

Ipswich City Council's comments
Inquiry into Catchment Management

1. The development of catchment management

- Driven primarily by the green, natural environment sectors of organisations, this needs to be broadened;
- Community participation integral to best practice catchment management;
- The rate of progress is limited to the resources available to the volunteers;

2. Value of a catchment approach to the management of the environment

- This value is undisputed;
- Its provides co-ordination to the many activities, organisations and groups in a catchment area;
- Removes the administrative boundaries and works with natural boundaries;
- The value to the natural environment is the most recognised one, the built environment values sometimes get forgotten;
- Involves all sectors of the community;
- Many of the outcomes are intangible but they are still valuable;
- Takes preventative rather than curative approach – more financially efficient

3. Best practice methods of preventing, halting and reversing environmental degradation in catchments, and achieving environmental sustainability

- often gained through local experience and application of regional methods to local conditions;
- incorporates a range of different approaches to cater for different circumstances;
- need best practice for communication and linking between all agencies and groups involved in natural resource management;
- augment incentives for local government to support community groups in meaningful and ongoing ways, particularly for producing on the ground outcomes and providing facilities (homes) for catchment groups;
- Social science issues need to be considered and incorporated into ICM. Expertise about relationships and personalities is needed to help look at issues such what makes people do things differently, not just how to do them differently;

4. The role of different levels of government, the private sector and the community in the management of catchment areas

- Ipswich City Council (ICC) has had a long association with catchment management since it initiated the Bremer Catchment Association in 1995. Since this time ICC has provided extensive catchment co-ordination and administrative support to this group.
- ICC has a branch called Conservation and Catchment within its Conservation Parks and Sport Department, this provides evidence at a corporate level of its commitment to ICM;
- ICC is currently sourcing funding (NHT) to establish a catchment project for three catchments that flow directly into the Brisbane River. (the Six Mile, Woogaroo & Goodna Creek Catchments)
- Needs to be more incentives & leverage applied to get corporate Australia involved in ICM;
- The corporate sector have a responsibility to be part of the process if they want access to the natural environment;
- Can influence local government by providing a community representative forum with input to local government planning;
- Federal – policy, promotion and long term resourcing; tax breaks for private sector sponsorship;
- State – should provide coordination of the ICM program by one lead agency;

- All lead agencies need to be involved in ICM – eg. share funding of coordinators, sharing of other resources; eg. joint funding of catchment coordinators

5. Planning, resourcing, implementation, coordination and cooperation in catchment management

- Generally there are a number of localised groups within a catchment who are active in local areas, but don't take a broader catchment view;
- Often local groups are not in the position to initiate a collaborative catchment group. Within Ipswich City Council has been taken by council;
- Funding sources often expect community groups to do everything and there is a danger of 'use & abuse' of volunteer time, local government has an important support role to play here;
- Catchment management is nearly entirely funded by NHT across Australia. Catchment Management needs long term funding support that extends beyond a political term;
- Local government often contributes real and in kind dollars, in this way the local community also contributes through their council;
- There are a lot more people prepared to volunteer to plant trees than to be involved in the planning and coordinating that is ICM, but this community participation is essential;
- Most funding for ICM in Qld come from NHT. NHT does not fund education and awareness activities, only with on ground outcomes. NHT is time consuming and a gamble with volunteer time and effort that often does not pay off.
- Most catchment coordinators are employed with NHT funding. There is expectation that NHT will not continue in the long term. Long term resourcing is critical to ICM;
- Catchment Coordinators are needed even once Catchment Strategies are developed to champion their implementation;
- Local government most appropriate level of government to implement ICM at the local level but needs support/resourcing from higher levels of government;
- Acknowledge the need to get groups performing well before launching into complex processes;
- There is a very high expectation being placed on volunteers;
- The lack of administrative support for ICM is a huge barrier to achieving real outcomes;
- Much of the enthusiasm is being lost in the applying for funding for project through NHT;
- Consideration needs to be given in Qld to simplifying the resourcing process;
- CCC's are can become overwhelmed by the enormity, complexity and multiple tasks they are supposed to undertake. They are under resourced and underskilled to do it;
- Considerable effort needs to be put in to determining community values;

6. Mechanisms of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on catchment management programs, including the use of these reports for state of the environment reporting, and opportunities for review and improvement.

- Regular review of catchment strategies and action plans by catchment groups;
- Improvement needs to be made on this area to ensure long term changes are monitored as opposed to outputs;
- Intangible benefits need to be considered. How do we efficiently and effectively measure change in community awareness and the success of getting diverse stakeholders with competing needs to function effectively as a group;