

6. Models, Tools and Templates for partnership

In this chapter, we propose or discuss some ‘models’ for partnership within various sectors and across sectors. They have been directed firstly at the sector-based structure of the Burnett Mary region but, as much as possible, we attempt to provide concepts here that may apply in other regions. As well as the first-hand observations and discussions in the Burnett Mary Region, they are based on literature review, past experiences and studies in NRM, and discussions with people in other NRM Regions. The first section in fact discusses several partnership approaches evident within Victorian Catchment Management Authorities but not generally developed in the same way in Queensland. They provide food for thought as well as background to some of the options proposed in later sections in this Chapter.

Before proceeding into this chapter it is useful to clarify terms that may in some places appear interchangeable but do have intended, though often subtle, differences in meaning – the terms collaboration, cooperation, partnership, network and alliance. Oliver, Whelan and McKenzie (2004), who have sorted through the relevant literature as part of the ‘Dialogue and Knowledge Exchange’ project of the Cooperative Research Centre for Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterways Management, provide answers directly applicable to the NRM partnership environment.

Collaboration occurs when two or more participants work together to achieve goals that are mutually beneficial to participants. Collaboration may also involve acts of *cooperation* where the participants do not realise a direct benefit, yet may be involved because the collaboration fulfils values that are important to them.

Usually, people collaborate with others to achieve goals that would be unachievable working individually.... If participants decide to share the power present in a collaborative relationship, then the relationship becomes one of *partnership* (Oliver, Whelan & Mackenzie 2004, p.7).

We define a partnership as a collaborative relationship in which participants cooperate and share power present in the relationship to achieve goals that are desired by, or beneficial to, all who may be affected (Whelan and Oliver 2005, p.11).

McCabe, Lowndes and Skelcher (1997) distinguish between networks and partnerships as follows:

Networks operate through links between individuals and shared interests. They are informal arrangements with indistinct boundaries and fluid memberships. *Partnerships* involve links between organisations and are formally constituted with fixed memberships and clearer boundaries. Networks and partnerships exist alongside each other. Sometimes a network is formalised and becomes a partnership. Often informal networks continue to operate in parallel with partnerships (McCabe, Lowndes & Skelcher 1997, p. 39).

Oliver and Whelan (2003) add to understanding the network concept as follows:

Stoker and Young (1993) identify the characteristics of effectively functioning *networks* as: a recognition of dependency; pooling of resources; exchange of information; development of trust; a mutual orientation; and a commitment over the long haul. However, these characteristics do not highlight the effect of the relationships that make up networks, or the way in which these relationships may be used as a collective tool to achieve mutually beneficial and desired, or otherwise unachievable goals (Oliver & Whelan 2003, p.12).

Oliver and Whelan provide a literal definition of *Alliance* as ‘any joining of efforts or interests by persons, families, states or organisations’ (Oliver & Whelan 2003, p.12). Note however that the term *Alliance* has been adopted in the business world to signify a special relationship between a complementary group of companies working together on a major project, with the client as part of the alliance, not merely contracting a job. In this situation Alliance operates by the following principles:

- decisions made on the basis of ‘best for project’
- responsibilities clearly defined within a ‘no blame’ culture
- innovation is to be encouraged and provide a key driver to the success of the project
- the parties to provide reasonable access to all personnel, materials and other resources needed for a successful project; and
- all communications to be open and based on a relationship of trust and honesty. (Relationship-first Contracting 2002).

6.1 Victorian partnership initiatives

The following information on some approaches to partnerships within NRM in Victoria was gleaned from visits to six Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs). There does not appear to be any reason why any of these should work better under statutory governance (as with Victorian CMAs) than the non-statutory status of Queensland regional bodies.

1. Landcare partnership support

Landcare is a well-established and important part of natural resource management in Victoria, claiming over 800 groups and over 40% of landholders having landcare membership. Support is quite structured, with a state-wide recommended framework for employing support staff at three levels: regional coordinator based with the Catchment Management Authority (CMA); network coordinator and Landcare facilitator (State of Victoria 2004). The network coordinator position presumes the establishment of networks of perhaps 10-15 groups. The Landcare facilitator position is a support position of more localised nature when finances and projects make the position possible and warranted. Networks have a steering committee, which either directly employs the network coordinator or oversees the program for a coordinator employed by the CMA.

The contribution of landcare groups to Regional Investment Strategies varies, with some regions seeing them as key contributors and others perhaps believing that the volunteer model cannot deliver what is required. The following brief case example of Landcare in the Corangamite Region illustrates high-level support for a valued sector.

In Corangamite Region there are about 160 natural resource management groups (about half are called landcare groups), with 20 Landcare coordinators serving nine networks of groups. Each network is an incorporated body and employs the coordinators. Each group in the network has a representative on the network executive committee. Landcare project agreements with the networks amount to about \$2.5m of the region’s \$8m allocation. Projects generally have 2-3 year agreements. One interesting feature, and much in line with the principles of the ‘triple line tender’ concept in our progression to partnership model, is a requirement that the social outcomes be included, through capacity building or other social capital benefits.

Corangamite CMA has established a long-term partnership relationship with landcare groups and has taken leadership in developing, with the groups, a comprehensive and systematic support

strategy. This was developed through three workshops that used an 'Appreciative Enquiry' approach: participants first shared their success stories; from this, key reasons for success were distilled; visions were renewed and ideas to help Landcare move forward were discussed. A support strategy document was then compiled using '7 doors' or arenas for attention. Support for groups seeking partnerships to achieve goals threaded through several of these arenas. Two examples are:

Arena 2: (Understanding the benefits): develop funding proposals in partnership with schools; work in partnership with schools for Landcare to be included in the school curriculum; form partnerships with the media in a marketing strategy.

Arena 3 (Build skills): group capacity building in developing/ managing partnerships; develop group capacity to form partnerships with corporate and philanthropic investors; develop stronger partnerships between landcare groups and agricultural industry groups.

The strategy advocates use of the 'Being Investor Ready' package designed to assist landcare groups seek support from business, and it has indicated investment of \$5000 per year to support groups to develop partnerships to access multiple funding sources.

(Sources: Corangamite CMA 2004 [Landcare Support Strategy] and discussions at Corangamite CMA Head Office March 2006).

2. Implementation committees

When CMAs were established provision was made for sub-regional management of implementation of NRM Plan objectives through implementation committees, generally selected by the CMA Board from nominees. Over time some regions are adjusting the role to de-emphasise implementation management and re-invent a consultative or advisory committee approach. Without knowing the reasons for a trend away from implementation committees in some regions, it is useful to look at their functions in relation to established regional structures in Queensland. While this may appear more of a governance issue than a partnership issue, the partnership strategy is very dependent on whether or not a subregional management structure exists. As a case study we look briefly at two of three Implementation Committees in the Goulburn-Broken Catchment: Shepparton Irrigation Area Committee and the Mid Goulburn Committee.

The Shepparton Irrigation Region Implementation Committee members are selected according to their specific skills and links to community networks. Working Groups operate for four program areas: farm and environment; surface drainage; sub-surface drainage; and waterways. The working groups have community and stakeholder representatives. Agency staff provide technical input through a Plan Implementation Support Committee, the working groups and project teams.

The Mid Goulburn Implementation Committee's Business Plan gives Landcare a key part in the delivery of most natural resource programs. Landcare groups help develop projects and lead local communities in practical land management at a local level. The employment of Landcare coordinators has helped obtain the support needed for project success. Local Area Planning, involving two or three landcare groups with assistance of a coordinator, is a feature of this catchment's operations. Local area plans enable on-ground work goals to be developed in an integrated and cost-effective way.

These two cases give the impression that some committees are very 'works' oriented and others are facilitators of community action. This may be a feature of the different landscape issues and the types of landholders in each area. The concept of local area planning has appeal, where two or

three contiguous landcare groups can pool efforts to gain funds and share resources for common issues. This is similar to the syndicating option presented in section 6.2.

(Source: Goulburn Broken CMA website and discussions at the CMA Head Office, Shepparton, March 2006).

3. Agency partnership

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) appears to have positioned itself as a service provider to CMAs (who have the funds for implementation programs). The nature and extent of this CMA-DPI partnership varies. North-Central CMA have recently contracted the DPI for a three year period to deliver 'on-ground' landholder projects such as fencing, revegetation, extension and water use efficiency using an area management (i.e. geographical) approach.

The partnership relationship is bedded in an MOU (setting out operational principles, processes, standards and relationships; and emphasising values of trust, collaboration, productivity, team work and mutual respect) and Service Level Agreements (defining the products and services to be provided and arrangements to monitor performance).

Delivery entails a new approach with acronym PACE (Partnerships, Action, Community Effectiveness). It is based on case management: a single point of contact for all services within a defined area. (This is to overcome previous overlap in service with different incentive programs of different value for the one activity). There is also a team to develop a single suite of incentives, a team to coordinate works on a property to ensure cost effectiveness and additional professional advice service as back up for the case manager.

A Partnership Steering Committee monitors the implementation of the case management model and considers recommendations from the Implementation Committees in relation to regional delivery. A strict monitoring regime has been put in place for all projects to ensure that problems in the system are revealed and corrected.

The new system appears partly to have arisen in response to a situation in which field officers are employed by CMA while DPI in Victoria also maintains a field service. Under the new arrangements, several CMA staff have been transferred into DPI. This situation seems unlikely to be a problem in Queensland at the moment, but does signal the need for regional bodies to work in collaboration with agencies on incentive development and delivery methods rather than set up a parallel structure.

(Source North Central CMA 2005 and discussions at the CMA Head Office, March 2006).

4. South West Sustainability Partnership

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is part of a partnership of fourteen bodies comprising five shires, three water boards, three tertiary education institutes, a coastal management board and a government agency as well as the CMA. This partnership demonstrates a remarkable level of shared values, commitment and trust for long-term partnership. The partnership facilitates joint initiatives through cooperation, collaboration and free exchange of information.

The goal is to initiate a structure to support the implementation of regional sustainability initiatives based on a new paradigm of collaboration and partnering within the region, and engagement with government and external stakeholders. The ways in which the goal is to be achieved include:

- the partners adopt a sustainability charter
- policies and protocols be established to support the charter and the interaction between the partners
- the partners individually agree to undertake activities to promote the adoption of sustainability within their individual responsibility and control
- admission of new partners to the partnership be governed by their commitment to incorporation of sustainability principles within their activities
- create further partnerships and networks with non-partner organisations to promote the sustainability initiative (South West Sustainability Blueprint).

Some of the planned actions are worth noting, particularly in the educational arena:

- develop mentoring relationships between primary and secondary schools, higher education facilities and industry in developing sustainability initiatives.
- develop curricula incorporating sustainability linked with project activity.
- assess the emerging skills requirement in trades and services associated with sustainability and design new training programs to develop these skills.
- design training programs for elected representatives and board members to increase the understanding and adoption of sustainability within institutional activities.

(This is just a small selection from the Blueprint's action list).

The Blueprint is interesting in that admission of new partners is governed by commitment to incorporation of sustainability principles into their activities, but the Blueprint makes no mention of a self-audit or peer review of progress in adoption. Some of the partners such as water boards might find this a step away from the way these bodies usually operate. It will be interesting to see how well the principles become embedded in the organisations, so that when the initiating enthusiasts move on, the partnership itself is indeed sustainable.

(Sources: South west sustainability blueprint, Glenelg Hopkins CMA website and discussions at CMA Head Office, Hamilton, March 2006).

5. Workshops for partnership formation

Acting on recommendations from their Land and Water Community Advisory Committees, the North East CMA has adopted a 'more inclusive investment planning and engagement model designed to maximize stakeholder input into investment planning' (North East CMA 2006).

The process involved a review and development of a regional priorities document; call for expressions of interest (EOIs); and then a collaborative process to develop projects.

The EOIs were evaluated for alignment with the priorities. EOI's that aligned with the investment priorities progressed to the collaborative project development process. Importantly, EOI's not identified for further project development in the Investment Program were supported with assistance through coordinators and project staff to access alternative State and Australian Government funding programs.

The collaborative approach for eligible EOIs worked as follows:

1. All groups and organisations who had submitted an EOI that aligned to the strategic investment priorities were invited to a workshop to explore opportunities for further project development. Additionally representatives from both the CMA Land & Water Community Advisory Committees and a CMA Board Member attended the workshop. The outcome of this initial workshop was to identify and scope new projects to be

- included in the 2006-07 Regional Catchment Investment Plan. All new projects and indicative budgets were agreed to by the project development working group by consensus;
2. Identified project proponents developed the project detail within the scope of the project brief developed at the first project development workshop.
 3. A second project development workshop was convened for project proponents to present the developed RCIP project to the project development working group. Each new project was reviewed in detail by the project development group who by consensus confirmed the developed project met the original scope identified in the first workshop and was ready for RCIP submission (North East CMA 2006).

This appears to be an excellent way to develop cross-sector collaborative project partnerships (refer chapter 3 section 3.12 and chapter 6, section 6.8).

(Source: North East CMA 2006 (regional Investment Program) and discussions at North East CMA Wodonga office, March 2006).

6. Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum – breaking down the silos

Gippsland Integrated Natural Resources Forum (GINRF) was formed as a coalition aiming to ensure cooperation of many agencies involved in NRM. Approximately 60 NRM related organisations participate (with quarterly gatherings) and it has an executive group of ten senior representatives of the member organisations. It covers the areas of both East and West Gippsland CMAs, representing the bulk of south-eastern Victoria. The role of the Forum is to achieve a cooperative and strategic approach to natural resource management in the region. Membership includes government departments, catchment management authorities, municipal councils, rural and urban water authorities, universities, private industry, regional development bodies, community-based groups, and some cross agency groups (such as Gippsland Research Coordination Group).

Five strategic elements direct the Forum's activities:

- leadership - a visionary approach to integrated natural resource management in Gippsland
- collaboration - agreement on priorities and alignment of action
- knowledge - better decisions through greater access, use and generation of research and knowledge
- strategy - facilitating the development and implementation of major natural resource strategies (such as the Regional Catchment Strategies)
- reporting - annual, independent reporting on the condition and stewardship of Gippsland's natural resources.

By comparison with a Queensland example of a large multi-organisational coalition, the Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchment Partnership, GINRF appears less productive in research and publications, but perhaps shows higher capability to engage in cooperative strategic dialogue. GINRF have followed the South East Queensland model in developing a regional NRM scorecard. The purpose of the scorecard is to foster the strategic integration of natural resource management, provide a credible independent and regular evaluation of natural resource management in Gippsland and cultivate a strong regional identity for Gippsland based on natural resources. It assesses twelve assets. Features are reliance on multi-agency commitment and low cost (National Land and Water Resources Audit 2006). Scorecards in South East Queensland have been very effective in motivating local government authorities to form action partnerships to

eliminate F ratings (for example, the recent announcement of the Oxley Creek Taskforce involving three councils, developers, community and agencies). Should the Burnett Mary region want to use this lever, a modification of the GINRF low cost option covering broader resource condition might have better application than the South East Queensland approach, which focuses heavily on water quality.

Is there a role for a coalition such as this in the Burnett Mary? Perhaps the Regional Planning Advisory Committee provides a structure – does it enable the same level of dialogue on integration of natural resource management research and implementation as is possible through a coalition such as the above. Is BMRG in a position to catalyse or coordinate this type of cooperation, or is it already happening through cross-sector partnership processes?

(Sources: National Land & Water Resources Audit—Main Report 35 *Case Studies of Current Regional/Catchment Integrated Assessments*, GINRF website, and discussions at West Gippsland CMA office Leongatha, March 2006).

6.2 Landcare partnership options

Landcare in the Burnett Mary is recovering from a low point that accompanied policy and funding changes in the transition from NHT1 to NHT2. Less than two years ago there were just 15 groups, some almost dormant. The Byron, Curtis and Mackay survey of rural landholders in 2004 (PAP 1.1) found that just 18 % of respondents classified as farmers were landcare group members and 9% of non-farmer landholder respondents were in landcare groups. This compares poorly with some interstate averages; for instance in 2002 an estimated 42% of Victorian broadacre and dairyfarmers were members of a landcare group (The 2002 Second Generation Landcare Taskforce). During research for this project, two interviewees from other sectors spoke of landcare groups being more active in the past – ‘it seems to have gone out of fashion’. The mini-resurgence over the past eighteen months is very welcome, and there appears much scope to go further.

The recovery has been largely due to BMRG’s strategy to fund landcare groups as an alliance or network. A joint project funding arrangement, quarterly network meetings, a newsletter, invitations to each others’ events and some sharing of knowledge and resources have done much to generate energy to work together. This energy has led to increased interest in landcare, with the number of groups increasing to 23 in a little over a year.

Groups were initially linked through a short-term collaborative project (2004). This helped develop relationships and build trust between the various landcare groups and between BMRG and the groups – essential pre-requisites for a successful longer-term partnership. Steps towards partnership have progressed further with the current funding: the ‘alliance’ between groups is now working well enough to continue, at least while support funding of this nature continues. However we might also ask – how will the ‘partnership’ stand up to restricted funding? Are there enough benefits in sharing knowledge, ideas, resources to continue the network communication? Would the groups act as an alliance to exert collective influence or gain sponsorship dollars or form other creative partnerships? Do the groups have common goals that they can best achieve by sharing and swapping resources even if there are no supporting dollars? Are the groups committed to each other or just hanging about together because that is a requirement of the dollar support?

The question this section addresses is ‘what are the options to move forward in partnership from here?’ We propose some alternatives for consideration.

Some options:

1. Freedom

There are strong philosophical grounds for landcare groups not to want to make more formal commitments to partnerships or accept responsibilities wider than their local area. Landcare is about local grassroots groups tackling the local issues the group thinks important. The bait of dollars available if the group fits in with priorities from above has been resisted by some, but generally landcare groups have gravitated towards relevant projects for which grants are available.

In the Burnett Mary, the current arrangement provides a reasonable amount of coordinator support, much needed to keep the groups moving forwards, with little imposition over priorities and strategies for action. Some groups may fear that going into more formal partnership arrangements might lead to commitments that meet regional priorities but not necessarily the group’s local priorities.

It is noted that in Victoria, where the ‘Landcare’ term (though perhaps not the concept) began, support has recently been provided (under ‘Second Generation Landcare’) to groups without strings attached: ‘support for what Landcare wants to be, giving capacity for Landcare to function as a movement; putting back into the community to run itself’ (CMA Manager, pers. comm., March 2006). Base funding plus an amount per registered member is provided. This follows a period where landcare volunteers tended to be seen (or at least perceived themselves as) on-ground work-horses for government programs. Dealing with this and other issues, the 2004 Victorian Landcare Forum (300 attendees) identified concerns about local control for landcare as follows:

- There are concerns that Landcare is being dictated to by CMAs and government.
- Losing ownership of group agenda/needs by having to comply with government policy, programs and priorities.
- Differences between how landcare people see themselves and how CMAs/government see them (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005, p.49).

The Second Generation Grants should appease some of these concerns, freeing groups to exist on their own terms. This augers well for Landcare as a movement, as Victorian Landcare has been seen by many as a government-initiated program without appreciating the spirit with which the members themselves took it up.

2. Choosing alliances

Some groups wishing to overcome their resource and capabilities limitations may opt to join forces in more formal alliances or syndicates with other groups with similar goals. This will entail making formal commitments to a project’s outcomes, even to the extent of putting in more than anticipated if another party is unable to deliver what was expected. This is likely to be in small syndicates rather than whole-regional commitments, with one clique of groups interested in production grazing management, another in pasture management for lifestylers, another in urban landcare and so on.

Syndicate formation could take place at a regional landcare meeting that explores interests in the various issues, and forms syndicates that then develop activity proposals for their key issue. One incorporated group would be lead agent in a contractual agreement and responsible for allocations to partner groups. Syndicates could strengthen projects by forming cross-sector partnerships with agencies such as DPI, local government or business (particularly agribusiness).

3. Cluster or Catchment networks

A more structured way to link groups with common interest would be to break the regional landcare network into Cluster or Catchment networks. In the Burnett Mary this would mean four networks for the four clusters (or the four catchment groupings suggested in section 6.3.)

Advantages of this over other options are:

- a discrete group within reasonable travel distance of each other and likely to have similar issues
- this encourages strong relationship development and sharing of resources, which could lead to a long-term network partnership
- some incentive to promote the formation of other landcare groups within their cluster/catchment area
- a non-competitive way to put together strong bids for business - landcare sponsorship or partnerships with businesses having some allegiance to the cluster/catchment area
- opportunity to negotiate the type of partnership relationship with the region that best suits each network.

If each network were to expand (say to 10 rather than 5 or 6 groups), there would be strong argument for a landcare coordinator for each landcare network. Alternatively if catchments have coordinators (one possibility to consider), the coordinator might also facilitate landcare cluster group communication and project development (in both cases, part time project officers for individual groups might be assumed to continue).

Networks are operating in several parts of Victoria, and some Catchment Management Authorities see them as effective in implementing substantial land management programs. North-East CMA has 5 network coordinators for 55 landcare groups. Corangamite CMA has nine landcare networks employing twenty Landcare coordinators.

4. A regional partnership

Advantages of a whole regional landcare network that might become a powerful partnership appear to be:

- easier to negotiate with the region on policy and funding issues related to landcare support
- opportunity to put together stronger and more comprehensive bids for business-landcare partnership than option 3
- economies of facilitation staff and communication (e.g. just one newsletter needed).
- a wider net for creative ideas and resource sharing
- opportunity to appreciate and debate the range of values and methods of operation within the Landcare movement.

Disadvantages appear to be:

- it would seem more difficult to generate a ‘partnership’ ethos – perhaps groups would stick together while it is good for the group, but not completely trust some other groups (relationships and trust will be harder to establish)
- some groups need to travel long distances to network meetings, making it less likely that group members other than the paid project officer will attend (a serious disadvantage, particularly if meetings require decisions on behalf of the group)
- as groups grow, as must surely be a target, organisational problems increase; achieving consensus in a large group becomes more difficult, and more people have to travel long distances than through other options
- loss of some of the advantages listed in 3 above.

Another option would be to have cluster networks but also an annual regional landcare network meeting. West Gippsland has four networks (for 77 groups), with the Chair of each network steering committee plus the network coordinators meeting together with the regional body quarterly.

In line with the principle that Landcare is about grassroots decisions, it is not really our place to recommend that the regional body adopt any one of the above options. We do recommend that Landcare groups have opportunity to know the options and discuss them at a regional network meeting, then either stay as they are or move in one or other direction as the consensus determines. Our sense is that, while the regional network appears to be working well at the moment (and you might say if it’s not broken don’t fix it), if expansion of Landcare is a target this would probably happen quickest under option 3, where neighbouring groups would see advantages in fostering more groups within the cluster.

In terms of alliances or partnerships, while the regional network’s wider pool of ideas and linkages is an important advantage, we think that relationships and trust between landcare groups and between the groups and local government or business will develop better under the more localised cluster system (forming partnerships further along our ‘progression in community partnership’ scale).

In terms of formality of partnerships, it needs to be acknowledged that building of relationships and trust and appreciation of organisational ‘culture’ are key elements of partnerships that take time, and are not helped by premature rush to formality. On the other hand, guaranteed commitments from one party are likely to make another party confident to increase its own commitment. Guaranteed commitments promote reciprocal commitments that another party might otherwise be reluctant to risk. Landcare groups reluctant to make formal commitments to regional bodies or other landcare groups outside their local ‘mission’ area (case 1 above) need to weigh up the potential loss to their own cause by not doing so.

6.3 Catchment management partnership model

This section reviews some features of Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) as applied in Queensland². ICM principles underlie the structure, mission and goals of organisations in BMRG’s catchment group sector. BMRG’s own structure and operations also strongly reflect the

² In NSW and Victoria, CMAs established on ICM or TCM principles were seamlessly transposed into Regions for the purposes of NHT2 and NAP funding, however in Queensland, most ‘ICM’ catchments have generally become subsets of larger regions. New south Wales and Victorian variants of ICM were already statutory and larger scale, whereas Queensland’s version of ICM was non-statutory (Bellamy et al. 2002).

ICM approach. This presents some relational problems in the region, with two layers of organisations seeing themselves as cross-sectional coordinators.

The Queensland ICM approach was based on non-statutory strategic planning and implementation through a coalition of affected stakeholders. There were two levels of cooperative action. Formal Catchment Coordinating Committees needed approved cross-sector representation and needed to develop a strategic plan. At the second level, Catchment Care Groups were less formal and, while expected to be inclusive, were not formally required to have full sector representation.

Catchment Care Groups will informally link the activities of landholders, community action groups and government agencies to focus on catchment management issues that are relatively clear-cut and do not involve a large number of individuals and groups. The major roles of catchment care groups will be to provide a forum for community discussion and to foster the cooperative development of solutions to local catchment issues.

Catchment Coordinating Committees will be more formal bodies ... to address catchment management issues that are relatively complex and involve a significant number of community groups and government agencies. They will comprise representatives of the community and government which are involved in, or influenced by, the management of land and water resources in the catchment. (Queensland Government 1991, p.2).

Member groups of the Catchments sector in the Burnett Mary Region comprise a mix of both types and perhaps some forms in-between. This has made it difficult for BMRG to establish a pattern of responsibility and accountability across the catchment group sector.

The basis for partnerships within ICM is as shown below (Queensland Government 1991, p. 18). Community action groups, industry organisations, government and other stakeholders are represented on the Catchment Coordinating Committee, which develops a Catchment Management Strategy. However, responsibility for implementation needs to be picked up by individual bodies or alliances between bodies with common interest. Success depends on parties with common goals pooling resources and seeking funds, which were not always easily obtained. While this was an admirable venture into participative governance, it had a weak link that made it difficult to deliver the desired outcomes.

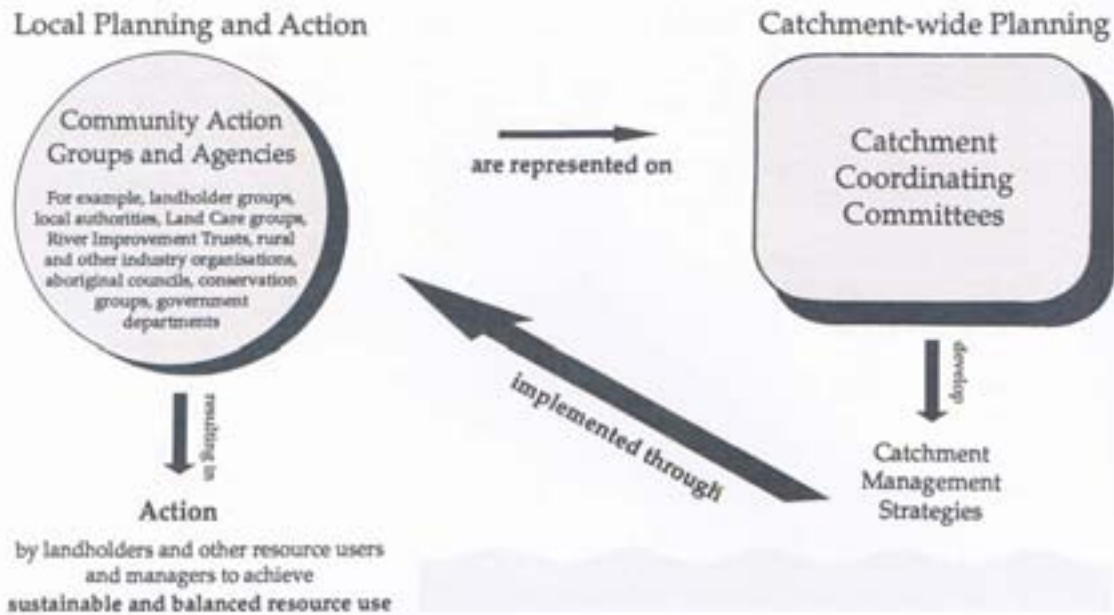


Figure 1 Links Between the Catchment Coordinating Committee and Community Action Groups and Agencies

(Queensland Government 1991, p. 18).

The fallibility is that the people who act as representatives on Catchment Coordinating Committees work together to develop a strategic plan, but generally do not take equivalent responsibility (or even have time and resources) to take the plan back to the stakeholders they represented and develop the activities needed to achieve the plan's targeted outcomes. The model has generally floundered because insufficient thought and resources have been put into strategies to ensure the 'implemented through' step was put in place.

Other cracks have appeared in this ICM structure, with government disbanding the Queensland Landcare and Catchment Management Council, withdrawing its staff from the catchment coordination table (because of drain on staff time, or a perceived conflict of function, or because the process was not seen to deliver the expected outcomes?), and establishing the regional management layer. However, in some regions, catchment (or sub catchment) ICM bodies have thrived and hold key places as integrating implementation bodies within the regional structure. There is an advantage in operating this way – the catchment or subcatchment group is in a better position to link stakeholders with common interests than a more remote regional body.

We recommend continuance and strengthening of the coordination/partnership formation role that catchment bodies have seen as their role in the past. As an aid to appreciation of what is needed for this to succeed, we highlight and comment on some principles for successful ICM drawn from the Bellamy et al. (2002) national review of ICM (*Integrated Catchment Management: Learning from the Australian Experience for the Murray-Darling Basin*). Given that BMRG uses an ICM type stakeholder representative governance model, many of these comments relate to the regional body as well as catchment groups within the region.

- (a) Catchment management depends on a complex set of nested relationships, both 'horizontal' and 'vertical', between different actors (including business or industry groups,

community organisations, government agencies and politicians) and between different spheres of government. Its effectiveness hinges on the quality of these relationships and the extent to which different actors are able to understand the perspectives of others, have the capacity to negotiate and to undertake collective action (p. 70).

Under regionalisation, catchment bodies have often struggled to understand where they fit in the vertical and horizontal matrix of relationships. In some regions, they have become implementation bodies at a tier below the regional body, acting as local coordinators of action by interested organisations; in others they have been regarded as one of several special interest groups, with need to compete for resources to achieve strategic targets. In these situations, the catchment body's previous coordination role is nullified. We believe that opportunity to use the networking and trust that catchment groups can offer should be valued and built upon.

- (b) The implementation of an ICM initiative is inherently context sensitive and a wide range of environmental, economic, social, policy/institutional and technological factors will influence its implementation and impact. In any particular instance, the human association with the natural resource environment in a catchment is embedded in established social networks and interactions, fundamental social values, institutional frameworks, historical problems, past experiences and established ways of doing things and it will continue to be shaped by them in the future. ICM arrangements therefore need to adapt and to suit local contexts (p. 70).

Relationship building and negotiating roles for action are likely to work best at catchment/subcatchment level, or in some situations needing to work at landcare or residents group level to draw together social networks that are concerned for their local area.

- (c) Community based catchment management initiatives should be viewed as "*complements*" rather than "*replacements*" for traditional approaches to policy design and implementation such as regulation and litigation-based approaches. Hierarchical organisation of governance should be allowed to emerge such that governance activities at higher levels complement or 'nest' those at lower levels rather than supplant them (p. 71).

Regional bodies need to consider how best to gain benefits from complementary action at different governance levels, or face criticism for 'supplanting' what others could do.

- (d) The success of ICM in achieving outcomes will in part be dependent on government agencies resolving bureaucratic gridlock among the array of fragmented but inter-dependent agency-based policies, plans and programs and, in particular, ensuring long term agency commitment to the ICM process (p. 71).

The absence of state agency staff around the Coordinating Committee table (to contribute technical and system knowledge and to negotiate paths through the 'bureaucratic gridlock') does not help partnership-formation and efficient operation. The answer is for government to re-enter the partnership.

- (e) Representatives must keep their constituents informed of the ICM process, interact actively with their constituents to understand their perspectives, and adequately represent their constituency's interests to the partnership (p.71).

There are many critics of representative governance. Seeking opinion from and giving feedback to those represented is challenging enough for representatives, who probably hold the position

because they are already active in several other ways. It takes time, and money, and can be more challenging in some sectors than others depending on the extent of organisation and communication mechanisms within each sector. Going the extra step of bringing people together in partnership activities that turn strategic plans into local action is an even greater hurdle, and has not been given enough attention in many quarters. Thus for BMRG using a representative governance structure, there needs to be assured support for Directors in reporting back and catalysing action by way of support for communications and facilitation of meetings. (This is not meant to criticise the efforts of community support officers in BMRG, who are very willing to support the Directors of their specialist areas in community interaction, or the current efforts of Directors to interact with their sector).

- (f) Stakeholder groups invariably have very different organisational/social cultures, with different levels of comfort in dealing with representative governance, different communication systems, differences in conceptualisations of the objectives of ICM and related issues. An ICM process needs to be able to recognise and adapt to these cultural differences (p. 72).

We believe that this research to investigate the readiness to partner for the different organisational sectors shows that BMRG recognizes this point.

- (g) ICM relies on building common purpose, agreed plans and commitment to their implementation, among diverse sets of stakeholders with very different needs and interests. It needs to confront hard issues, so cannot rest with a 'lowest common denominator' level of agreement. The method of 'principled negotiation' (Fisher and Ury 1981) provides excellent guidance (p. 72).

In many regions, partnership formation has relied heavily on groups with common interest seeing an opportunity and submitting expressions of interest. 'Going with the goers' is a good way to get quick runs on the board (or rather, works on the ground), and from a partnership development point of view, it is good to work together on this common ground first. However, this is not necessarily delivering the most socially or environmentally critical outcomes. A stage is envisioned, not too far from now, where expansion into contentious areas, requiring skills in conflict resolution methods such as Fisher and Ury's (1981) win-win strategy will be needed. The negotiation space process described in section 6.5 is based on this strategy.

- (h) A fundamental element of effective partnering is the need for all stakeholders to form, manage and maintain relationships (p. 70-72).

This re-iterates the importance of relationship formation in partnership development. It is a gradual process, which we do not think is enhanced by the competitive tender system for achieving targeted outcomes.

- (i) Catchment planning and management needs to be informed through 'socially robust knowledge', developed through the integration of scientific and other technical expertise, local knowledge and the broader community perspective (p. 75).

SEQ Catchments' use of 'Confluence of issues' to determine localities with high priority for action (Davidson & Mooney 2006) provides great opportunity to apply focused community development to achieve action where it is most needed. Processes for doing this have been recently tried in complementary projects in the Condamine Alliance Region (Keith and Ross 2005b) and through a partnership between Griffith University and SEQ Western Catchments Group (Rickson, Warburton & Keith 2006).

6.4 Partnership models for local government

As reported in Chapter 4, local government partnership arrangements have advanced considerably since the interviews and readiness to partner assessment in 2004, with four clusters of shires having formed, signed MOUs, met to identify priority issues and developed projects to deal with those issues. Partnerships between BMRG and each cluster appear to be well underway. Matters needing consideration are the potential for collaborative projects between clusters dealing with similar issues, and the linkage of other sectors into planning, funding submissions and implementation.

Before proposing a model that might cater for these situations, it is useful to provide some background on driving and constraining forces to local government partnership development.

1. The evidence from previous interviews

Some local government representatives interviewed in 2004 gave the impression that they believed that regional bodies were an unnecessary level of government and that if shires were given the money they could do the job. This was tempered by recognition in some quarters that there are issues that need coordinated effort across shire boundaries.

2. Local government readiness to deal with NRM issues, 2004

Apart from feedback from our 2004 interviews, a wider survey (Commonwealth of Australia 2004) had found that almost half of Councils interviewed did not demonstrate a clear understanding of natural resource management issues in a local and regional context, and that more than two-thirds did not consider local or regional natural resource management goals when developing Council corporate and planning schemes. This prompted an injection of \$875 000 in federal funds for actions to ensure that there is effective integration between regional natural resource management goals and local government planning.

3. Local Government Association, Queensland (LGAQ) policy on the environment

LGAQ's stated policies on the environment include the following points relevant to natural resource management.

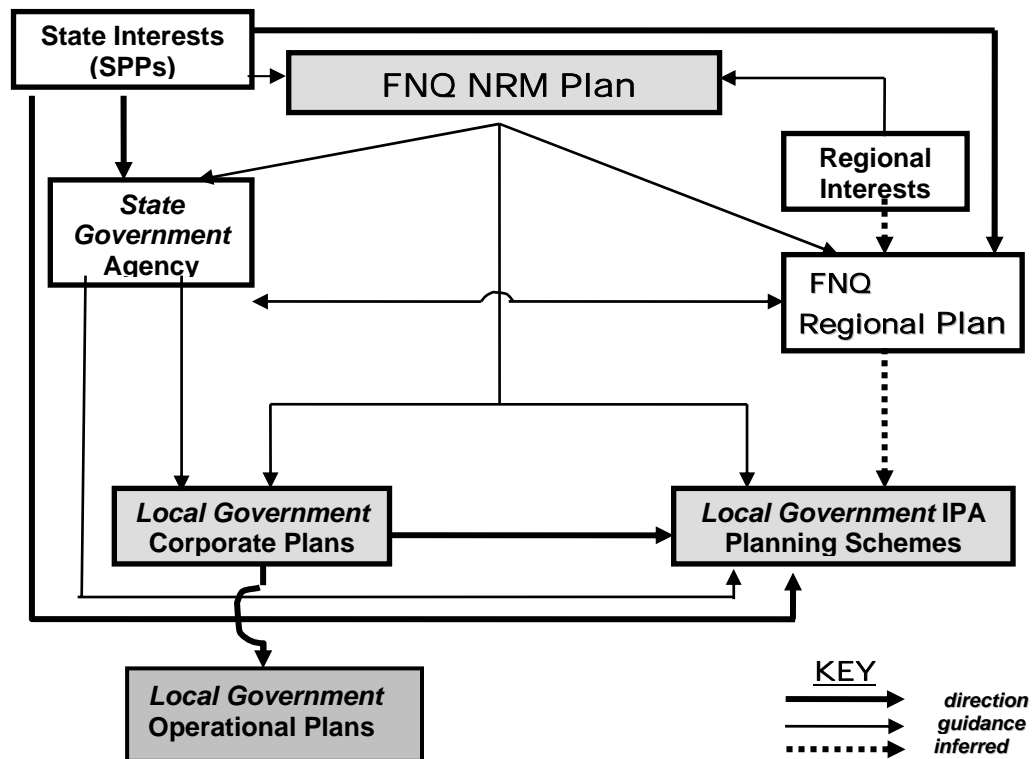
- a) Local Government supports the planning and management of land and water resources on a catchment basis as embodied in the principles of the Integrated Catchment Management Program.
- b) Local Government supports the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) model included in the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* to achieve the necessary institutional/legislative approach for implementation and integration of future natural resource management issues.
- c) Local Government is opposed to moves from any other sphere of government that would usurp or diminish Council planning powers, or see non elected groups override Local Government's legitimate autonomy or decision-making role (LGAQ website).

Statement (a) is positive and opens the door for collaboration on catchment management issues. Points (b) and (c) appear, whether deliberately or not, to warn against creation of statutory linkages between the NRM Plan and the planning requirements that local governments are already committed to.

4. Existing matrix of local government planning

Regional NRM plans and local government planning schemes were being finalised at about the same time in most regions. However there was little opportunity for one to inform or influence the other; as one town planning interviewee said, they were developed by people with different mindsets and they spoke different languages³. The hope is that when planning schemes come up for renewal in a few years and when NRM Plans are revised they will be able to inform each other, and that planners will wish to do so. (Hopefully the workshops referred to in 1 above will ensure this and perhaps hasten the process.)

The following figure from Low Choy 2006 shows interactions in local government planning for shires in Far North Queensland. It shows a ‘guidance’ linkage from the NRM Plan to the Corporate Plan and the Planning Schemes for shires in the region as well as the network of other influences on these plans.



The diagram is part of a ‘NRM roadmap’ – ‘The roadmaps step the user through the complex of statutory planning instruments and processes and provide a step by step guide to the relevant NRM statutory requirements that directly and indirectly impinge on their normal planning

³ One notable exception is the work done in 2003 jointly by the Local Government Association Central Queensland and the Fitzroy Basin Association to develop assessment procedures and codes for the inclusion of water quality amongst assessable parameters for development applications in Central Queensland.

activities. The roadmaps provide a short description of each piece of related NRM legislation' (Low Choy 2006).

5. An incentive for the cluster approach?

A \$25m funding announcement by the Queensland Government last year to encourage shires towards working together lends support to the concept of cluster partnerships.

Queensland councils are being invited to apply for a share in \$25 million to research the best ways to work together to better provide services and infrastructure for their residents. Local Government and Planning Minister Desley Boyle said guidelines for the new Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building program had been finalised and councils could now apply for funding. "Queensland's 157 councils play a vital role in our communities, but as our towns and cities evolve and change, so too must local government" Ms Boyle said. "The State will match dollar-for-dollar any serious studies to identify a better way of working for two or more councils". Some examples of how councils could work together include sharing a sewerage treatment plant or sharing major equipment or staff such as plumbing inspectors or environmental health officers (Queensland Government 2005).

These points show that there is growing appreciation of the need for links between NRM and local government planning processes, and current investment in it. The push for local government authorities to work together endorses BMRG's initiative to work with local government in defined groups (clusters). Direct partnerships between regional body and local government clusters on issues of concern to local government are important – local government would like to be relatively autonomous regarding issues that are essentially local government issues. However, it is not clear how clusters operate within a catchment management model, where local government is one of several stakeholders around a coordinating committee table.

Alternative structures appear to be a) abandon the multi-sector catchment management model and treat the clusters as sub-regions, relying on the cluster to coordinate partnerships with other sectors; b) have clusters coupled with a centralised partnership system, in which the regional body negotiates multi-sector partnerships; or c) have a dual sub-regional system where projects are developed through local government clusters in tandem with catchment management arrangements.

What are the possible processes and potential implications of these three scenarios?

In scenario (a), the regional body would negotiate the formation of clusters of shires for participation in the NRM plan. An MOU would define the relationship between the regional body, the shires as a cluster and the shires separately. The regional body would run cluster meetings to identify priorities and general strategies. (In the Burnett Mary region, some of these were run as 'what if' workshops – i.e. 'what if the Region offers \$500K for cluster generated activities?') Priority activities for the councils as a cluster would then be developed as Expressions of Interest. The regional body then would decide which of these to support (priorities and available funds), and detailed activity plans are prepared. As the cluster is not a corporate entity, funds for a particular activity could either be allocated to each shire, or, preferably, allocated to one council as delegated lead agency, which would then disperse to other shires. Alternatively, and preferably where the work is to be done by non-council employees, the cluster (through the lead agency) could let contracts for the works or services required across the entire cluster. This might include the services of a network of landcare groups if there are network alliances that match clusters (refer to the discussion in 6.2). (An alternative to this is for Shires to

individually engage landcare groups or other community organisations in their area for parts of projects when appropriate).

The agreement documents in this scenario would be

- an MOU between the region and the cluster
- contractual activity (project) agreements or perhaps service level agreements between the region and the lead agency acting for the cluster (presumably signed off by all participating shires); and
- contracts or service level agreements between each shire and landcare or other community groups in the shire participating in this activity.

Perhaps an MOU between the cluster members is needed, and other contractual agreements for particular project allocations may be needed. (Perhaps this could be covered within the agreement between BMRG and the lead agency).

This leaves in question (i) the handling of activities that are not part of the cluster's proposed and approved program; (ii) the role of catchment management committees where they are also present within the area defined by the cluster; and (iii) mechanisms for using common strategies across clusters for problems common to more than one cluster (especially upstream-downstream relationships within a catchment).

Regarding (i) and (ii), one alternative is for the catchment committee to become the coordinator of the gaps – the matters not managed by local government. Another is for the regional body to manage the gaps directly and for the catchment committee to find a useful role that is not about coordinating and managing projects across the catchment, or else disintegrate.

As for (iii), one way would be for all clusters to have planning fora in a similar time-frame, and where common issues are given priority by different clusters, a working party be formed with members from each cluster to integrate the various strategies into a coordinated program.

The main disadvantage with this scenario, and it is a serious disability, is that other sectors affected by the NRM issues lose ownership under the dominance of local government planning processes.

In scenario (b), the centralist option, the clusters would submit EOIs and the regional body would then determine whether other stakeholders' submissions needed to be linked with the proposals, or whether stakeholders needed to be approached (even if they have not separately expressed interest). Where such cross-sector approaches are appropriate, the regional body could bring together key players to negotiate a cross sector partnership approach (processes suggested in section 6.5 – cross-sector partnerships – could be used). Once consensus is reached on the strategy and roles of each interested stakeholder and a formal activity proposal approved, the regional body formalises contract agreements (or SLAs) with each participating organisation for its part in the project. For cluster proposals that are completely within local government domain, agreements would proceed as outlined for scenario (a).

In scenario (b), catchment committees would have equivalent status to other community organisations and could submit tenders (if a competitive tender approach is used) or negotiate their role with other potential stakeholders in a planning forum.

Scenario (c), a dual sub-regional concept, may sound unduly complex, and would probably be considered only in a large complex region where there are sufficient shires to warrant the cluster

approach, and existing catchment bodies with interest in maintaining their strategic coordination role (as occurs in the Burnett Mary region).

A pre-requisite is the possibility of defining a shire cluster area that almost matches a catchment committee's area of influence. (In the Burnett Mary Region the two inland clusters cover the North and Central, and the South Burnett Catchment Committees, Mary cluster matches the Mary Catchment Committee's area of interest. The remaining cluster covers two catchment committee areas – Lower Burnett and Baffle.)

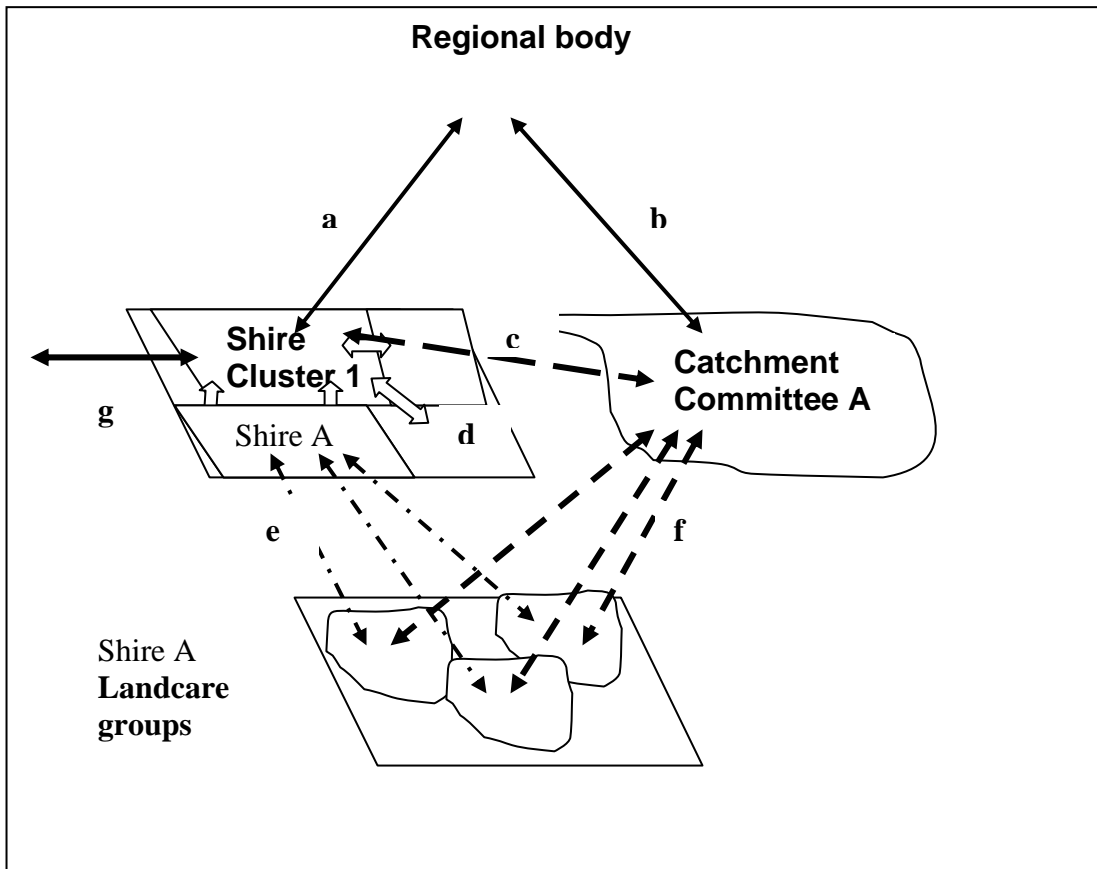
The catchment committee would have a recognised role of coordinating multi-sector activity within the catchment. Shire Councils would have representatives on the Catchment Committee, as is the current ICM committee arrangement. As well as submitting EOIs from cluster meetings to the regional body, the cluster would forward them to the Catchment Committee, either (i) for information purposes where it is an exclusively shire NRM responsibility, or (ii) further development as a catchment submission where other stakeholders have an interest in contributing. A multi-sector proposal would be negotiated by the catchment committee and submitted to the region, with clear delineation of consensus reached regarding operational and management roles.

Matters that are large enough to warrant planning across catchment/cluster boundaries would be coordinated by the regional body through a working group or forum comprising representatives from all affected clusters and catchment committees.

Although complicated, this may be the best way to merge the different talents and implementation processes of local governments and community organisations. It is recognised that local governments would like autonomy over issues that are their responsibility (without having to work through a catchment committee on those), but, as discussed in section 6.3, we believe catchment bodies can play key roles in linking local knowledge and community networks to form partnerships, and that losing this leads to loss of social capital.

This discussion has not considered the formulation of agreements with individual landowners for incentive schemes. Although landcare groups, catchment committees and local government would be at the frontline of generating interest and proposals, they would all probably be happy for the contractual agreements to be centrally administered (i.e. resting with the regional body).

The following diagram, drawn to clarify the linkages in scenario (c) possibly serves rather to highlight the complexity.



Partnership links:

- a** Partnership MOU and SLA between regional body and Shire Cluster 1.
- b** Partnership MOU and SLA between regional body and Catchment Committee A
- c** Each shire (or cluster representative) represented on the Catchment Committee
- d** Project agreements between shires within the cluster
- e** Project agreements between shire and individual landcare groups
- f** Project agreements between catchment committee and individual landcare groups within landcare network
- g** Project development with another cluster.

Local government appears almost obliged at times to use competitive tender (non-partnership approaches), though Brisbane City Council has set some promising examples of true negotiated partnership activities, particularly in their effluent upgrading program (BWEA – Brisbane Water Enviro Alliance). Many NRM objectives do not lend themselves to competitive tender, and it is hoped that some of the approaches to establish effective partnerships recommended in Chapter 3 and section 6.8 will be taken up by local governments. As an adjunct to the readiness to partner questions formulated by Felkins, a set of indicators for use by local governments in the UK to review effectiveness of partnerships is available on the website titled *LGPartnerships – smarter partnerships* <http://www.lgpartnerships.com/>

. A sample of the effective partnership indicators follows.

Common interest supersedes partner interest.

Partners **use "we"** when talking about partner matters.

Partners **share** responsibilities and rewards.

Partners **seek to improve** how the partnership performs.

Partners are **willing to change** what they do and how they do it.

Partners share a **common vision** of the difference they want to make and the direction to take.

Partners focus on partnership **added value**: how they can achieve more or better results through collaboration.

6.5 Cross sector partnership models

The initial plan for this study was to explore partnerships within sectors and then cross sector relationships. In practice, a great number of the activities in the NRM Plan are best achieved through cross-sector or multiple sector activity. Thus, following regional invitations for all members to indicate their interests (or willingness to be involved) in the Plan's proposed Management Action Targets (late 2004 and onwards), many projects have multiple stakeholders. For some, liaison between stakeholders has produced joint submissions but for many, there are discrete agreements to work on part of the whole task. With others, competitive tender has been used to select one stakeholder for the task.

The purpose of this study's efforts to look into cross-sector partnerships is to enable the region to maximise benefits from the combined the skills and resources of multiple stakeholders.

The Lower Mary – Burrum Water Quality Alliance

Although many Plan activities are in progress, there have been relatively few opportunities for this study to contribute to the negotiation process. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to join the Lower Mary-Burrum River water quality monitoring proposal at an early stage. This activity, which commenced in July 2005 with BMRG staff drawing together stakeholders interested in water quality monitoring in these areas, has moved forward from a set of individual stakeholders with differing interests to a team with a project coordinator undertaking a program that will satisfy the individual needs in a way that could not be done through discrete projects, and will also deliver information in a standardised and integrated form that will serve the NRM Plan needs in a much better way.

Stakeholders include BMRG, a water utility (Wide Bay Water), local government (Hervey Bay Council), Landcare and catchment groups (Lower Mary Catchment Landcare and Catchment Care Group, Friends of the Burrum River System, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee), a conservation group (Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Fraser Coast) and two schools. It is evident that the needs and capabilities of these groups vary considerably. They probably also wondered initially how their needs could be met by working within one project.

After an initial 'forming' workshop process, the group has met several times under the facilitation of BMRG's Coastal Management Sector Support Officer, Sue Sargent, to learn about a process by which their data could be drawn into a common database, prepare a joint project submission and receive training in the tools to be used.

Some of the successful features of this partnership development activity have been:

- the regional body's initiative to bring the interested parties together

Regional Partnership Agreements Burnett Mary, July 2006

- the presence of groups who wanted outcomes for themselves rather than just taking opportunity to contribute to a regional need, but were able to see the benefit in linking data across a wider area
- an initial process which gave stakeholders ample opportunity to talk about their needs/visions, without a long introductory 'talk down' by the initiating body about its own ideas on the need and vision for how it should happen
- the process also gave opportunity for any dissonance to be aired and dealt with. the group moved quickly from forming to norming and went away with positive attitude
- the prospect that by joining forces the help of a coordinator might be achievable
- opportunity to be trained in new data collation methods, with availability of agency trainers who were interested in trying the system with a group like this, even though this entailed considerable travel
- an enthusiastic and skilled facilitator keeping the momentum going, with all well informed and those who have not 'kept up' kept in the loop.

The agenda for the first workshop (5 July 2005) outlines the process:

1. Welcome and introductions (10 mins)
Overview of workshop agenda and participant introductions
2. History of monitoring (45 mins)
Participants who have been involved in monitoring to provide an overview of what they have been involved in with regards to monitoring works in their area
3. A vision for alternative levels of monitoring (15 mins)
Presentation of national and statewide monitoring frameworks
4. Facilitated session on aims and constraints of water quality monitoring alliances (45 mins)
Smaller group discussion on interests and aims (both common and broader wish list) for monitoring water quality
5. Refreshment break (15 mins)
6. What does the region want? (20 mins)
7. Summation of what could work as an alliance and where to from here (30 mins)

To indicate something of the progress in that session, part of the workshop notes is shown in the box below (Common goals, Constraints, Actions).

We believe that the region could profitably apply this process for several other Management Activity areas where there are multiple groups from more than one sector showing interest.

**Facilitated session in Water Quality Monitoring Alliance formation workshop
(agenda session 4)**

The group was split into three sub-groups (Local Government/Industry, Lower Mary/Schools and Burrum) and asked to consider the aims (both common and wish lists) for monitoring water quality and the constraints that may prevent this from happening. Results were then grouped as follows:

Common Goals:

1. Increase collaboration and communication in both the group (alliance) and broader community (showcase works).
2. WQM will lead to water quality improvements through on-ground action.
3. That there will be a commitment to data management – including quality assurance and training.
4. That there will be a commitment to overall program coordination and management.

Constraints:

1. Time
2. Money/resources
3. Ability to meet goals – people and apathy
4. Training
5. Willingness to share data – i.e. trust that data will not be abused (data agreements for data use)
6. Institutional inertia – State agencies should take responsibility
7. Inequality of roles and responsibility – real and perceived
8. Goals may not align – different agendas/core business.

What does the region want?

Presentation on key aspirational target in BMRG's NRM Plan *Country to Coast – a healthy, sustainable future* related to water quality.

Summation of what could work as an alliance and where to from here?

After the workshop and presentations, considerable overlap was identified between the regional body's targets and the overall goals of the 'alliance' members. It was felt there was some merit to take the alliance forward as a proposal and develop it further.

Actions:

- BMRG to provide meeting notes for all participants and potential members that had been unable to attend the first meeting.
- BMRG to follow up with schools and others to gauge their support and provide an update on the first meeting.
- BMRG to circulate date and location for WQ05 Monitoring Plan Tool workshop and participants asked to indicate their interest in participating (Wednesday afternoons were flagged as a better day for schools).
- BMRG to make available copies of the Draft MRCCC reports for PAP2.1 and PAP2.2 for review/comment.

A cross-sector partnership sorting process

Part of our study plan was to develop a process for cross-sector partnerships was a conference or forum at which sectors groups would share with others something of their history/culture and the way they operate before exploring how their combined efforts in projects of mutual interest could

work profitably. We found it was not practicable to do this as an additional activity to the many interactions already taking place within the region, and so attempted to ‘piggy-back’ a 2-3 hour session onto a forum to be run by the Burnett Catchment Care Association. Although this amount of time was less than ideal, there would be benefits for this exercise to follow on from the forum where issues were discussed, and on the other hand, what we planned was an ideal culmination of the outcomes the Catchment Association sought. Unfortunately, in spite of good preparation and wide publicity, the day was cancelled as the Association believed there were too few acceptances to justify going ahead with the day. This has left no opportunity to try the process in another situation.

The planned process, which we believe offers good opportunity to establish common ground and a negotiation space in an environment that emphasises equality amongst potential partners, is shown in the box below. Note that it permits sectors to identify how they like to operate and boundaries on their willingness to participate. These can be subject to further dialogue if they are stumbling blocks to a potentially worthwhile linkage.

Cross-sector partnerships proposed workshop process

(This session follows an information and discussion session on various issues)

A. Assuming a 2-3 hour session

1. Select one of the issues discussed earlier (e.g. weeds, waterways, soil), and identify aims that emerged from the forum discussion.
2. Form sector-based discussion groups (e.g. landcare, catchment groups, local government, primary industry) and work through the following questions:
 - a) Does your sector think that the suggested aims should be changed in any way (consider how they fit with your organisation's aims)?
 - b) What aspects of the aims would organisations in your sector like to become involved in?
 - c) How would these organisations like to contribute?
 - d) What resources (skills, time, dollars, hardware) does your sector bring to the partnership?
 - e) What resources or help do you need to enable you to do your bit (e.g. from BMRG or other partners or improved knowledge or skills)?
 - f) Is there anything that you would not like to get caught up in as a partner in this activity?
 - g) Are there any philosophies or values or methods of approach you want others to respect in working in a partnership?
3. Sector groups report back.
4. Plenary discussion about questions e), f), g) – this includes listing capacity needs and establishing ground-rules of understanding in working together.
5. Re-define aims if necessary.
6. Identify partnerships to achieve aims; and perhaps allocate responsibilities.
7. Identify action needed to move towards partnership to achieve aims of this activity.

Expected Outcomes

- Aims for catchment-wide activity to deal with one of the issues.
- Expressions of interest in partnerships to achieve specific aims.
- Indications of what different sectors can contribute and what resources or support they need.
- Clarification of boundaries of involvement and negotiation on working relationships.

B: Assuming a 4-5 hour session

1. Firstly proceed as for A to achieve outcomes for one of the three major issues.
2. Run sector group discussions for the other two issues but reduce this session time (some of e,f,g should be similar to the first session and dealt with quickly) .
3. Report back and discuss each issue in turn. Allow for others not involved in discussing that issue to add their interest and needs.

Expected outcomes:

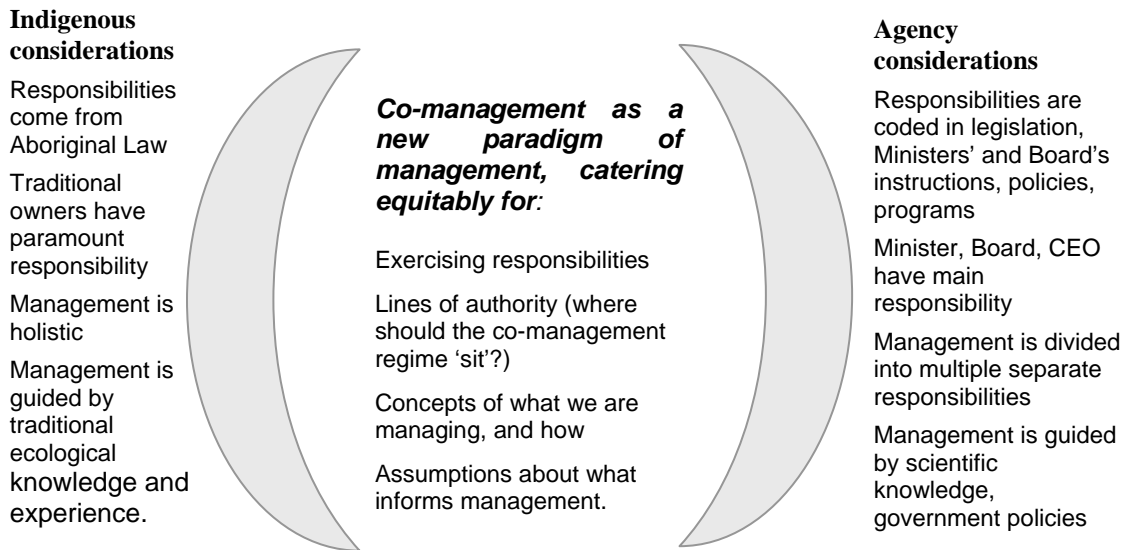
As for Option A but for three issues rather than one.

Negotiation Space

Discussions in earlier sections of this report where serious differences in philosophy, goals or governance structures can impede partnership (as in the coastal, conservation and Traditional Owner sectors) have mentioned the option of finding common ground through a 'negotiation space' strategy (Ross & Innes 2005). The framework uses the logic of 'win-win' negotiation (Fisher & Ury 1981), with common interests the foundation for establishing mutual benefits, and 'needs mapping' methods of identifying underlying needs and concerns (Cornelius & Faire 1989).

The idea of the ‘space’ is that the co-managing parties bring a number of ‘givens’ to the relationship, whether these are different values, priority issues, different laws or management paradigms. As Ross and Innes (2004) argue, when starting co-management negotiations it is often difficult and time consuming to first try and change many of these ‘givens’, for instance to expect Indigenous people to change their beliefs or customary law, or to expect government to change existing legislation to any great extent.⁴ It is far more productive to identify these ‘givens’ so that they are mutually recognized and understood, then to concentrate discussion and the development of arrangements into the area of potentially common ground. This draws on the negotiating principle (Fisher and Ury 1981) ‘invent options for mutual gain’ (Ross, Robinson & Hockings 2005 p.53; see also Robinson, Ross & Hockings 2006).

The concept is demonstrated below for the particular case of developing a co-management agreement between Indigenous and Agency interests for management of the Great Barrier Reef. The figure comments on one of nine factors necessary for designing a co-management arrangement, ‘paradigms of management’.



(Ross & Innes, 2005, p. 51)

Here, the different ‘paradigms of management’ that are not easily changed are placed outside the negotiation space, and the parties are encouraged to recognise, understand, but not attempt to change these factors. They are encouraged to focus within the ‘space’, representing their areas of potential common interest. Within the ‘space’, shared interests and approaches often need to be compatible with factors lying outside the ‘space’, for instance to avoid conflicts of governance.

In this instance, exploring co-management options, matters open for negotiation within the space included:

⁴ This is not to say that these ‘givens’ in the relationship will not change. After all, the extent to which many co-management agreements exist in Australia is the result of changing legislation, including the Native Title Act *Cwth* (1993) or amendments to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act *Cwth* (1975) which provide for Indigenous representation on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Board.

- *How can parties exercise their respective responsibilities within a co-management regime?*
- *How can they reconcile their concepts of what they are managing, and how they are managing it?*
- *What structures and lines of authority will satisfy both parties? (This takes them to the ‘decision-making structures and processes’ part of the framework.)*
- *How should the decision-making be informed? (This requires linkage to the knowledge and information-management part of the framework).*

(Ross & Innes 2005).

The principles are not confined to co-management situations; they can be applied to ‘sticky’ partnership negotiations of all types where foundational values and governance structures differ. The willingness to try to understand where the other party is ‘coming from’ and allow for that in forming partnership relationships is akin to Felkins (2002) insistence that that the potential partner address questions of relationships and culture in preparing for partnership. The following conclusion from the Ross and Innes chapter on use of the negotiation space to achieve co-management expresses this in a very pertinent way for regional bodies beginning to appreciate the worth of Indigenous ways of interacting with each other and their environment:

Relationship-building and maintenance of those relationships must underpin the process. It is needed before discussions commence, during them, and throughout implementation of a co-management regime. The Indigenous Australian value placed on ‘respect’ would provide an invaluable foundation for designing co-management, focusing the parties on listening to one another, respecting one another’s points of view, and appreciating their needs and contributions (Ross and Innes 2005, p. 52).

6.6 Community-business partnerships

Readiness to partner

The regionalisation approach introduced with NHT2 and NAP, while keeping the integrated catchment management logic of collaboration among stakeholders through a board or body, uses a ‘business’ model of management focusing on partnerships. The success of regional natural resource management depends heavily on effective partnership linkages between business, government and community. In the past the private sector has had little formal role; it is now time for ‘corporate citizens’ to join forces with government and community, in targeted partnerships for action. The corporate sector is diverse, ranging from major corporations to very small businesses, and so corporate interests range from national and international to quite localised. Engagement methods that apply to local firms are unlikely to have much success with big business.

Fortunately, there is an increasing realisation by industry that triple bottom line reporting and world market expectation of clean and green production have changed some of the previous ‘givens’ for industry strategy – no longer is profitability the only goal to be kicked. Big business appears to have made substantial moves over the past few years to contribute to social and environmental improvements. A review of 115 large Australian companies’ approaches to corporate community involvement in 2000 by The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs and Business Council of Australia (CPA&BCA 2000) has put forward four strands of explanation for heightened recognition of social responsibilities: changing institutional relationships between

business and government; heightened community expectations of business behaviour and demands for greater participation in business by community; changes in organisational dynamics; and implications of operating in a global and information-rich context.

Leading corporations appear to have responded positively to the push by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership (since 1999) for the business sector to accept greater corporate social responsibility (including environmental). The Partnership 'operates on the premise that communities are stronger and more cohesive when individuals, not-for-profit organisations, governments and business all work together (Australian Government n.d.). Strong advocacy by industry leaders, facilitation through a vast array of factsheets on the *Our Community* website, organisations established to broker community-business partnerships and the recognition offered through the annual Prime Minister's Awards for Community Business Partnerships and Banksia awards provide a sense that we might see a surge in adoption over the next few years.

However, not all indicators are positive. A study of Australian business stakeholders (Warburton et al. 2004) found that only a few respondents believed that corporate responsibilities beyond profit making are valuable in themselves. Likewise Birch (2001 cited in Warburton et al. 2004, p. 118) found that 'Australian business, despite having a reasonable understanding of the concept, appeared to be lagging behind other countries in incorporating corporate citizenship into core business policies and practices'.

Further, some businesses will not necessarily change the amount they contribute – they may instead realign their contribution to more fruitful relationships with fewer stakeholders (Hutton 1999, CPA&BCA 2000). It will be important to aim to establish links with businesses that can recognise connections between their business goals and sustainable resource use. This logic underpins the focus in our study on businesses that had a relatively direct link back to natural resource use.

Corporate social responsibility – environmental examples

The following examples of innovative environmental partnerships by Australian businesses provide evidence some industry leaders are willing to align themselves with environmental management.

Alcoa

Alcoa received a Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business partnerships in 2003 for longevity of a partnership (21 years) with Greening Australia. The Alcoa Community Tree Planting program evolved into the Greening Australia Support Scheme that provided trees to community groups for tree planting projects. The Western Australian Ribbons of Green project transformed roadside landscapes. The Alcoa Woody Yaloak Catchment project and the Living Landscape project, working with farming communities to develop landscape management practices that protect biological diversity within an economically viable and sustainable land use system, are major initiatives with great flow-on benefits through the combined talents and resources of the partnership.

Hardy Wines

Hardy Wines are well-known for their wetlands management and an ISO 14001 standard environmental management system. They contribute a portion of sales of their Banrock Station label to landcare projects and have sponsored wetlands projects in nine countries as well as other parts of Australia. Banrock recognises a marketing edge in these activities: 'The Company's environmental conservation work gives it a point of differentiation and a promotional advantage

in environmentally conscious markets, such as Europe and North America. This has led to exporting success with 65 percent of Banrock Station's earnings from export markets'.

Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto has had a dramatic about-face in image over the past few years – from hard-nosed resource miners to socially and environmentally sensitive innovator in community partnerships. Rio Tinto has several community involvement programs designed to build relationships that meet important community needs – especially within Aboriginal communities. Rio Tinto has also formed partnerships with environmental groups such as WWF and Earthwatch to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, and Regional Trusts (such as the Tarong Coal Community Development Fund), Government alliances and business networks on social programs and social foundations.

The Rio Tinto change of heart must be at least partly attributed to the leadership of Barry Cusack who was Managing Director of Rio Tinto Australia from 1997 to 2004, with special responsibilities for external affairs, Aboriginal relationships and environmental policy. In 2002 Cusack was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.

In the push to boost finances through corporate partnerships, it needs to be remembered that effective relationships and mutual trust are fundamental to business partnerships. Lendrum (2003) defines strategic partnering in the corporate world as 'the cooperative development of successful long term, strategic relationships, based on mutual trust, world class/best practice, sustainable competitive advantage and benefit for all the partners; relationships which have a further separate and positive impact outside the partnership/alliance' (Lendrum 2003, p.7). Community-business partnerships to date have generally been low-key events in the form of sponsorships, awards, in-kind support, discounted services (pro-bono), infrastructure (donation of premises) rather than collaborative long-term relationships (with exception of the Alcoa-Greening Australia relationship noted above). However, a shift towards long-term relationships could be on the way. 'Three quarters of the companies see the goal of long-term business sustainability as at the heart of the business case for community involvement – their involvement is not a means of improving short-term competitiveness' (Cusack p. 62).

Reasons for partnering

Reasons for firms to enter partnerships vary. The following box from the Corporate Community Involvement report (CPA&BCA 2000) summarises alternative views about the social role for business.

Profit Maximisation	Socially Responsible Principles	Enlightened Self Interest	Stakeholder Engagement	Company as a Citizen
<p>Social obligations best met through making a profit for shareholders.</p> <p>Business not competent to do otherwise.</p> <p>Driven by fiduciary responsibilities to shareholders.</p> <p>May include modest philanthropic contributions.</p>	<p>Social obligations additional to responsibility for stakeholder returns.</p> <p>Driven by management discretion.</p> <p>Reactive sponsorship and community contributions.</p>	<p>Social role delivers business benefits and community outcomes.</p> <p>Focus is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external relations • corporate regulation • secure legitimacy. <p>Community approach often a contingency approach, defensive strategy.</p>	<p>Proactive social role through listening to internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Strong business sustainability drivers.</p> <p>Focus is on stakeholder partnerships.</p>	<p>Seeks to align community and employee values.</p> <p>Business sustainability drivers.</p> <p>Redefinition of company's internal and external priorities.</p> <p>Community involvement focuses on employee involvement and strong stakeholder partnerships.</p>

Source: Allen Consulting Group in CPA&BCA 2000, p. 31.

Before costly development of a partnership proposal, it is useful and important to identify the prospective ally's philosophy about the social role for business.

Benefits that companies hope to gain from partnerships are enhanced corporate reputation, improved relationships with the community, increased employee morale and retention, and a changed culture that indicates long-term corporate direction. Disadvantages that might reduce partnership benefits to the company or community include: risk of breakdown due to unrealistic expectations; inflexibility that locks-in activity; high administrative costs; and perhaps it can be an unforeseen burden for the community group (CPA&BCA 2000, p.74).

Success criteria

Making the partnership a success is not going to be easy for community organisations with little corporate experience. Key factors for a successful long-term partnership are

Identification

- careful identification of the issue
- find a 'good fit' between both parties (common interest)
- accept each other as equals
- both parties should want to work together (i.e. be proud of the association).

Development

- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined

Communication

- internal stakeholders are kept informed of developments
- publicity is maximised in communities that count.

Management

- both parties should be sincere and honest in the relationship
- troubleshooting mechanisms are activated when required
- replacement personnel are available to drive the project if required.

[Corporate Community Involvement Report (CPA&BCA 2000, p.103).]

Gunningham (2002), citing examples of green alliances such as the Southcorp-ACF partnership points out that ‘important to the success of a partnership will be the degree of power imbalance between the partners. Unless the environmental partner has sufficient countervailing power, so that the partners are to some degree dependent on each other, the partnership is unlikely to flourish’ (p.156). Perhaps this pinpoints the relative lack of effective partnerships between catchment bodies and industry – the catchment body does not muster sufficient power to catalyse dynamic partnerships. Do their successors, the regional bodies, have sufficient ‘muscle’ to command respect and offer the long-term business benefits that industry seeks?

Where do business – community partnerships fit into the progression towards partnerships model we illustrate in Chapter 3 Section 3.12? Firstly, we need to recognise that initial focus by community groups on partnerships amongst themselves is useful as a precursor to wider partnerships. Secondly we anticipate that business involvement will begin at the collaborative project level. It is probably appropriate to start with one or more modest projects to test the relationship rather than attempt to set up a long-term partnership agreement immediately. One successful project can lead to another and then into an enduring partnership on a number of fronts. Thirdly, in starting as this study has done with a focus on small-medium sized industries linked to natural resources, we are not likely to be working with businesses that are highly responsive to CSI arguments. Where there are opportunities to approach large corporations, it is important for BMRG and other regional bodies to plan well to minimise the chance of losing a rare opportunity.

We have shown that there is good reason to be optimistic about the future of business-community partnerships in social and environmental areas. It may be some time off in regions such as the Burnett Mary but also it may arise sooner than we expect if, as we suggest, companies are indeed nearly ready to embrace social and environmental investment.

The following suggested procedures are based on findings from our interviews with small-medium secondary and tertiary industry – that there is a lack of awareness about BMRG, lack of appreciation about their links to natural resources; but some growing interest as the issues were discussed (see Chapter 5 Section 5.3).

Steps in a partnering model with small-medium business with linkages to NRM

The following steps could apply at either regional or catchment levels.

1. Identify the potential allies.

Through local knowledge, and perhaps the ‘Yellow Pages’, identify businesses linked to natural resource use. (The categories we used (see chapter 5) are a good start: agricultural machinery; agricultural processing; agricultural services; seafoods; coastal tourism; inland tourism; town planning; timber).

2. Make your organisation and its mission known to the potential allies.

Do this by visiting if possible. Establish links between their business and sustainable natural resources. Leave information plus invitation to get more involved (eg BMRG membership) and personally invite to relevant activities in the following months.

3. Develop an engagement strategy for those who show some interest in becoming involved.

- List possible activities within your Plan that align with their skills/resources/expertise that may be useful to you.
- Match these with potential benefits to the ally (see below).
- Identify your preferred form of assistance (sponsorships, awards, in-kind support, discounted services etc.).

4. Check through Felkins' 'readiness to partner' questions to see whether you need to know more before a commitment to partner is made.

5. Make your pitch –a small project or support request with high prospects of success is probably best to start with, so that relationships, communication paths and trust can build up.

6. If successful, make sure the ally gets the publicity, thanks and other benefits that they need, and the opportunity to take on another support activity. Reinforce the benefits to the natural resources they use through participating in this activity.

In preparing the strategy, make use of information in the following documents or websites. They provide particularly clear outlines of various models of corporate involvement such as Partnerships, Cause Related Marketing, Sponsorship, Donations / Pro Bono, and Employee Involvement.

Community and Business Partnerships Brokerage service

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/business/>

Volunteering Queensland: corporate volunteering section.

<http://www.volunteering queensland.org.au/corporate.html>

(Provides Models of Corporate Involvement).

Approaching large corporations

We have not developed a strategy for taking regional NRM issues to the large end of the business world. However, another regional body, Condamine Alliance, has developed a corporate social responsibility model, developed through a State Investment Project capacity building project *Building Investment Relationships for the Future* (CBO7), which produced an *Investor Model Manual* (Phillips Group 2005) that was nominated as a finalist in the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency's Sustainable Industries Awards, May 2006.

The federal government, supported by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, provides brokerage assistance to help organisations connect with businesses of all sizes and has developed a series of taxation initiatives to encourage philanthropy (including workplace giving, spread of deductions for cash donations over five years, and donations of property with exemption from capital gains tax). It is useful to be aware of these in approaching businesses for serious financial support.

Establishing the potential benefits to a business in participating in partnership is important. Through prior research, it should be possible to target a few benefits from the list offered by The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership Factsheet 3 (see the box below) that a

proposal could offer. A large business will undoubtedly have a staff member who deals with corporate social responsibility matters and who will be well aware of the benefits the business is seeking. Ability to generate a match-up will be a key to success.

Benefits to the organisation	Benefits to staff
Stronger branding in the community	Improved morale, self esteem
Enhanced reputation	Team spirit
More attractive to ethically responsible investors	New skills
Greater productivity	Opportunity to 'give back'
More in touch with community needs	Increased knowledge of issues in the community
Visible demonstration of values	Increased opportunities (e.g. for mentoring)
Improved staff retention rates	Opportunities for staff development
Stronger community as customer and employee base.	Expanding networks
	Reduced risk.

(Department of Family and Community Services, n.d.)

In assessing who best to approach, it is important to work through the success criteria given earlier in this section, perhaps with support of someone experienced in partnership brokerage.

It is also useful to be aware of the reasons some partnerships do not work out. The list of reasons in the box below from The Prime Minister's Community Partnership, (Department of Family and Community Services Factsheet 2) applies to businesses of all sizes.

Why some partnerships do not work out
Unequal balance – contributions or benefits are one-sided.
Insufficient planning – partners rush in with the best of intentions but without sufficient forethought or planning.
One partner is not 'up front' about their motivation for joining the partnership.
The initial enthusiasm is not maintained.
The partners do not share the same values.
There is too much reliance on one or two individuals; if they leave the organisation, the partnership struggles.
Unrealistic or different expectations of what the partnership can achieve.
No monitoring or evaluation, so that the partnership doesn't evolve but becomes 'stable'.
It is a purely commercial or contractual arrangement.

(Department of Family and Community Services, n.d.)

Hoppe et al (2004) point out that many large companies making significant impacts on the environment have learnt that consultation and partnership in setting up a development might be important to avert adverse reactions that might jeopardize the development. Local people are not powerless in these situations – they have ready communication access to influential NGOs with ability to turn a local issue into global;

Many companies respond to this challenge by establishing local relationships where groups work with managers to review and evaluate strategic decisions proposed or made by companies. Company development strategies, in these instances, go beyond passive compliance to existing laws and policies, which is now discussed in the popular and scholarly management literature as “going beyond compliance”. They serve goals of social and environmental justice as well as establish a means where companies and local community members can, through their representatives, negotiate differences, settle differences, avoid rancorous conflict and the inevitable ever tightening downward spiral of discontent and distrust that inevitably follows (Hoppe et al. 2004, p. 16.)

Perhaps there are future developments in the Burnett Mary region that would warrant such preventative action by alert corporations, whether private or public sector (including major infrastructure).

6.7 Community partnerships through social capital development

The community development literature recognises two main types of community, ‘communities of place’, such as neighbourhoods and small towns, and ‘communities of interest’ in which people may not be co-located but network through shared interests. The charter for this study has been to explore partnerships amongst communities of interest; stakeholders with various backgrounds, goals and ways of operating but with a common interest link to the use of natural resources. (Perhaps we have strayed outside that slightly in discussing ways to engage businesses from the wider economy – though Ian Lowe’s quip that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment would draw them into the community of interest also). In another study (Keith and Ross 2005b) we focused on communities of place; we were looking for intra community partnerships that would maintain or improve the natural assets vital for sustainability of a particular community.

Sustainable communities embrace economic initiatives, social planning, local cultures, environmental consciousness and personal and spiritual growth (Ife 1995). They are rich in the five capitals, described by Cocklin and Alston (2003) as human, social, natural, institutional and produced capital. A list of qualities of ‘vibrant’ sustainable communities provided by O’Meara (1999) includes commitment, shared vision, participation, coordination and partnerships. The question we address here is how these attributes of sustainable communities can be linked (for instance human with natural capital, economic initiatives with environmental consciousness) through processes that encourage shared vision, coordination and partnerships *across* the sectoral divides reflected in the ‘five capitals’. Integrated community development to date has tended to fall into one of two camps – economic development or community approaches to social concerns. Seldom are groups with environmental objectives linked into an overall community development framework by professional community development facilitators.

We have connected the lessons learned from the communities of place study (with Condamine Alliance region), involving network analysis and resolution of issues impacting on community sustainability (Keith & Ross 2005b), with processes from this communities of interest study with BMRG to provide a proposed process or pathway for generating partnership action towards sustainable natural resource management within spatial communities.

The proposed pathway enables communities to consider actions towards ‘triple line’ sustainability. While our interests may be on natural resources, social and economic considerations are valued and can be dealt with through the process. The steps, as developed for the International Conference of the Australian Pacific Extension Network, Beechworth, March 2006 (Keith and Ross 2006) are given in the box below.

The steps include reference to a STIR workshop. This is an acronym for our modification of a social context analysis process described by Earle and Fopp (1999) that enables an overview of trends and their implications in the various structures or institutions (shapers) that make up community. In our modified version (developed in our project with Condamine Alliance, see Keith and Ross 2005a, as a community participation tool), we asked participants to work in small groups to select some of the Shapers of concern and discuss Trends, Implications and Resolve (what can be done by community). (Shapers commonly selected included economy and local industry, technology, education, family, beliefs and attitudes, as well as natural and cultural assets). The small group reports were discussed in a plenary session and common themes sought. A summary of conclusions drew together thoughts on what could or needed to be done. It is noted that this process allows for a community to move in directions they think need attention for sustainability, be it social, economic or environmental without confining the agenda to environmental issues.

Pathway to sustainability within a ‘place-based’ community

1. *Backgrounding* - Stakeholder analysis or community mapping that is quick, efficient but also inclusive. Don't just accept superficial 'status quo' thoughts of opinion leaders but also keep a clear understanding of what is needed to move forward without becoming distracted into unnecessary detail.
2. *Pre-event interviews*. Select a cross-section of interviewees and provide an introductory letter and phone call. The interview follows the strategic perspectives model, with questions attuned to the particular community sector involved. This elicits (and gets the interviewee thinking about) issues, opportunities, constraints, where they might fit into the solution, and their overall vision for where their community should be heading. Also gather information on organisational links (preferably using the ratings for frequency, importance and mutuality method to enable cluster analysis).
3. *Invitation* to the community-planning workshop (the social context or STIR workshop). Send all interviewees plus other selected organisational contacts a letter, perhaps offering optional workshop dates (this splits the dialogue but enables more to participate overall if there are conflicting activities). Depending on the nature of the workshop, you might invite them to ask others from their organisation. Decide whether to follow up with a phone call – will it cement interest or will it appear too aggressive?
4. *The community-planning workshop*. This uses a process such as the recommended STIR process to identify community trends, implications of the trends and resolves on what the community could do in any of the social, economic or environmental areas discussed. If organisational links have been identified during pre-interviews, it will be good to display a network diagram of these links and invite others to add new connections. The options for new partnerships to pursue joint goals can then be canvassed.
5. *Feedback*. Workshop participants should receive quick written feedback by way of workshop notes, summarising the ideas that came up and any resolves for action. Invite them to start taking their own initiatives to form partnerships with other interested groups to make some early progress.
6. *The partnerships workshop*. Organisations interested in forming alliances or partnerships to achieve one or more of the community 'resolves' (which could also be targets of a strategic plan developed by a shire, a regional natural resource management body or an economic development group) come together to look into the type of partnership arrangement that will suit the situation. Different community sectors have different visions, different cultures and different administrative protocols. The workshop could explore these using the 'negotiation space' concept (Ross & Innes 2005) in which plans are made within agreed common ground, without engaging in conflict over areas where ideologies are unlikely to meet. The workshop moves on from consensus on what can be achieved together to some detail of roles and responsibilities, accountability required and check-up or reporting mechanisms.
7. *Cementing the partnership*. Formalisation, if desired, may be by way of Memorandum of Understanding or other protocols, depending on the challenge, and the organisational culture. Model agreements and checklists of best practice can be used to reach a mutually agreed document of responsibility and accountability. The need for this will be greater in cases where government funds are to be accounted for than in cases where volunteer organisations strive together for mutually compatible goals. The first partnership step may be for a single straight-forward action or project, then as the benefits of working together become evident, the partnership might move on to a collaborative community partnership where resources are shared for a range of projects (Keith & Ross 2005a).

6.8 Templates

We have worked with the literature and our studies of Burnett Mary region sectors to explore readiness to partner, the types of partnership arrangements that might apply within and between sectors and processes for working towards partnership. It was also expected that we would work on the formats of contractual agreements that ensure that the principles espoused for various types of agreement are included. Lack of participation in the negotiating stages of contractual agreements leaves us reticent to put together templates for off-the-shelf use. Instead we provide comments about the tenor and content of six types of agreement identified in the ‘progression to partnership’ model in chapter 3, section 3.12: competitive tender, triple bottom line tender, institutional alliance, collaborative project contract, sector-based collaborative partnership, cross-sector partnership (see Appendix 4 for examples of content for these types of agreement).

We will not deal with the simple project agreements used to provide support for individual landholder works under incentive programs. Regional bodies have established formats that suit their requirements and the detail required varies. Landholders appear generally happy with the process, although in this case size does matter – the shorter the better. We do not intend to try to arbitrate on what should be in, what could be out, or how few pages this form of agreement needs.

Competitive tender

Sometimes tenders are an immutable fact of life: for example in the area of public service contracts where probity considerations, government policy and accountability of public money are sensitive issues (Lendrum 2003 p. 224).

As Lendrum notes above there are situations where competitive tender is necessary, but he does not consider this a form of partnership. The text preceding the quote above spells out his view:

The traditional ‘lowest-bid’ tendering process is the antithesis of both the principles and the practices of partnering and alliancing. Tendering may be the crisis point or the point in time where the partnership starts, but it is certainly not the way the partnership is maintained. The use of tenders in partnerships is difficult for a number of reasons.

1. Tenders display a lack of trust in the supplier and a lack of confidence in the customer.
2. They lock both parties in for a fixed term – this can lead to variable quality in service.
3. They create a lowest price mentality ... often poorer quality.
4. Tenders stifle creativity and innovation due to reduced margins and the traditional confrontational, adversarial nature of communication negotiation, and general management of the relationship.
5. While, on the surface, tenders create a long-term commitment, the reality is a shallow, non-strategic approach that, over time, diminishes enthusiasm and increases the level of frustration for both parties.
6. The tender process itself can be very expensive for both customers and suppliers.

(Lendrum 2003 p. 223).

The business of drawing up tender contracts has been well refined except perhaps in the emerging competitive tender approach for environmental management services, a special case that needs careful consideration. In the light of Lendrum’s comments above, how suited is the competitive tender to long-term cooperative effort by a community of landholders to manage their natural assets? Can provisions be made in tender contracts for environmental management to offset these criticisms?

Triple line Tender

By triple line tender (also known as ‘triple bottom line tender’), we refer to a tender that considers economic, social and environmental outcomes. A triple line tender is one that includes not only a natural resource management outcome at fair cost but also social capital outcomes such as organisational development, personal development, social liveability and viability, cultural sustainability. It requires reporting on social, cultural and economic impacts of the planned environmental change, including social capacity enhancement generated in carrying out the activity.

Although the corporate world is moving towards triple line reporting, tender assessments for natural resource management outcomes have usually focused on cost efficiency of environmental outcome only. Where tenders are considered the appropriate strategy, we ask that tenders be weighed on a triple line balance sheet. Perhaps qualitative descriptions of social and cultural benefits or economic impacts is enough, so that bids with negative outcomes would be rejected. Or perhaps quota scales could be developed that make a tender eligible if it totals a certain number of points on the social, cultural or economic criteria of interest. The capacity assessment tool developed by Cavaye (2005) provides one comprehensive and directly applicable source of criteria. The work by Rockloff et al. (2006) provides a rich source of social indicators related to natural resource management actions or inactions that could be used to provide a social benefits/disbenefits analysis for any project proposal.

Another applicable and quite exciting development is a ‘Community Strategies’ project involving four Victorian CMAs (Wimmera, Glenelg-Hopkins, Corangamite, and East Gippsland). As well as developing strategies to guide community engagement and social capacity building, the project develops a process for setting targets for and measuring progress on the outcomes of engagement and social capital building within the asset-based NRM framework. One development is an indicator for ‘stronger NRM relationships’. The indicators chosen are:

1. Strength of relationship around current bio-physical priorities.
2. Stakeholder satisfaction with NRM planning.
3. Activity of community NRM groups.
4. Strength of networks.

Corangamite CMA already uses a process to assess project proposals for social capacity outcomes, with a minimum of 20% of inputs to be devoted to this in one form or another (Hall, P [Project Manager Community Strategies project] 2006, pers. comm., 15 March).

It seems that enough work has been done to install social criteria into tender assessment in a way that can satisfy the need for public accountability, thus giving credence to espoused sustainability policies. Application of this could avert missed opportunities to develop the social capacity of community groups while ticking-off management activity targets for investment strategies.

Institutional Alliance

The AGSIP, SEO and CBO⁵ project clusters devised to enable institutions to provide research and information needs of Queensland regional bodies in their establishment phase have provided

⁵ AGSIP, SEO and CBO refer to State Level Investment Projects (SIPs) funded through the bilateral NAP program, referring to Sustainable Agricultural Production, Social and Economic research and Capacity Building projects respectively.

admirable groundwork for the ongoing delivery of some of the mid to long-term goals of Regional NRM Plans. It has enabled regional bodies to develop working relations with a variety of institutions (as has been done by BMRG), and become familiar with skills that match their needs. Further steps in partnership can then progress – one way is through a prospectus of R and D program needs, call for Expressions of Interest, negotiation with preferred providers of different aspects of the program and thence move to formal contracts between institutions and the regional body.

The extent to which this arrangement can meet or should work towards the principles of an Alliance as outlined in the Introduction to this chapter is worth considering when each agreement is being formalised (i.e. the relationship between client and provider in so far as responsibility for the end product is concerned):

- decisions made on the basis of "best for project"
- responsibilities clearly defined within a "no blame" culture
- innovation is to be encouraged and provide a key driver to the success of the project
- the parties to provide reasonable access to all personnel, materials and other resources needed for a successful project; and
- all communications to be open and based on a relationship of trust and honesty.

(Relationship first contracting 2002).

Collaborative project contract

This is about an agreement for a specific project, with specific milestones and usually short-term outcomes. It might be between a regional body and organisations within a sector or even a regional body and organisations across sectors for a specific 'one-off' project.

The Landcare sector support project in 2004 was essentially of this type, even though it now (in subsequent iterations) has many of the features of the sector-based collaborative partnership. It was easy to establish, because most of the 'readiness to partner' features were in place (see Chapter 4), given that sufficient flexibility was built into the project to allow landcare groups to exercise their rightful independence.

Where expressions of interest for a discrete project come from more than one sector, an important step is to cater for different operational and accountability procedures. The process outlined in the box 'Cross-sector partnerships workshop process' in section 6.5 can be applied here, with special emphasis on what part each organisation would like to play, what they would *not* like to be involved in and any of their principles or operational methods they would like to have respected in any agreement. The agreement should also contain expectations for social capacity performance based on indicators such as those mooted in the discussion on triple line contracts.

Sector-based collaborative partnership

This is about long-term productive relationships with organisations in a sector, usually targeting outcomes covering more than one NRM asset.

At this point, the Landcare sector is the best example to work with, the other sectors being more disjointed or dysfunctional.

Landcare has had varying development histories in various Australian states, and views about its grass roots authenticity vary. Some emphasise government intervention and view it as largely

‘top-down’ rather than a genuine grass-roots social movement (Curtis 1998, Lockie 1992). However, the underlying spirit that has motivated so many people to take action and to promote the values of a sustainable rural environment suggest it is much more than this. With this underlying unity of purpose Landcare has many qualities of a ‘movement’ – the atmosphere at a landcare gathering such as a conference bears witness to this.

With that in mind it is quite feasible to look on Landcare in the terms of Felkins’ ‘linked community’ (see chapter 3 section 3.11). Here are the elements for negotiating successful agreement with, and within, a linked community.

- Coordination with a shared leadership team
- Consent rather than control
- Shared reciprocal trust
- Motivation from common values
- Ongoing dialogue
- Space for disagreement and debate
- Recognition of independence as well as interdependence
- Common history and meta-narrative as a linked system
- Use of the capacity of each member community
- Information openly shared for collective learning
- Responsive listening to each other
- Local data collection to understand texts
- Collective action with monitored results
- Meaningful rituals to celebrate success together (p.220).

Felkins summarises the characteristics of an effective community agreement:

- Foundation in shared values and mutual beliefs
- Consensus on social rules that define relationships
- Commitment to common goals and mutual interests
- Responsiveness to individual needs and concerns
- Flexibility and openness to renegotiation
- Emphasis on trust and longer term relationships
- Reinforcement in social action and accountability.

Landcare groups could, as a linked community, establish the type of agreements summarised above among themselves. However, Curtis is probably correct in asserting that ‘The community-agency partnership is a fundamental element of Landcare and nurturing an effective enabling relationship is critical to program success’ (Curtis 1998, p.571). (Here we might substitute the words ‘regional body’ for ‘agency’).

The agreement would typically have an MOU setting out operational principles, processes, standards and relationships; and emphasising the valuing of the above characteristics, as well as Service Level Agreements defining the products and services to be provided and arrangements to monitor performance. This should, as already discussed, include social capacity and cultural or economic viability outcomes as appropriate for the various products and services related to each NRM asset. The work of the Victorian Community Strategies project (see triple line tender section above) should be helpful in this.

Cross-sector based partnership

We outlined a possible process for a cross-sector project above. A successful cross-sector project is likely to want to run on into other projects covering several assets over a longer time period.

In this scenario, the questions posed above about establishing who wants to work on what and how they prefer to do it are important, but are balanced by a need to be flexible and have a commitment to working with others to achieve the common good.

Before commitment to an agreement, it is useful for all potential partners to work through the 'readiness to partner' questions about need to partner, relationships and culture. Then roles and expected results can be discussed. This is best done at one or more workshop sessions where potential partners listen to each others' narratives about who they are, where they have come from in NRM, their visions, what they have achieved and how they like to go about doing it. This matches Lendrum's comment that:

The (agreement) negotiation is conducted through a series of workshops ... The aim is to conduct the negotiation in an atmosphere that fully supports and promotes partnering and alliance principles, concepts and practices (Lendrum 2003, p. 175).

When it comes to formalising agreement, the following negotiated content suggestions by Lendrum (for corporate partnerships) seem useful:

- the specific wording of the agreement
- details of general commercial arrangements (e.g. performance based)
- approach to benchmarking/measurement.
- details of transition plan to ensure an effective start up or transition to full delivery
- governance process and team member roles and responsibilities
- resource/people requirements and allocation
- involvement of experts to assist ongoing development and performance of the relationship.

(Extracts from Lendrum 2003, p. 176).

Here again, performance should include sharing of skills and social capacity enhancement.

In the Burnett Mary region, the Lower Mary/Burrum River Water Quality Alliance is a cross-sector partnership in development phase. It is gradually working through the learnings and relationship building needed to put hard answers on the specific negotiation points above.

This discussion of the six types of agreements in the progression to partnership does not attempt templates. More time in contact with partnership negotiations as they happen would be needed for this, and some legal advice in case of unknown loopholes. However, for readers looking for templates, some agreements currently in use that do address at least some of the key messages from the literature about effective agreements are provided as Appendix 4 with annotation for some.