



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**QUEENSLAND WATER  
& LAND CARERS**



**QWaLC**  
QUEENSLAND WATER & LAND CARERS



**NRM REGIONS  
QUEENSLAND**



(QUEENSLAND  
REGIONAL  
NATURAL RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
GROUPS  
COLLECTIVE LTD)



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) is the State's peak body for natural resource management (NRM) volunteers consisting of over 400 groups and 30,000 individuals. Established in 2004 QWaLC undertakes two primary functions, within four key areas of advocacy, networking, representation and promotion. The first is an advocacy role - representing the aspirations, needs and concerns of its members to Local, Queensland and Australian Governments. This role is seen by QWaLC as a very important one as it provides members with opportunities to have their say and effectively participate in the decision and policymaking process of governments. Importantly this role is seen as a two-way process - members use QWaLC to share their opinions with and inform governments, and governments use QWaLC to inform its members of the latest NRM policy and project developments.

The second role of QWaLC is to support NRM Volunteers through their community land and water care and NRM on-ground groups by strengthening their effectiveness, and demonstrating effective governance and management. A range of services to support volunteers and their groups are undertaken. A particularly vital service is the administration of insurance policies for Volunteer groups and members.

QWaLC's management committee includes elected representatives from across each of Queensland's NRM regions (management units). Member groups include Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare, Waterwatch, Catchment management, Friends of ..., Progress Associations, Environmental Councils, and Citizen Science groups.

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.

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. 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.

QWaLC and NRMQR operate collectively as part of a regional NRM delivery model having a common interest in creating landscape change to build increased resilience of our natural environment. This will be assisted by improved coordination at the appropriate scale for the delivery of NRM to ensure the benefits of current investment levels are maximised and grown. Both parties also have a significant role to play in actively influencing State and Federal Government policies and resources that impact the delivery of NRM. Both organisations work with a range of stakeholders such as other peak bodies and utilities to support the delivery of NRM activities.

In order to maximise the positive outcomes for both parties it is vital that the organisations work closely, share information, and where appropriate, collaborate (defined as joint planning and project delivery) to achieve the most beneficial outcome for Queenslanders in serving our communities and the environment.



## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to formalise the principles of cooperation, information (data) sharing and collaboration between QWaLC and NRMQR in dealing with NRM issues of mutual interest. This MOU outlines how QWaLC and NRMQR will work together to facilitate strong cooperation and partnerships between local QWaLC member groups and regional NRM bodies to achieve sustainable natural resource management outcomes on the ground. In particular, this agreement set outs the responsibilities of QWaLC and NRMQR, and the respective roles of local QWaLC member groups 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 is required to promote effective coordination and value-add of regional and local NRM investment. It also recognises 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, QWaLC and the NRMQR recognise:

- Both parties play an advocacy role with regard to NRM and seek to promote the development of a State Environment Strategy;
- 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 member groups or regional NRM bodies in isolation to those parties.
- Both parties hold information and data that is beneficial to both as well as to our collective communities.

### 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 each other (events and documents).
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** our boundaries are delineated regionally 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 QWALC AND NRMQR:

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

- To identify and support capacity building of both QWaLC member groups and regional NRM bodies to allow them to more fully participate in the management of natural resources in their respective regions.
- To identify tangible opportunities to work collaboratively on NRM including:
  - Projects between QWaLC member groups and the regional NRM bodies
  - Data sharing between QWaLC, member groups and the regional NRM bodies
  - Encourage and support specific written contracts between QWaLC member groups and regional NRM bodies on identified projects
- Support and facilitate joint regional and local planning to achieve greater ownership and input into regional NRM plans.
- To encourage and support agreed and formally documented communication channels between QWaLC member groups and the regional NRM bodies in each region.

## 2.4 ROLES OF QWALC MEMBER GROUPS AND REGIONAL NRM BODIES (IE. OUR MEMBERS)

QWALC member groups roles fall across a broad spectrum of interest and activity. Groups are formed to address and respond to local and regional concerns and opportunities. Many have strong relationships with Local Government, local businesses and are embedded within their communities. Some member groups are statewide and national organisations.

Member group areas of practical on-ground activity and interest fall across many diverse areas and include:

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

The real value proposition for the regional NRM bodies in Queensland (as it is across Australia) is focussed on facilitating key partnerships, developing and implementing an integrated regional NRM Plan, and leading a regional investment strategy bringing funds into their respective areas. The regional NRM bodies are responsible for developing and implementing a regional NRM Plan in each of their areas. This guides regional actions delivered by themselves and a range of delivery partners (including most importantly, QWALC member groups), that restore waterways and landscapes, improve native habitats, manage pests and weeds, protect native species, and through working with farmers and communities supporting them in the best ways to improve and protect the environment for future generations. Regional NRM bodies 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. The roles undertaken directly by regional NRM bodies include:

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

## 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 12-24 months. 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, QWALC 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.



## 3.0 OUTCOMES

It is envisaged that this MOU will support enhanced communication and partnerships between regional NRM bodies and QWaLC member groups, resulting in more successful NRM outcomes. It is also envisaged that this MOU will contribute to the expansion and enhancement of NRM resources available from Governments at all levels. QWaLC will seek formal feedback from their members (principally through the QWaLC Annual membership and insurance survey) to determine value derived from the MOU and the associated Schedule of Activities. NRM Regions Queensland 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 QWaLC and NRM Regions Queensland to resolve. If the parties fail to resolve the dispute within two months of notification to the officers, a mediator agreed between the parties may be appointed to resolve the dispute. This MOU assumes no responsibility to resolve disputes between individual QWaLC member groups 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 on 1 December, 2020.



**Geoff Elliot**  
Chair  
Queensland Water  
& Land Carers



**Julie Boyd**  
Chairperson  
NRM Regions Queensland

# ATTACHMENT I: SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES (2021-2022)

The following activities are planned to be completed by the end of 2022 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)	Geoff Elliott (Chair, QWaLC), Julie Boyd (Chair, NRMQR), & QWaLC and NRMQR CEOs	December 2020
6-weekly meetings between QWaLC & NRMQR re: upcoming opportunities and positioning	Darryl Ebenezer (QWaLC) & Chris Norman (NRMQR)	6-Weekly
Annual presentation to NRMQR Board & QWaLC on MOU progress, including KPIs and achievements	Darryl Ebenezer (QWaLC) & Chris Norman (NRMQR)	2021 & 2022
A minimum of at least 1 annual NRM Forum (with speakers from QWaLC/Member Groups & the local Regional NRM Bodies)	Darryl Ebenezer (QWaLC), Chris Norman (NRMQR), President/EO Local Landcare Group/Network & CEO, Regional NRM Bodies	2021 & 2022
Active sharing and engaging between Landcare Groups and regional NRM bodies in renewal and implementation of their respective regional NRM Plans <i>Agreed communication and engagement standards to be defined and implemented.</i>	Local Landcare Groups, Regional NRM Bodies	2021 & 2022
Collation of joint funding data to validate and verify investment flow between the organisations (to highlight to Govt. efficiency of regional funding model)		June 2021
Progress joint discussions with Qld Government re: growing next tranche of NRIP (or equivalent) funding for both organisations	Darryl Ebenezer (QWaLC) & Chris Norman (NRMQR)	2021
Capture opportunities to involve each organisation in new joint projects and initiatives, where mutually beneficial	Darryl Ebenezer (QWaLC) & Chris Norman (NRMQR)	Ongoing