual reporting protocols between NRM bodies and regional vegetation plan implementation. E.g. on changing RE status or geographical priorities; investment strategies and outcomes from devolved grant applications; and potential nodes of neighbourhood catchment collaborators.

## Important contacts, support and further information

Key regional contacts for Regional Vegetation Management Planning are:

Region	Contact	Phone
Central West: (Rockhampton):		49 384615
South West: (Dalby)	Peter Voller	46 881166
South East / Metro: (Nambour):		54 512270
North:(Townsville):	Michael McDougall	47 997126

These contacts will also be able to put you in touch with:

- regional *Vegetation Management Officers*
- members of the *Regional Vegetation Management Committees* in your area, and,
- the agency-based *Technical Advisory Panels* that provide advice to the *Committees* and *Working groups*.

Other possible support for integration could include the emerging regional agency coordination groups or support agreements identified in the agencies 'Prospectus' under development.

Follow this link to the NR&M factsheet on [www.nrm.qld.gov.au/factsheets/pdf.vegetation/v17.pdf](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/factsheets/pdf.vegetation/v17.pdf) or visit [www.nrm.qld.gov.au/vegetation](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/vegetation) for further information on the *Vegetation Management Act 1999, State Policies for vegetation management on Leasehold and Freehold land* and related information.

This module is one in a series of guidance products linked to the Regional NRM Plan Guidelines. Related modules (under development) include, Coastal management planning; Regional Growth management Frameworks; Water Resource Planning and others.

For a full list of **guidance materials** as they become available visit the regional NRM website at [www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au](http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au)

## Appendix 1 – Regional Vegetation Management Planning Areas

