

Pine Rivers Shire Council



**SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND
HERITAGE.**



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ON ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Pine Rivers Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, Inquiry into Catchment Management.

The Pine Rivers Shire Council is committed to protecting the environment. Our Corporate Vision is *“For Pine Rivers Shire to become the most natural place in Australia for families to live and prosper in harmony with the environment”*.

1.1 Overview of Pine Rivers Shire

The Pine Rivers Shire is located in Queensland, adjacent to and north of Brisbane City. The Shire covers an area of 770 square kilometres and has a current population of 125,000 persons.

The Shire area is primarily the catchment for the North and South Pine Rivers. These rivers flow from the ranges to the west of the Shire, through the Shire and into Moreton Bay. There are also a number of smaller water courses that flow directly into Moreton Bay.

At present there is approximately 130 square kilometres of urban development area within the Shire with the remainder being rural land or State Forest.

The Pine Rivers Shire is one of the fastest developing Shires in South East Queensland. At the current rate of growth, the Pine Rivers Shire will be fully developed (245 square kilometres) by the year 2045.



2.0 CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT BY PINE RIVERS SHIRE

2.1 Strategy Plan

The Pine Rivers Shire Council has, since 1996, been moving to meet legislative requirements with respect to the management of urban stormwater quantity and quality.

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The Shire was among the first Local Governments in Queensland to put in place an Urban Stormwater Quality Management Plan (Strategy Plan) addressing the requirements of the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997.

2.2 Catchment Management Planning

Council has been preparing Catchment Management Plans for catchments in the Shire since 1997. It is currently Council's plan to have a Catchment Management Plan for all of the Catchments in the Shire by 2002.

Council's Catchment Management Plans (CMPs) deal with both stormwater quantity and quality issues within a catchment as well as amenity and public awareness issues. These plans deal with entire catchments on a regional basis, identifying not only what infrastructure is needed but also what re-vegetation and other modifications can be made to reinstate the natural environment along our waterways. Headworks charges calculated in a CMP are based on the cost of regional infrastructure/re-vegetation requirements and do not included for the cost of upgrades to localised stormwater pipe networks.



Plate 1– Catchment Management Infrastructure (iTrash Rake, Silt Trap & Artificial Wetland)

Council has, to this time, completed CMPs for three (3) urban catchments in the shire currently experiencing major development.

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These catchments however, only represent a small portion of the Pine Rivers Shire catchments. It will be necessary to prepare a further six (6) CMPs if all of the catchments are to be addressed

2.3 Creek Enhancement Projects

Council has commenced a project to enhance the natural character of a number of its waterways and reinstate the natural environment.

This project has seen design work carried out for three sites and construction commenced along Cabbage Tree Creek. Council has committed \$500,000 to this project thus far and also received a grant of \$350,000 from the Commonwealth Coasts and Clean Sea program.

2.4 Development Controls and Conditions

Council has since 1975 required all developers to mitigate the increased stormwater runoff that results from development of an area within a catchment so that the downstream flows are not increased. This has often involved the incorporation of a detention basin as part of the stormwater drainage system.

In 1996, Council added the requirement for developers to mitigate the adverse water quality impacts that result from development within a catchment.



Plate 2 – Stormwater Quality Improvement Device

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The inclusion of these development conditions has resulted in measurable reductions in the impact new developments have on the environment, but has seen a proliferation of stormwater quality improvement devices (SQUID's), all of which have imposed an additional maintenance cost on Council.

2.5 Community Education and Awareness

Council has undertaken a number of Community education and awareness initiatives. These include:

- preparation and publication of the book "Living with the Environment in the Pine Rivers Shire;
- preparation and distribution of information brochures about living within a catchment; and
- promotion and support of community based catchment management groups.

2.6 Water Quality Monitoring

Council has a water quality monitoring program in place, with forty-eight (48) test sites distributed across the Shire. This program, one of very few in Queensland, has been in place since March 1996.

The program is funded entirely by Council, although the results are shared with other organisations such as the South East Queensland Water Board.

The information obtained from testing undertaken at these site enables Council to assess the changes in water quality over time and identify sites with water quality problems.

3.0 COST OF CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT FOR COUNCIL

Stormwater drainage has traditionally been about flood mitigation and conveyance of runoff. As such considerable time and resources have been directed towards providing stormwater drainage to minimise the risk of flooding.

Catchment management has expanded the focus. While it is still necessary to consider runoff quantities and flooding issues, it is now equally important to consider the quality of the runoff and the effects additional quantities of sediment and nutrients will have on the water quality of receiving waters.

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This expansion of focus has placed considerable strain on existing resources and Council budgets.

Council has to-date undertaken catchment management planning for three catchments in the Shire.

The result of this planning is summarised in Table 1 below. This table also lists Council's estimates for the overall costs to undertake catchment management across the entire Shire area.

TABLE 1.0. SUMMARY OF COSTS OF CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION	THREE CATCHMENTS	ALL CATCHMENTS IN SHIRE
Total area of catchments	5460 hectares	77000 hectares
Total developable area (to yr.2045)	3330 hectares	24500 hectares
Existing developed areas	1520 hectares	13000hectares
Total costs for catchment management	\$56M	\$400M
Costs to retro-fit existing developments	\$17M	\$150M
Annual Maintenance costs	\$1.2M	\$10M

Costs include for land acquisition (to provide corridors), re-vegetation, water quality treatment infrastructure and community awareness programs. Costs do not allow for provision of stormwater pipe networks.

All cost estimates are at 1999 prices.

The costs to address catchment management issues in existing developed areas (viz. to acquire land, install infrastructure and re-vegetate along streams) can also be expressed as an additional cost of \$4000 per existing allotment.

The estimated costs to retro-fit existing developments assumes that all future developments will incorporate and fund catchment management requirements as part of the developments.

4.0 WHO BENEFITS FROM CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

A narrow view of catchment management might conclude that the only persons to benefit from catchment management would be those fortunate few who live beside a waterway. A more realistic approach would be to recognise that all those who live in or around a catchment are the beneficiaries and that the broader community rely on good water quality for a healthy water supply, safe recreational facilities, usable marine waterways, an attractive amenity and livable environment.

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All rivers and streams within the Pine Rivers Shire discharge either to Hay's Inlet (a declared Ramsar wetland) or Bramble Bay and then out to the Commonwealth's marine environment via Moreton Bay.



Plate 3 – Tidal Mangrove Area - Hays Inlet .

It is noted that the new Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act lists protection of the ecological character of declared Ramsar wetlands and the Commonwealth's marine environment as matters of national environmental significance.

This would suggest therefore, that by association, protection of all catchments in the Pine Rivers Shire is of national environmental significance.

Clearly if the Federal Government is to ensure that the interests of the broader community are protected, it has a role to play in Catchment Management. It will take a coordinated effort from all levels of government to protect our waterways.

Local Authorities are at the front edge of this process setting development standards, undertaking the catchment management, installing the infrastructure and to a large extent providing the necessary funds. There are opportunities or perhaps more importantly imperatives for State and Federal Governments to provide support for what should be one off (long life) measures for waterway management.

Funding assistance from the Federal Government would accelerate implementation and lighten the significant financial burden new environmental objectives and the associated legislation impose.

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5.0 CONCLUSION

The Pine Rivers Shire Council has adopted a catchment management approach to address the environmental issues related to stormwater runoff from development.

Catchment management will benefit the broader community as it has a direct impact on the health of Moreton Bay.

Implementing Catchment Management will involve a significant increase to the amount of money being spent on stormwater drainage.

Without Federal Government assistance, Council will have to stage the implementation of catchment management strategies over many years.

Delays will see the cost to recover lost ground (environmentally speaking) become far greater than the cost to protect unharmed environments now.

Protecting the environment is important to all Australians. Investment in the environment is an investment in the future of Australia and our continued enjoyment of a healthy and attractive environment.

Our Council is making this investment but we are seeking Federal Government funding to support our efforts.



Plate 4- The Environment We All Want To Keep