

October 2020



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
QUEENSLAND**



**NRM REGIONS  
QUEENSLAND**



(QUEENSLAND  
REGIONAL  
NATURAL RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
GROUPS  
COLLECTIVE LTD)





# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government (councils) in Queensland. It advises, supports and represents the state's 77 councils and their individual needs in order to improve their operations and strengthen their relationships with their communities.

NRM Regions Queensland (NRMQR) represents a member base of the 12 Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Bodies in Queensland. NRMQR (or Regional Groups Collective as it was originally known) was formed in 2002 to improve the state-wide delivery of regional NRM outcomes in partnership with industry, community and government, and to act as a representative body for NRM in Queensland by providing a single, strong voice for its members. NRMQR supports the Queensland Regional NRM Bodies to deliver sustainability outcomes by influencing policy, coordinating Statewide programs, providing mentoring and leadership, advocacy for improved investment in natural resource management, and identifying areas for training and improvement.

Effective Natural Resource Management (NRM) is an important part of local government responsibilities, and effective decision-making at this level is crucial to maintaining many essential ecosystem services. Local governments make a significant direct investment to NRM, either through rates and in some case through environment levies; and also provide co-investment to support research and on-ground activities to State Government funds such as the Land Protection Fund. Councils have a strong track record in achieving environmental outcomes in response to the community's desire to protect a range of natural assets and resources. The 700 strong workforce are experts in invasive plant and animal control, stock route management, biodiversity conservation and the management of land and water resources.

The 12 Regional NRM Bodies in Queensland are community-based organisations, funded principally from State and Federal Governments, and work in partnership with Traditional Owners, local government, farming groups, Landcare, utilities and the community, to deliver innovative and science-based solutions to challenges affecting the environment through integrated regional NRM planning. This diverse Statewide team of over 320 includes scientists, GIS, engineers and support staff, all of whom are experts in research, monitoring, analysis, engagement and project management.





## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to formalise the principles of cooperation, information sharing and collaboration between the LGAQ and NRMQR in dealing with NRM issues of mutual interest. This MOU outlines how the LGAQ and NRMQR will work together to facilitate strong cooperation and partnerships between local governments (including their collective groups) and regional NRM bodies to achieve sustainable natural resource management outcomes on the ground. In particular, this agreement set out the responsibilities of LGAQ and NRMQR, and the respective roles of local government and regional NRM bodies in the delivery of NRM. Both signatories to this agreement appreciate that successful relationships are fundamental to effective NRM. Strong partnerships between the parties will be required to promote effective coordination and value-add of regional and local NRM investment. It is also recognised that success of the regional model for NRM delivery depends on the availability of the necessary resources and skills within the regions where important investment decisions are made.

### 2.1 COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS

In committing to this MOU, the LGAQ and the NRMQR recognise:

- Both parties play an advocacy role with regard to NRM;
- Both parties play a significant role in planning and implementation with regard to NRM;
- Both parties have expertise and strong networks with key stakeholders;
- Both parties represent the interests of the community at large; and
- Both parties are not empowered to make commitments on behalf of individual local governments or regional NRM bodies in isolation to those parties.

### 2.2 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

In committing to this MOU both parties recognise the following principles:

- Mutual Benefits: all parties benefit from their dealings with each other.
- Collaboration: the management of natural resources is delivered cooperatively (that is, cooperation is used instead of competition).
- Good Governance: we make decisions together and manage processes well.
- Acknowledgement and Respect: we recognise and advocate for our partners (events and documents).
- Roles and Responsibilities: our boundaries are clear and understood by each other and our respective members.
- Differences: we identify and resolve our differences early and in-house.
- Commitment: we have a shared long-term vision for the environment.
- Communication: is open, honest, on-going and fit for purpose.

### 2.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF LGAQ AND NRMQR:

Responsibilities assumed under this MOU for the collaboration between LGAQ and NRMQR include:

- To identify and support capacity building of both local governments (including their collective groups) and regional NRM bodies to allow them to more fully participate in the management of natural resources and associated land use planning in the region.
- To identify tangible opportunities to work collaboratively on NRM including:
  - Projects between the councils and the regional NRM bodies
  - Data sharing between councils and the regional NRM bodies
  - Encourage and support specific written contracts between the councils and regional NRM bodies on particular projects
- Support and facilitate joint regional and local planning review processes to achieve greater integration of regional NRM plans and local government NRM plans.
- To encourage and support integration of budgeting and operational planning between regional NRM bodies and councils to minimise duplication and foster resource sharing
- To encourage and support agreed and formally documented communication channels between the councils and the regional NRM bodies in each region.





## 2.4 ROLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL NRM BODIES

Local governments have a statutory requirement to protect, enhance and maintain natural assets and resources as they are not only required to comply with environmental policies but also to enforce the requirements of legislation such as sediment and erosion control under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the control of invasive plants and animals under the Biosecurity Act 2014. As the interface between the community and many natural assets, councils directly engage with and educate communities on environmental values and conservation actions through formal and informal programs, including their libraries, community centres and environmental education centres. Councils also play a knowledge gathering and brokering role, and source and maintain datasets and metadata on local biodiversity, ecosystems and in some cases, ecosystem services. They also enter into partnerships with research institutions to gather new information and knowledge to support their work and the work of others.

The regional NRM bodies restore waterways and landscapes, improve native habitats, manage pests and weeds, protect native species and through working with farmers and communities to support them in the best ways to improve and protect the environment for future generations. They have extensive networks in place, including strong relationships with the University sector to ensure their work is science-based as well as with First Nations Peoples to ensure the incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in their work.

## 2.5 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

A Schedule of Activities will be developed by the signatories to outline the activities to be undertaken to progress the implementation of the MOU for the next 12 months {see Attachment I}. The Schedule will be negotiated annually at meetings with designated officers as agreed by the signatories to the MOU.

To ensure the mechanisms to achieve effective collaboration are developed, implemented and are reviewed and adapted from time to time, LGAQ and the NRMQR commit to providing resources (where possible) to implement the mechanisms outlined in this MOU. Each party will determine how information and issues are progressed internally taking into account their own practices and reporting requirements.

### BEYOND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ALSO INVEST IN NRM ACROSS:

- Stormwater management including Water Sensitive Urban Design
- Waterway and riparian restoration
- Urban greening through urban forestry and street tree planting
- Invasive plant and animal control
- Habitat restoration & rehabilitation
- Revegetation
- Coastal protection and management
- Fire management
- Natural disaster recovery
- Management and compliance on the stock route network
- Advocacy and policy development

### THE ROLES UNDERTAKEN BY REGIONAL NRM BODIES INCLUDE:

- Natural disaster recovery
- Weed management
- Feral animal control
- Habitat restoration
- Revegetation / Tree planting
- Fire management
- Fencing construction and repair
- Carbon sequestration (carbon farming)
- Water quality programs
- Monitoring and data collection
- River and creek line restoration
- Coastal / marine habitat restoration
- Sediment/erosion control works
- Property management planning
- Advocacy and policy development





## 3.0 OUTCOMES

It is envisaged that this MOU will support enhanced communication and partnerships between regional NRM bodies and councils, resulting in more successful NRM outcomes. The LGAQ will seek formal feedback from their members to determine value derived from the MOU and the associated Schedule of Activities. NRMQR will seek formal feedback from the regional NRM bodies and their members as to the success or otherwise of the implementation of this MOU. Success measures will be established to track progress in the delivery of the governing principles and against agreed activities.

## 4.0 DISPUTE RESOLUTION



Any disputes in relation to this MOU will be referred in the first instance to the respective CEOs of LGAQ and NRMQR to resolve. If the parties fail to resolve the dispute within 2 months of notification to the officers, a mediator agreed between the parties is to be appointed to resolve the dispute. This MOU assumes no responsibility to resolve disputes between individual councils and regional NRM bodies, although it will support due processes to be undertaken.

## 5.0 DURATION

The parties agree that the life of this MOU is for a period of three years from the date of signing. The MOU can only be amended with the agreement of both parties. The parties undertake to formally review this agreement no later than one month from its expiry date or at any time during the life of the MOU at the request of either party, provided three months' notice of an intention to review is given to the other party to the MOU. The attached Schedule of Activities will be revised annually.

Signed in Brisbane on 14 October 2020

  
 **Mark Jamieson**  
President  
Local Government  
Association of Queensland

  
 **Julie Boyd**  
Chairperson  
NRM Regions Queensland



# ATTACHMENT I:

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES (2020-2021)

The following activities are planned to be completed by the end of 2021 to give life and substance to the MOU. These activities are subject to ongoing review and input from both parties and their members.

ACTIVITY	WHO IS INVOLVED	DATE FOR COMPLETION
Launch of the MOU (with media and communications).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Jamieson (President, LGAQ).</li> <li>• Julie Boyd (Chair, NRMQR).</li> <li>• LGAQ Comms Team.</li> </ul>	Mid-October 2020
Presentation to Local Government Annual Conference (Gold Coast, 20 October 2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Norman (NRMQR).</li> </ul>	20 October 2020
Annual presentation to NRMQR Board & LGAQ Natural Assets and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group on MOU progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristy Gooding (LGAQ).</li> <li>• Chris Norman (NRMQR).</li> </ul>	2021
LGAQ NRM Forums (with speaker from the local Regional NRM Body).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristy Gooding (LGAQ).</li> <li>• CEO, Regional NRM Body.</li> </ul>	2021
Active sharing and engaging between Local Govt. and regional NRM bodies on their respective regional Plan development and implementation. <i>Agreed communication and engagement standards to be defined and implemented.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments.</li> <li>• Regional NRM Bodies.</li> </ul>	2021
Joint planning session between NRMQR Think Tank and LGAQ Natural Assets and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group facilitated by Prof. Darryl Low Choy regarding opportunities post-COVID.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRMQR Think Tank Committee &amp; LGAQ Natural Assets and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group</li> <li>• Prof. Darryl Low Choy (Griffith Uni.)</li> </ul>	MAY 2021
Deliver and communicate outcomes from the <i>Translating biodiversity conservation research into local action project.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGAQ.</li> <li>• Scenic Rim Regional Council.</li> <li>• City of Gold Coast Council.</li> <li>• Healthy Land &amp; Water.</li> <li>• CSIRO. (case study)</li> </ul>	Due to be completed December 2021