

Condamine Catchment Management Association

Response to the **Future of Facilitation and Coordination Networks** **under Natural Resource Management Planning** **and Implementation**



QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are your needs for a facilitator and coordinator support mechanism?

Any facilitator and coordinator support mechanism would need to reflect the new funding arrangements of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

It would be important to establish the positions so there was a “skill bank” available across the region which would be available for groups to draw on depending on their requirements.

2. What would be the role(s) of positions under the new facilitator and coordinator support mechanism?

The primary roles of such a position would be to deliver the regional outcomes as identified in the strategic natural resource management investment plan developed by the Regional body in conjunction with the catchment community.

It has been a recognised feature of this region that enormous benefits can be achieved on-ground if a facilitator/coordinator position operates within the local community to negotiate between the landholders, to bring in specialist expertise when required and to deliver relevant information.

3. What structure could the facilitator and coordinator support mechanism take?

For this region it has been clearly demonstrated over the past 10 years that a locally based project officer who can network between all the stakeholders effectively is in the best position to deliver regional outcomes at a local level. There needs to be an established regional professional support network from which the project officer can draw on to ensure that skills are available to best address local needs.

4. Who should fund the positions?

The whole community benefits from the positive outcomes resulting from such positions, it is not restricted to just those individuals who are active participants. It has been documented that for the Condamine catchment, on average, for every external dollar, the cash/in-kind contribution by landholders is 3.5. With this in mind, the CCMA strongly supports a partnership approach based on who is receiving the most benefit. This could include the Federal and state government agencies, local government, business and industry involvement. The regional body, the Condamine Alliance should also be a partner.

Any of these types of positions should be driven by the planning processes. They need to be flexible in terms of their role and location depending on requirements identified in the regional plan and the opportunities available to deliver on-ground outcomes.

5. What kinds of management and accountability systems could investors establish to promote their objectives in funding the positions?

Any management and accountability system should be developed to ensure that investors were able to promote their objectives in funding the positions. Of course, they would need to be consistent with the objective of the major funding programs of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust.

Any project would also need to ensure they delivered on key performance indicators and targets established in their project application.

6. Who should be the employer of the positions?

Ideally there would be no restrictions placed on who would be the employer. The positions could be multi-skilled or linked to specific project initiatives depending on which regional natural resource management outcomes are required.

Possible employers are those who are receiving the majority of the benefits. Flexibility is required as a mechanism may need to be developed to fund one person from a number of different sources of funding.

It has been demonstrated across the Condamine catchment that when coordinator/facilitator positions are employed by a local community organisation greater ownership of the project is achieved.

7. What levels of salary and employment conditions are required?

There was a general consensus that any salary and conditions should be negotiated between the employer and employee with consideration given to the employee skills and qualifications. Payment and conditions may be linked to the delivery of outcomes.

There should be a minimum contract of 3 years wherever possible subject to probation and regular review. It was thought that this might reduce the high nature of staff turnover currently experienced by employees in the natural resource management field. Training opportunities should also be provided for staff to meet local demands.

An alternative approach to what is currently in place across this catchment is to establish a program based system which provides flexibility to employees in both role and location. This would be particularly suitable to those staff employed on a specific project which once delivered locally could be delivered elsewhere across the region. This would provide greater capacity to address regional requirements. It might also provide a pathway for progression, enabling employees to see potential long-term employment opportunities if they remain in the region.

- 8. How many positions should there be and where should they be located?**
- 9. What qualifications and experience are required of the positions?**
- 10. Should the positions be program specific or generic or a mixture of both?**

This will be determined by the regional natural resource management strategic plan. Positions should be flexible and located where required.

- 11. What should the positions be called?**

N/a

- 12. How can communication be conducted?**
- 13. Should the positions be badged?**

The community need to have ownership over both the desired outcomes and those involved in the delivery of those outcomes. It is important that any such position is accessible by the community and that the position works with the community on their patch.

- 14. Other comments or suggestions.**

- Need some sort of continuity.
- Regional body needs to keep an overview of what has happened in the past.
- Consideration to be given to the social element. It is often beneficial to draw heavily on people out of the community because they have the local knowledge and will stay in the community.
- Need to provide opportunities for local young people to assist with succession planning and corporate memory.
- Groups have the opportunity to pool money from a variety of sources and employ someone to address local community needs.
- Capacity building activities need to be resourced locally.