

Workshop: Building the coastal capacity of Local Government – Reef Guardian Councils

**Wednesday, 19th September
1.50pm – 2.20pm
Main Hall, Anglican Church**

Facilitator: Jason Vains, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Background:

This presentation sets the scene for the workshop, and introduces the concept of Reef Guardian Councils.

The Reef Guardian Council programme has been designed to recognise and foster environmental stewardship for the Great Barrier Reef from local government and the general community.

The programme seeks to raise awareness and encourage best management practice in local government activities, while recognising that effective protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef requires partnerships at all levels of government, industry and the community.

As part of the Reef Guardian Council programme, local government actions for natural resource management will be assessed against both environmental and cost benefit.

This workshop will assist in developing a model action plan (based on the Reef Guardian Council Programme) for a local government managing and planning natural resources within its local government.

Discussion:

The workshop explores (brainstorms) good methods in natural resource management and planning for local government in:

- waste management
- water management
- community engagement and
- land management that can help improve water quality for downstream marine environments.

The workshop will also explore the relationships between local government, community, NRM etc. in the delivery of the methods identified.

At the end of the workshop, we will quickly look at the resulting model and its links to Reef Plan, NRM and the implementation of Water Quality Improvement Plans.

What was discussed
(please list the main dot points such as identified issues or threats)

- Best practice for stormwater management? Must start with planning before development assessment. Guidelines must be incorporated into planning schemes and monitored.
- Best practice to save stormwater as a valuable resource and recycled is a suggestion.
- Best practice to slow it down and keep it flowing otherwise fine sediments come downstream. Reduce velocity. Has been proven in USA that increasing velocity is a mistake.
- Riparian vegetation is one method to increase water quality but this can be difficult in some areas and is not 100% effective.
- Gold Coast City Council use soft engineering practices to manage stormwater by reducing velocity as well as riparian practices as well as education programs - combining with increasing biodiversity. Community heavily involved.
- Best practice should involve community engagement.
- Less hard sealing of surfaces should be considered for upstream to recharge the aquifer and also slow it down.
- Engineered walls can also include biology – eg. Mangroves will grow on some platforms to be buffers to waves and flows.
- Sometimes best to start with those landholders who are amenable to the ideas, and then spread them further.
- What is the barrier of turning guidelines into practice? Because guidelines are not always running parallel to planning schemes.
- Enforcement can be an issue when it comes to development eg. Water sensitive urban design.
- Are we getting close to best practice? No! What's happening in the meantime while all this planning is going on?
- Ideally to start at the top of the catchment all the way down but this does cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Best practices for sea level rise? Buffer zones
- Incentive programs for not building on buffer zones
- Very hard for places like Gold Coast
- Make people who live on the coast pay for the mitigation works?
- Buy back scheme can work well
- Have higher rates for coastal property owners?
- Best practice is relative according to value of area, will not be the same for all areas. Eg small fishing community versus Mermaid beach \$18M home.
- Save your house versus save the sandbank? Who should pay? Council – they own the sand according to home owners. Or homeowners – they own the very valuable house?
- Beach is a public place, not private ownership – an issue can be private owners building their own access points on a public place. How do we stop this? Send local law enforcement?
- Where do local g'ment responsibilities start and finish? What should each sector of community and government be

	<p>delivering on? These things are getting greyer over time. EPA, Councils, Marine Parks, DPI – technical expertise and capacities become and issue. Such a mixture of planning – who will pay for the implementation? Delivery of the planning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BDTNRM is an example of using resources to spread with LG. An issue is will this work with LG? Is it welcome? ○ Best practice is great but who will pay and implement it? This is the key. There should be a bigger commitment from all levels of government. 	
Suggested follow-up actions	Action	Who will undertake this action?
1.		
2.		
3.		