



## The Waterways Network

14 November 2021

### Submission: Draft Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management Plan

#### About The Waterways Network

The Waterways Network is a community practice that considers the way flows, rivulets, creeks, streams, and rivers form a connected network across the landscape that is fundamental to the health of our environment. The ecological integrity of the landscape is indispensable to the health of the world in which we live, and water is the critical ingredient in that integrity.

We acknowledge the work of the Cradle Coast NRM in preparing this plan. We make the following points.

#### MERI

Perhaps our greatest concern is the lack of information, detail and transparency around the MERI. A plan is a waste if it just a plan, a plan may not be implemented, or implemented in varying degrees of completeness. Too many plans are not implemented and too often there is no effective monitoring. Good intentions fall by the wayside. The value of a plan is not only in the initial stakeholder consultation but in the stakeholders and in particular the community being able to track, assess and in turn contribute to the MERI on an ongoing basis. There is insufficient information about the MERI in the plan itself.

We propose that there is website that tracks the MERI for all three regions as a joint exercise. This would be modelled on the Melbourne Water MERI website for the Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018: <https://healthywaterways.com.au/report-card?suld=PPW&tabId=river&> This would better fulfil section 13 (1) (c) to encourage the participation of community in the natural resource management of the region.

#### Climate change/global warming

The plan needs to more explicitly address the impact of climate change on biodiversity and on water. The impacts are explored in more detail in the land (agriculture section) but not to the same degree in the water or biodiversity sections. Land clearing and dams built in the warmer stormy scenarios of climate change will have a significantly larger impact on biodiversity than under current regimes.

Distribution patterns of species will change as climate changes due to global warming, and the changed climate will impact on the distribution and viability of ecological vegetation



## The Waterways Network

classes. The plan needs explicitly to take into account the specific biodiversity impacts and shifts in habitat.

### Structure of the plan

The first part of the plan is generic to all Tasmanian NRM plans. By providing a generic element at the start of the plan, the intent of the plan is softened and the relevance of the plan to place is muted. We suggest that the first part of the plan become an NRM plan for Tasmanian regions that is issued separately to the plan for each region so that each plan has a stronger focus on its region.

The plan needs to set out a clear timetable for its actions. A goal without steps to its achievement is most likely to fail. There is an interim review, but it is unclear what will be expected to be achieved by that interim date.

The King Island Natural Resource Management Plan has a clear summary table of actions. This could be a model for a summary table of outcomes and priorities to be placed at the end of the report. A summary table makes an assessment of the priorities and outcomes considerably

easier. [http://www.kingislandnaturalresources.org/publications/King\\_Island\\_Natural\\_Resource\\_Management\\_Strategy\\_2010-2020.pdf](http://www.kingislandnaturalresources.org/publications/King_Island_Natural_Resource_Management_Strategy_2010-2020.pdf)

While we recognize that this is not an implementation plan, yet the plan is not sufficiently specific and the actions too vague and conditional to drive its priorities within the limited timeframe.

Of concern is that there is no clear intent or timeframe as to how projects will be developed or how or when an implementation plan might be created: 'Projects aligned with the Strategy will be developed at a subsequent stage, through the development of a Regional Investment Plan and/or in response to emerging needs. (p35)' The phrase 'a subsequent stage' will make the interim review and final review challenging to be a useful assessment.

The Strategy requires a context of previous plans for natural resources in the region, and the successes and failures of earlier plan. What has worked, what was successful, needs to inform this strategy. These plans have sometimes been written outside of government, as citizen science, advocacy and strategic planning. That work also deserves respect.

### Community

The Strategy commits to community: 'Best practice approaches to community engagement are essential. (p22). This best practice needs to be defined with a clear commitment in the strategy to IDP2 principles.



## The Waterways Network

Community groups need to be funded on an ongoing basis with core funding. There has been a shift by government to fund projects rather than organizations. Projects can only be effectively done by organisations that are firmly established with consistent funding. The strategy needs to recommend core organization funding, with a shift back to funding local NRM and volunteer groups on an ongoing basis rather than project by project. This sort of ongoing funding provides an informed and active group (and an audience for the messaging recommended by the strategy) able to inform planning, advocate for improved outcomes, build community knowledge, share community knowledge, do citizen science and undertake projects.

### Bass Strait Islands

We applaud Priority WC2, though it does not go far enough, with priority actions being implemented on only 50% of **priority** islands. 'WC2.a' lacks sufficient detail. The islands need to be mapped in terms of biodiversity values and threats and priority work identified, both for preservation and improvement of habitat, both land and sea. The Bass Strait islands are sanctuaries that are naturally advantaged by being protected by sea water. They are rich in rookeries and bird life, as well hosting unique Ecological Vegetation Classes. They are also critical steppingstones in migratory routes. The migratory routes and the differing values of particular island as sanctuaries needs to be mapped and then particular protection policies initiated. As a matter of scale these they are most likely to be more impacted by climate change than Tasmania itself.

### Summary

This is a good beginning, and we thank the Cradle Coast NRM staff for the effort they have put into the plan. As draft, the intent is to have the draft improved and we have contributed our thoughts in that spirit. The Waterway Network would like to see more detail, more dates, more funded community commitment more mapping of spatial data and in particular of the impacts of climate change. The Priorities as the

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Kelly, Convenor,  
The Waterways Network

680 Red Hut Road  
Lymwood, King Island, Tas 7296  
0408 850 810  
andrew@ize.com.au