resilient RIVERS
SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Resilient Rivers Initiative:

SEQ Waterways and Wetlands Investment Strategy

Acknowledgement of Country

The Resilient Rivers Initiative recognises, respects and values the knowledge of waterways and wetlands management held by First Nations people, which has evolved over generations of living on and managing custodial responsibility for Country, as well as their rights and interests in Country.

Council of Mayors (SEQ) would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land of the Badtjala, Barunggam, Bundjalung Dungibara, Giabal, Gubbi Gubbi, Jagera, Jarowair, Jinibara, Kabi Kabi, Kitabul, Quandamooka, Turrbal, Ugarapul, Wakka Wakka, Yugambeh, Yugara/Yagara and Ugrarapul people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture, and the contribution they make to the life of this region. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

Stakeholder Acknowledgement:

This document was developed through generous contributions from elected members, environment officers, staff, and First Nations people from across the region. Thank you for your input, discussions, and ideas.

Brisbane City Council, Noosa Shire Council, Sunshine Coast Council, City of Moreton Bay, Redland City Council, Logan City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Seqwater, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Department of Environment and Science, Urban Utilities, Healthy Land and Water, Port of Brisbane, Unitywater, Danggan Balun Aboriginal Corporation, Gubbi Gubbi Dyungungoo Group Inc, Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, Kabi Kabi Aboriginal Corporation, Kombumerri Rangers, Munujali Nation, Maibin Jahyilah Yahgilah Inc, Ngarang-Wal Gold Coast Aborigininal Association Incorporated, Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, Turrbal Nation, Wakka Wakka Nation, Wirrinyah Conservation Services, Yugambeh Nation, Yugarabul Nation, Yuggera Nation.

Cover image: Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Funding Partners:

Queensland Government

Council of Mayors South East Queensland

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Lord Mayor's Message

South East Queenslanders have a strong affinity with our waterways. From Moreton Bay and its islands, to our dams, rivers, creek and coastline - our waterways and wetlands are an important part of what South East Queenslanders love about where they live.

Across the south east they provide a place to relax and recreate; they support food production, local business and our economy; they sustain local ecosystems and life; and they provide the perfect backdrop to eat, dine and catch-up with family and friends.

But our waterways are under increased pressure from population growth and natural disasters. That's why the Resilient Rivers: South East Queensland Waterway and Wetlands Investment Strategy (the Strategy) is so important.

That's why the Resilient Rivers: South East Queensland Waterways and Wetlands Investment Strategy (the Strategy) is so important.

The Strategy provides a coordinated approach to how we manage and invest across the south east. It will drive improved collaboration and provides a framework for all levels of government, utilities, industry, investors and communities to work together to improve the health of the waterways we all share.

It will deliver targeted improvements to waterway health, enhanced flood resilience and work with local communities, landowners and First Nations people to improve land, waterway and wetland management outcomes across our region.

As we look to the future, the Resilient Rivers Initiative has been highlighted as a key program in the Brisbane 2032 Legacy Strategy – Elevate 2042. It has also been supercharged with new investment from the Australian Government and Queensland Government through the SEQ City Deal.

This Strategy will help to ensure we leverage these opportunities to deliver significant benefits for South East Queensland's waterways and wetlands before and after the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner

Chair
Council of Mayors (South East Queensland)

Minister's Message

Water sustains all life, but here in South East Queensland it also defines our lifestyle and economy. Whether it's camping on the Stanley River, irrigating the Lockyer Valley, sailing on Moreton Bay, generating power at Wivenhoe Dam, fishing at Moogerah Dam, swimming at Mooloolaba beach, exploring the waterfalls of the Scenic Rim, bird watching at Boondall Wetlands or wandering through the River City, water is intrinsic to our life and lifestyle.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative is a generational commitment that signals a transformative era for the sustainability of South East Queensland's waterways headlined by a $40 million investment through the SEQ City Deal, led by the Council of Mayors (SEQ), Queensland Government and the Australian Government. The Resilient Rivers: SEQ Waterways and Wetlands Investment Strategy provides a comprehensive plan to improve the health of our catchments and waterways by increasing native vegetation, fortifying erosion control and enhancing bank stability all the way from our hinterlands out to Moreton Bay.

In the face of challenges like rapid population growth and increasingly severe natural disasters, it's essential that we take a holistic approach to the management of South East Queensland's waterways and wetlands. Because the best way to protect the delicate Moreton Bay marine ecosystem from the impacts of downstream sediment runoff is to address these issues upstream at their source.

This work will unite government and multiple stakeholders together to improve South East Queensland's water security, lifestyle, and disaster mitigation. I thank all involved for stepping up to the mantle of addressing tomorrow's challenges today.

Leanne Linard MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef

Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

The Resilient Rivers Initiative:
a decade of coordination and success

The Resilient Rivers Initiative (RRI) has been a successful partnership between Council of Mayors (SEQ), the Queensland Government, water utilities, key regional waterways and catchment organisations and the community for almost 10 years. It has delivered coordinated catchment management to improve the health and resilience of South East Queensland's catchments, waterways and the internationally significant Moreton Bay.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative was established as a response to the devastation of the 2011 and 2013 floods in South East Queensland, through recognition that coordinated catchment management is needed to protect our water and keep soil on land and out of waterways. At its core, the Resilient Rivers Initiative recognises that we can deliver more through collaboration, cooperation and coordination than working alone.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative was launched with the development of a South East Queensland Resilient Rivers Initiative Regional Strategy 2015-2025. The Resilient Rivers Initiative Regional Strategy set the direction for management of waterways and has guided the successful delivery of more than $8.3 million of investment to deliver priority works to protect and improve SEQ's waterways, working collaboratively with its partners and the community.

An economic study undertaken in 2020 revealed that the $4.3 million worth of investment that had taken place at that point in time provided an additional $3.8 million of returns for local government area regions, in the form of local capital and employment.

A new era of opportunity

The success of the RRI, and its ability to have even greater success, has been recognised by significant further investment through the South East Queensland City Deal (SEQ City Deal, 2023). The SEQ City Deal is a tripartite commitment between the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Council of Mayors (SEQ) to positively transform SEQ by delivering a significant package of initiatives generating thousands of local jobs, boosting digital and transport connectivity, supporting the local environment, enhancing liveability and creating thriving communities.

The SEQ City Deal commits $40 million over the next five years (until 2028) to fund works to improve the health and resilience of the region's rivers and waterways. Under the SEQ City Deal, the RRI aligns within the outcome for a more livable SEQ, which aims to deliver a healthy, sustainable and livable region through new investments in urban amenities and blue and green environmental assets.

Additionally, CoMSEQ is working closely with Department of Environment and Science (DES) to ensure RRI aligns with and complements other programs for healthy waters and wetlands in SEQ. This includes objectives under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

As SEQ prepares to host the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is a unique opportunity to build on these successes and drive a transformational shift in delivering the much-needed improvements in our catchments and waterways.

To realise this opportunity, and the many local and regional benefits that will be delivered from increased investment in the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of the region's waterways, the Resilient Rivers Initiative – SEQ Waterways and Wetlands Investment Strategy (the Strategy) (this document) has been developed.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative:
SEQ Waterways and Wetlands Investment Strategy

This strategy will guide the delivery of the enhanced Resilient Rivers Initiative under the SEQ City Deal, enabling transparent, efficient and effective decision making for investment in on-ground action that achieves real outcomes for the region. The Strategy adopts a whole-of-system, values-based approach to management, which considers management at multiple scales in the context of the ecosystem services and values provided by waterways and wetlands. Developed through comprehensive consultation across 19 organisations and with First Nations peoples, the Strategy recognises people as central to decision making and promotes management responses that achieve multiple objectives.

In addition, the Strategy recognises opportunities to leverage additional funding and investment through the collaborative partnership model that underpins the RRI, for the betterment of SEQ's waterways and wetlands, creating regional jobs, supporting local communities and facilitating economic growth and development.

This Strategy **builds on the success** of the Resilient Rivers Initiative to date, captured within case studies which celebrate the innovation, hard work and collaboration of **local people all over South East Queensland.**

The Strategy aligns with and advances the objectives of numerous regional, State and international plans and policies. At a regional scale, the 2023 update to the *South East Queensland Regional Plan, Shaping SEQ 2017*, directly calls out the Resilient Rivers Initiative to provide water sensitive communities with a strategy to protect and sustainably manage the region's catchments. The Resilient Rivers Initiative is also identified as a key program to achieving the Brisbane 2032 Legacy Strategy, Elevate 2042. This strategy recognises the intrinsic importance of healthy lands and waterways, seeking continual improvement in riverine, estuarine and marine water quality, and provides further opportunity for investment spurred by the upcoming Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The improved coordination and management of SEQ catchments through this Strategy will also support the maintenance and improvement of the ecological character of South East Queensland's internationally listed Ramsar site - Moreton Bay.

About SEQ and our waterways

For more than 60,000 years the waterways of SEQ have been the source and support of life for First Nations People, living in close harmony with the land and water of the region. This relationship with waterways and wetlands continues to be critical for the people of South East Queensland today, as the only major Australian settlement built substantially on floodplains. The topography of the region has resulted in 19 relatively short catchments flowing from the nearby Great Dividing Range into the internationally recognised Moreton Bay.

SEQ has grown to be home to more than 3.8 million people, and is the fastest growing region in the country with thriving industry and business offering new opportunities for employment, lifestyle, and investment. The region's success is intrinsically linked with its waterways and wetlands and the ecosystem services and values they provide to the people of SEQ. Significant post-European modification and disturbance of the waterways and wetlands, including dredging of the lower estuaries for shipping, extensive land clearing, industrial pollution, resource extraction and rehabilitation, has negatively impacted these ecosystem services and values.

The current gross domestic product (GDP) of the region is $1.5 billion, half that of Queensland. The capacity of SEQ to continue to grow its population, its economy and employment, whilst maintaining the quality of life for which the region is renowned for and that is desired by the community, is directly linked to the capacity of its waterways, wetlands, and catchments to support this growth.

The impacted state of the region's waterways and wetlands is leading to losses of productive agricultural lands, reducution in climate resilience and impacts on the receiving environments – ultimately impacting their associated ecosystem services and values such as tourism, recreation and resource availability (e.g. water supply and fisheries). Protecting, managing, restoring and rehabilitating SEQ's waterways and wetlands is critical to maintaining the ecosystem services and values that underpin the lifestyle and economy of the region.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Resilient Rivers Initiative

Vision, Aims, Values

*Our region's waterways and wetlands are **healthy and resilient,** sustained through regional partnership and the community's stewardship to preserve and **enhance their cultural, economic, and life-sustaining value.***

Aims

The above vision is underpinned by key goals that support achievement of the vision. The Strategy focuses on elevating above the business-as-usual activities of our partner's effort to achieve outcomes at a regional scale where cross-boundary and cross-jurisdiction coordination and partnership is essential for success.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative aims to:

- Prioritise action that will protect, maintain and enhance the ecosystem services and values provided by the region's waterways and wetlands, using robust information, science and knowledge
- Promote partnerships with strong leadership and good governance to influence planning and policy in the region to support achievement of the vision
- Facilitate landholder, community and industry stewardship of waterways and wetlands
- Incorporate First Nations cultural values and ecological management for waterways and catchments through robust engagement and collaboration
- Be a beacon for waterway and wetland investment in the region, working in partnership to realise desired environmental outcomes and investors needs

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Values

To achieve the vision, we must understand the intrinsic and existence values and ecosystem services being provided by waterways and wetlands. Through stakeholder engagement six overarching categories of ecosystem services and values that are important to the people of SEQ were identified. These underpin decision making for management intervention investment for the Resilient Rivers Initiative.

Resilience

Resilience means that waterways and wetlands (being the rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, estuaries and their catchments) can adapt to pressures (e.g. a growing population and climate change) and are prepared for threats (e.g. floods and droughts) enabling them to continue providing functions and values (e.g. water quality, biodiversity and amenity) that are indicative of good condition.

Biodiversity

South East Queensland is one of the most diverse bioregions in the world with a number of ecological features (such as waterways, rainforests, fauna) of international significance which are loved by the community and tourists alike. Hundreds of threatened and migratory species depend on the extent and connectivity of natural areas in the region for their survival and the regions' waterways support a number of iconic species such as dugongs, turtles, whales, platypus and lungfish.

Water and Food Security

Waterways and wetlands sustain our lives, livelihoods and lifestyles providing fit-for-purpose water, both in terms of quality and quantity, to grow the food we eat, the materials we manufacture and the water we drink.

Cultural

For First Nations peoples, the waterways are the arteries of the land. Land, sky, water and people are connected and inseparable. Water is of critical importance for the health of Country and its people.

Social and Amenity

Our unique waterways support our quality of life as well as our mental and physical wellbeing. The natural scenic amenity of the region's waterways and their biodiversity value is one of its greatest assets for tourism and migration, being highly sought after for its recreational opportunities such as fishing, watercraft, swimming and nature immersion.

Scientific and Research Excellence

The uniqueness and richness of the SEQ region makes it an ideal location for study and the pursuit of knowledge. It is a center of scientific excellence with a high quality of understanding of the functions and processes that shape the region, which brings confidence and trust for investors interested in influencing its condition.

Strategic Focus Areas

There is clear evidence that a whole -of -system approach is needed to fully integrate the economic, environmental, and social aspects of waterway management in SEQ. A number of strategic focus areas are proposed to drive this intervention and achieve the vision and goals of the Resilient Rivers Initiative.

The core work of the RRI is delivering high-impact on-ground projects across all relevant local government areas. The other strategic focus areas are designed to support and enable this to occur.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Strategic focus 1: *Improving information and data*

Objective: Up-to date, scientifically robust and integrated information is available for evidence-based decision making and informing best practice protection, management and rehabilitation of waterways and wetlands.

Effective, efficient protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of waterways requires robust scientific information and tools. This information includes understanding the components and processes of a system, the services it provides, how people value them and how they respond to pressures. Knowing where they are (i.e. mapping), and their condition is also important. This information can be used to inform management action locations and activities, monitoring of management activities, targeting investment, assisting with land use planning and improving education and awareness. Improving information available for decision making involves building on existing information, developing and integrating new information and making that information available.

Action: Work with Partners to identify data and information needs and gaps and to design a program for delivery.

Action: Adopt existing best practice standards and guidelines for the management and rehabilitation of waterways and wetlands and develop or contribute to the development of new ones as required.

Action: Work with partners to improve waterway and wetland mapping to ensure activities are focused on key priorities.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Strategic focus 2: *Planning and governance*

Objective: The region's planning and policy frameworks and governance supports desired outcomes for waterways management

The two greatest risks to waterway health and resilience are climate change and population growth. It is important to ensure that the expansion of our urban and regional footprint, is underpinned by policies and frameworks that support outcomes for waterway health and resilience in the face of these pressures. Planning and regulatory processes directly influence activities which impact (both positive and negative) on waterway health and resilience. In Queensland, the complex nature of managing waterways and wetlands is further exacerbated by complex statutory arrangements for waterways. Efforts to manage, rehabilitate, protect and build resilience in waterways and wetlands must be accompanied by policy and legislative tools that support them. The Resilient Rivers Initiative provides an opportunity for Partners to develop a shared understanding of these impacts to inform the development of planning and regulatory processes that appropriately consider the health and resilience of waterways. It also provides an opportunity to develop a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities amongst government, industry and other stakeholders. Therefore, the RRI will be innovative in its approach to implement a robust and effective governance model to advocate for waterways and wetlands in the policy and planning landscape.

Action: Implement governance arrangements and delivery model.

Action: Investigate opportunities to streamline approval process for projects that deliver ecosystem services and wise use of waterways and wetlands outcomes.

Action: Work with partners to maximise the opportunities for waterway ecosystem service delivery.

Strategic focus 3: *Investment*

Objective: Attract investment from public and private sector to accelerate the rehabilitation of waterways and wetlands in SEQ.

Building the resilience of SEQ's waterways and wetlands is an urgent challenge and meeting that challenge is likely to require significant investment. Globally, the current level of investment in restoring ecosystems and building resilience comes predominantly from public and philanthropic investors and is considered nowhere near the scale to meet the challenge. RRI seeks to attract significant additional public and private investment, including opportunities through emerging markets, such as natural capital investment, to the region to accelerate and upscale activities that protect, manage, rehabilitate and restore waterway health and resilience. Key principles for this investment will include:

- Long term sustainability: prioritise the long-term sustainability of projects as rehabilitation and conservation efforts require long-term commitment;
- Investment incentives: encourage private investment in catchment and waterway environmental projects.
- Collaboration and Partnerships: between different stakeholders, including co-investment between government agencies, non-profit organisations, private sector entities, and local communities.
- Risk sharing: mitigate the financial risks associated with environmental projects and share the risks associated with the project among the participating partners.
- Transparency and Accountability: clear accountability in the allocation and use of funds.
- Flexibility and innovation: adapt to changing environmental challenges and community needs and to support new ideas and approaches that can drive positive environmental outcomes.
- Best value for money: careful and considered use of funds to achieve the best outcome and highest return on investment.

To support ongoing investment, sharing real-life stories and showcasing the tangible impact of that investment will be a powerful way for RRI to grow. Highlighting success stories and the positive change that has come about through previous investments can help build trust and encourage future investment.

Action: Investigate options for attracting investment to maximise outcomes of the Strategy.

Action: Develop a prospectus to attract investment.

Strategic focus 4: *On ground activities to protect, manage, restore and rehabilitate*

Objective: Implement on-ground activities that protect, manage, rehabilitate and restore the health and resilience of SEQ's waterways and wetlands.

Actions under this theme will seek to protect, manage, rehabilitate, and restore the key ecosystem services and values identified by stakeholders via catchment management planning processes. Management intervention options may include a mix of Best Management Practice including pressure reduction, systems repair, engineered solutions, and engagement extension and education.

Action: Review and update the Catchment Action Plans using the whole-of-system values-based approach.

Action: Prioritise projects based on their contribution to achieving the vision and alignment with the key values of the Strategy to maximise positive environmental and community outcomes.

Action: Plan and deliver projects using the Aquatic Ecosystem Rehabilitation Process.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Strategic focus 5: *Engagement, education, communication, advocacy and capacity building*

Objective: Improved awareness of the value of waterways and wetlands enhances stewardship of our waterways by the community.

The communities of SEQ are intrinsically connected to the region's waterways. The community benefits from the services waterways and wetlands provide (such as food and water supply, recreation and culture) but also are impacted by the declining state of waterways and wetlands through outcomes such as poor water quality, habitat destruction and flooding that impact on these services. Most of the region's waterways run through privately owned land. The actions of landholders and those of the community, can positively and negatively impact the health and resilience of SEQ's waterways and wetlands. Commitment from landholders and the community to undertaking the long-term management and care for the rehabilitation sites is critical to ensure that long term outcomes are achieved. SEQ landholders and the community will play a significant role in the protection, management and rehabilitation of the health of waterways and wetlands. Engagement, education, communication, advocacy and capacity building are critical success factors to creating a shared understanding, driving innovation and action and encouraging best practice management of waterways and wetlands.

First Nations people in SEQ have an intrinsic connection to the land and water, grounded deeply in their cultural, spiritual and historical identity. Dispossession and rapid urban development have broken their engagement with these lands, restricting their cultural practices and decision-making power. This has led to changed ecosystems, loss of traditional knowledge and impacts on sites of cultural importance. The Resilient Rivers Initiative has started on the journey towards collaborating with First Nations people (see Case Study 2). There is now an opportunity to continue this journey of collaboration with First Nations people to increase their participation in and the incorporation of their traditional knowledge and practices into land and water management in SEQ.

Action: Develop and implement an education, engagement, communication, advocacy and capacity building plan.

Action: Identify and harness regional opportunities to work with First Nations peoples in the delivery of the RRI.

Photo by Gary Cranitch @ Queensland Museum.

Strategic focus 6: *Monitoring, evaluation, reporting*

Objective: An adaptive and effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework is implemented to improve waterways management.

Measuring the full impact of management intervention in the natural environment is a challenging proposition as it generally takes a significant time to effect change and the natural variability of the environment leads to uncertainty of the impact. However, monitoring and evaluation are essential to determine whether management intervention is implemented correctly and performing as expected so that the intended outcomes are achieved. This also allows for continual improvement and best practice management by feeding the learnings from this process into the overall approach, to drive focus areas for science and understanding and improve guidance and standards for delivery.

Action: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and the efficiency of the implementation of the Strategy.

Action: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects delivered as part of the Strategy.

Action: Work closely with Partners to monitor and evaluate the extent, condition and ecosystem services being delivered by waterways and wetlands.

Catchment Action Plan: Mid Brisbane
Site: Glamorgan Vale Rd
Area: 8 ha
Date Planted: May 2022

Case Study 1:
Black Snake Creek collaborative transformation

In 2014 Ipswich City Council (ICC), in partnership with multiple stakeholders and the local Marburg community, produced the Upper Black Snake Creek Improvement Plan (UBSCIP). A whole-of-system values-based approach identified catchment salinity as a key threat to water quality of the Brisbane River and the Mount Crosby Treatment Plant, potentially impacting on water supply. Seqwater monitor this threat at multiple sites on Black Snake Creek and downstream of the confluence with the Brisbane River. The UBSCIP identified multiple objectives: for this project including reducing salinity and sediment, as well as flood risk.

A site investigation and an implementation plan were undertaken, with the initial work site chosen primarily because the landholders had an interest in rehabilitating country. The site is highly visible, with a broad channel arrangement and significant exposed earth, so any changes due to the rehabilitation efforts will be pronounced. A geomorphic investigation of the site was undertaken.

The investigation identified most of the degradation within the channel and floodplain was likely due to subaerial erosion processes primarily from cattle impacts. Cattle pugging can strip topsoil and groundcover, creating concentrated flows within the floodplain and stream banks. The lack of groundcover in these impacted areas makes them prone to the impacts of rainfall splash, runoff and stream flow, leading to degradation of the channel and floodplain. There was no major evidence of fluvial scour or mass failure processes within the channel, most likely due to the low stream power and low bank heights.

Based on this assessment, catchment officers recommended the removal of stock from the floodplain and riparian zone. Riparian and floodplain vegetation was planted to improve the bank and floodplain condition over time, and ultimately reduce erosion and improve flood mitigation. Planting included deep-rooted vegetation to lower the saltwater table and reduce salinity downstream over time.

The planting area was fenced and cattle removed; with an initial planting flooded soon after being laid down. The flood did minor damage and required debris removal but as it was slow moving, across a broad floodplain, the flood is now seen in hindsight as an element of the success of this planting. The areas planted and flooded have achieved exceptional growth in comparison to other sites in the district and those planted on this site shortly after the rain event.

A spectacular aspect of this project is the recovery of the landscape and the coverage of the couch grass once the cattle were removed. The improved health and vibrancy of the site post-rehabilitation can be seen by the diversity of flora and fauna now observed at the site.

*Twelve months after completion the **entire exposed area is now completely covered.** This high level of cover will **reduce erosion and improve flood mitigation** in future rainfall events.*

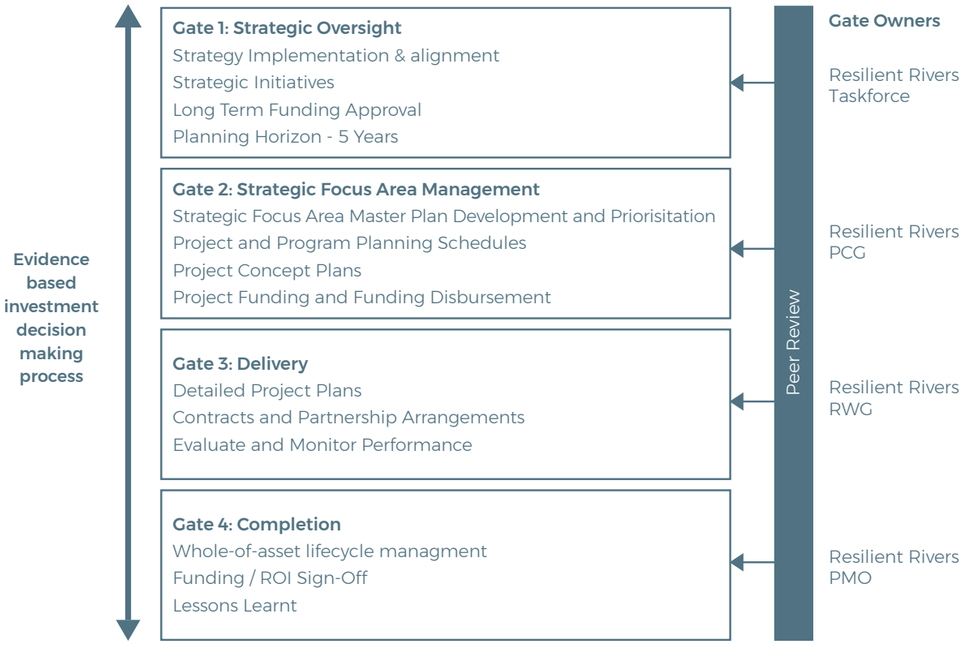
Now in its fourth phase, projects under the UBSCIP have led to more than 40,000 trees being planted across 10 properties. Critical success factors for this project were clarity of communication with landholders as well as project partners and contractors, quality site investigation to inform robust design for the site, oversight of the contractor in the implementation of the site preparation, and planting to ensure the design was implemented appropriately while meeting landholder needs.

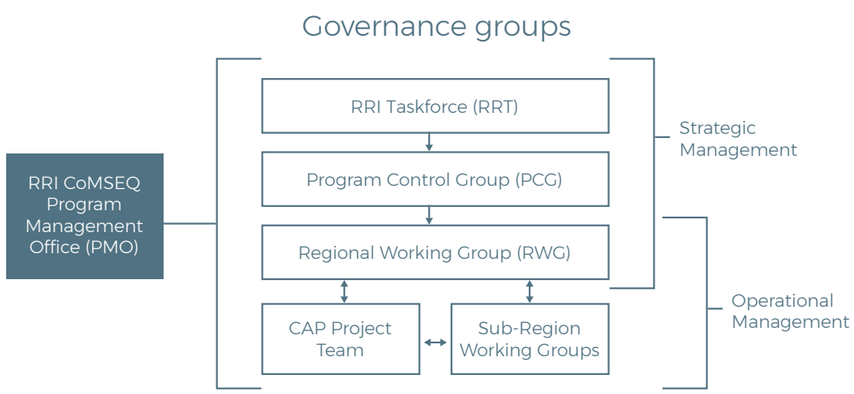
Governance Framework

Responsibility for the delivery of the RRI is led by the Council of Mayors (SEQ) - CoMSEQ, representing councils across the SEQ. CoMSEQ will deliver against this Strategy, including leading the RRI Project Management Office (PMO).

The RRI PMO provides overall leadership and coordination, supporting the Resilient Rivers Taskforce (RRT), a Program Control Group (PCG) and a Regional Working Group (RWG). The RRT provides the highest level of governance for the RRI, supported by the PCG which has a regional focus on master plan development and prioritisation. The PCG sets the direction for the RWG which coordinates development and delivery of the Catchment Action Plans (CAPs).

Operations groups may also exist (such as Catchment Action Plan working groups and sub-regional focus groups) coordinated through the RWG.

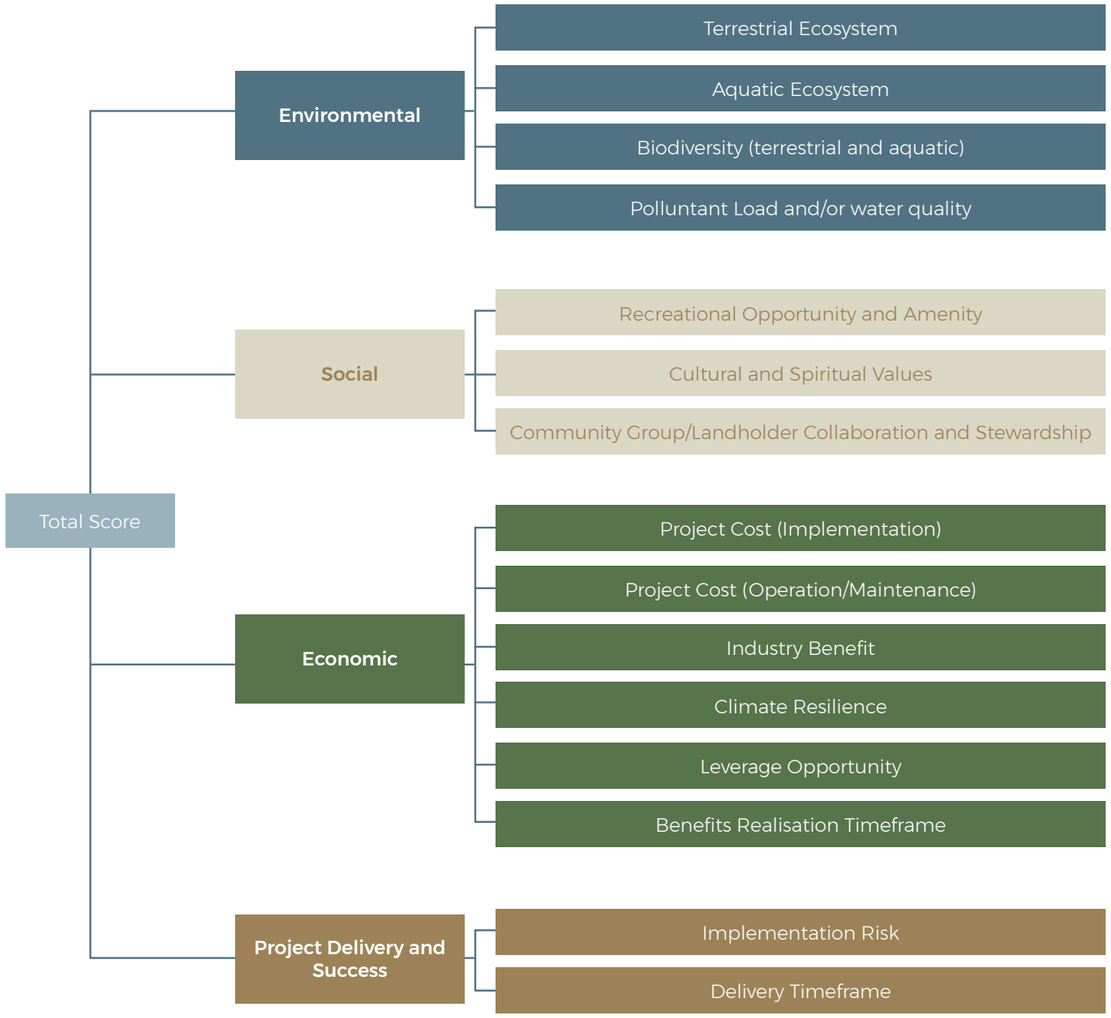




Prioritisation Process

Projects undertaken by the Resilient Rivers Initiative will align with the strategic focus areas of the Strategy. The prioritisation process will be adaptive and will enable the PCG and RWG to make informed, consistent and transparent decisions on projects that will be selected for funding, independent of catchment area.

Projects will be prioritized based on their contribution to the achievement of the overarching vision and their ability to achieve multiple objectives that align with the six key values of the Strategy and maximise outcomes from investments for the benefit of the environment, the community and future generations. The process is designed to provide confidence to investors that investment in on-ground works will be made in those projects that contribute the strongest overall outcomes for the waterways and wetlands of SEQ.



Catchment Action Plan: Lockyer
Site: Park Lea, Placid Hills
Area: 7 ha
Date planted: April - June 2023

Case Study 2:

Investing in revegetation for multiple benefits

Management interventions that focus on revegetation and avoid civil works (where possible) are understood to be the best value-for-money and most effective rehabilitation approaches for riverbanks. Using this guiding principle, an investigation was undertaken to determine the best approach to revegetate an 8km reach of the Lockyer Creek near Gatton, looking for high value, low risk stream bank and bench stabilisation planting opportunities. The investigation examined geomorphic and hydrological components and processes to determine erosion risks associated with high flow flood events. Several priority sites were identified, including Council-owned Parklea reservation. This site was part of the creek floodplain that had become overrun with weeds and had suffered extensive damage from cattle grazing.

This site has high community value, both for the township of Gatton but also for the local First Nations community. Building on the work undertaken to identify the site, a collaborative approach was taken to researching, designing, and delivering the rehabilitation project. This included extensive and direct collaboration with Wirrinyah First Nations Services, the wider Gatton community, and investment partners Greening Australia.

The project was researched, designed and planned following the Department of Environment and Sciences Aquatic Ecosystem Rehabilitation Process and included the incorporation of First Nations traditional land management practices. As the site was located close to urban development objectives in addition to revegetation to reduce erosion included flood resilience, bush fire resilience, and creating green space for the community to connect with nature. In addition to the initial investigation, an extensive bush fire risk investigation was also undertaken at the site and applied a rigor over the proposed revegetation design. The outcomes and recommendations of the report influenced the planting design (layout, density and species selection) so that the future revegetated site did not significantly increase bush fire hazard to the neighbouring residents. In consultation with the traditional owner group, cultural burning practice was considered for the site and future site management will include elements of this in the longer term. Other considerations included in the planning and design phase due to the proximity of the site to houses included vegetation slashing requirements to reduce immediate risks associated with overgrown vegetation on the site.

Assessing potential flood impact from the proposed revegetation is always critical, particularly when sites have close proximity to creeks, floodplains and residences. The investigation tested various planting designs using the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Flood Model. A design was selected that had no impact on downstream residences, while still reducing flood velocity and erosion potential.

Finally, reinstating koala habitat and increasing biodiversity were also objectives included in the design and planning phase.

The Resilient Rivers Initiative partnered with the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and Greening Australia to deliver the project, with Greening Australia contributing substantial investment from corporate and philanthropic donors looking to invest in long-term land restoration projects.

*A key part of the project implementation and **successful community engagement** was delivery of a community tree planting day held on **Earth Day** for the launch of the on-ground works.*

During this event the traditional owner groups representing the Yuggera and Barunggam people provided the welcome to country and cultural dances to welcome community, introduce the site and the project. A total of 1,200 trees and shrubs were planted on the day. The event provided local community and project funding representatives an opportunity to engage firsthand with environmental restoration, establish a connection with this site and its ecological importance on the landscape. Attendees on the day expressed how much they enjoyed the experience.

The investigation, methodical approach and process applied to building this project sets the standard to be implemented to all RRI projects and programs in the future.

The process and partnership approach was seen as attractive to investors and a commitment has been entered into to co-fund this site as well as another planting site on Lockyer Creek, to be planted in early 2024.

CAP: Logan Albert Catchment Action Plan 2017-2020

Site: Various within the Mid Logan

Case Study 3:

Facilitating knowledge sharing, co-ordination, collaboration, and action in the Logan River Catchment

The actions and achievements in the Mid Logan River catchment have been acknowledged for providing leadership and being a catalyst for cohesion, collaboration, efficiency and change.

Bordering both the Logan City Council (LCC) and Scenic Rim Regional Council (SRRC), the Logan River has historically presented issues for landholders, particularly those who straddle both sides of the river. One of the drivers of landholder concern has been a lack of consistency in approach to land restoration, as well as a lack of clear on-ground deliverable outcomes, leading to justified landholder cynicism when approached to be involved in restoration projects. To overcome this, the Resilient Rivers Initiative has taken a different approach: rather than multiple agencies delivering their own singular projects with limited coordination, RRI catchment officers facilitated coordination, collaboration, and action among involved groups.

An early example of the effectiveness of this collaboration was when RRI catchment officers approached the largest landholder on the Mid Logan with a proposal to undertake a range of work along reaches of their property. Initially the landholder was clearly skeptical and disinterested, however, through genuine engagement, historical issues that were concerning him were raised. Top of mind was the unwanted legacy of mesh fences across the property, installed along easements established for and from Wyaralong Dam to the Logan River, that were overgrown and had recently caused the loss of a valuable bull. RRI catchment officers, as the collective representatives of the Councils, Seqwater and the NRM groups, agreed to investigate. Seqwater responded that the fences were no longer required and through a collective effort led by the RRI catchment officers the fences were removed within days. This timely action changed the dynamic with this landholder, from distrust to interest. On the back of this came a willingness from the initial landholder to engage and in time more landholders across this catchment have also willingly engaged. This same landholder has since installed over a kilometer of top of bank fencing to restrict cattle from the bank and the river, whilst also supporting the revegetation of 6 hectares of riparian planting through collaboration with the NRM group and co-investment from Seqwater's Multi-catchments Sourcewater Protection Project. RRI catchment officers have now engaged with nearly 100 landholders in this catchment from lifestyle blocks to commercial farmers and are working on over 20 properties providing support, information, connection and on ground actions.

Another project of significance in this catchment was working with turf farmers and Turf Queensland (TQ) to develop an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for turf farms. Turf production is a dominant land use in the Mid Logan and also more broadly across SEQ. Many turf farms are close or adjacent to sensitive riverine environments.

__The Resilient Rivers Turf Production Environmental Management Plan Template__ was developed to assist turf producers with the preparation or improvement of a plan for their farm. __This helps ensure that the environmental values and responsibility,__ relevant to each farm, are identified, understood, adequately protected, and enhanced.

TQ actively supported our efforts to work with a cross section of farms to gain an in-depth understanding of the various practices and needs, to develop a document that would provide a review point in regard to practices relating to on and off farm nutrient management. This has acted as a catalyst for broader understanding of this issue, to improve the timeline with Councils when applying to make modifications to farms and also advance the awareness and readiness for future challenges. This approach proved successful as RRI catchment officers worked with farmers, in the pursuit of mutual benefit, we were able to engage openly and honestly, actively deliver learnings and management plans. The management plan is now also available SEQ wide and through the TQ website. Using this approach catchment officers have developed ongoing working relationships with numerous turf farms, and their neighbours, working together on nutrient, livestock, weed and erosion management.

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