

Development of the Strategy

This part describes why and how the Strategy was developed. It explains the future direction and funding of natural resource management programs based on various joint agreements between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments. It describes how the community and stakeholders were consulted in developing the Strategy.

Cradle Coast NRM has established a Vision and identified Goals for managing the Region's natural resources and, to improve the condition of these resources over the next 10–20 years, has set Resource Condition Targets. These are measurable targets, so we can evaluate the success of the Strategy in improving the condition of natural resources or in decreasing the rate of degradation. We have also set short-term Management Action Targets for more immediate actions that will contribute to achieving the Resource Condition Targets. Management actions were grouped into suites of integrated Management Action Packages and prioritised for the first Regional Investment Proposal, to attract investment in the priority actions. This Investment Proposal will be developed in partnership with stakeholders and potential investors, which include the Tasmanian and Australian Governments. Community involvement is also important in developing and implementing the priority actions for sustainable NRM.



3. Framework for the Strategy

3.1 A Regional approach to NRM

Throughout Australia, natural resource management (NRM) is becoming based on broad-scale Regions, because management of natural resources, such as native forests, water, flora and fauna, is often more effective at the Regional level than at the local and State levels.

In Tasmania, many integrated catchment management and other natural resource management strategies and plans have already been developed. Recently, the State and Local Governments decided to take the broader Regional approach to integrate the management of all our natural resources.

The nation-wide move towards Regional NRM has led to the development of various partnership agreements between regions, State and Australian Governments over the last few years. The Australian and State Government have signed a Bilateral Agreement for the delivery of the Natural Heritage Trust (signed in June 2003), which outlines a number of National agreed frameworks. These nationally-agreed frameworks provide the basis for developing Regional NRM Strategies that set the direction for protecting and managing our natural resources. The Regional Strategies and accompanying Investment Proposals will also provide guidance for potential investors in NRM including the Australian Government funding arrangements, such as the Natural Heritage Trust.

The Regional NRM Strategies will not replace existing legislation and policies – they must be consistent with these to be accredited by the State and Australian Governments.

3.2 The Tasmanian NRM Framework

The Tasmanian Government recognises that effective natural resource management, particularly on private land, requires a mix of both regulation and incentives. The Government has been seeking

to achieve this balance under the Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) and the Forest Practices System and, more recently, through the development of the Natural Resource Management Framework. The RMPS was established in 1994 with the aim of achieving sustainable outcomes from the use and development of the State's natural and physical resources.

In September 2001, the Tasmanian Government released *Tasmania Together*, a 20-year social, economic and environmental plan based on broad community and stakeholder consultation. This forms an overarching framework for planning, budgeting and policy prioritisation for the Government and non-government sectors.

Tasmania Together includes four goals that are particularly relevant to NRM:

- to value, protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage
- to value, protect and maintain our natural diversity
- to ensure there is a balance between environmental protection and economic and social development
- to ensure our natural resources are managed in a sustainable way now and for future generations.

The *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Framework*, which was launched in February 2002, was developed by the Tasmanian NRM Steering Committee, representing State and Local Government, industry and community groups. Community consultation was an important part of the development process and many people and organisations contributed to the Framework.

The Tasmanian NRM Framework starts from a broad definition of natural resource management:

Natural resource management is the management of all activities that use, develop and/or conserve our air, water, land, plants and micro-organisms, and the systems they form.

The Tasmanian NRM Framework provides the State with a systematic way of integrating and improving natural resource management. It provided legislative support to underpin a new Regional approach, through the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002*.

To administer the Regional approach, the NRM Act set up:

- a State-wide Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Council to advise the Minister for Environment and Planning on NRM issues to increase the effectiveness of management approaches.
- three Regional Committees to prepare an NRM Strategy for their Region and facilitate its implementation.

The Framework does not replace existing policies and processes such as *Tasmania Together*. The Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System still provides the overarching legislative framework for natural resource management and for planning and development control. The Framework integrates the elements of the RMPS and deals with aspects of natural resource management that are not covered by legislation.

Key priority areas for the Tasmanian NRM Framework have been identified as:

- community capacity building
- education/communication
- research.

In addition, five priority NRM issues have been identified:

- management of water
- vegetation
- soil
- weeds, pests and diseases
- the coastal/marine environment.

The Regional Strategy is required to incorporate and seek to implement these principles and to take full account of the priorities in order to be accredited.

The following set of principles will inform decision making under the State Natural Resource Management Framework. They are not in priority order.

- Ecosystem approach – Natural resource management should be based on an understanding of the relationship between natural resources and the ecosystems they support, and upon careful monitoring of change over time.

- Balanced decisions – Natural resource management decisions should take proper account of the range of environmental, social and economic benefits, values and costs in accordance with the objectives of the Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System.
- Integrated management – The management of natural resources should be integrated within regions and catchments, as well as across industry sectors, Government agencies and specific issues.
- Priority-based – Natural resource management actions are to be undertaken according to priorities that are based on the best available science and information, and relevant experience, as well as on assessment of the relative cost-effectiveness of various options.
- Prevention is better than cure – It is often more efficient to prevent damage than to repair it. Therefore, where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- Partnerships – To be effective, natural resource management requires the establishment of partnerships between all levels of Government and the community, including the Aboriginal community, industry, land holders and individuals, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- We are all responsible – All Tasmanians receive benefits from the use, development and conservation of natural resources; they share responsibility for managing natural resources sustainably, and for providing economic resources to do so.

These State-wide principles form the basis of the Regional Cradle Coast NRM Strategy. During the development of the Strategy, nearly 240 management actions were developed and carefully prioritised, with extensive input from the community, stakeholders and technical advisors. The process for developing and prioritising the management actions recommended in the Strategy is set out in Part E.



3.3 The Regional NRM Committees

The Tasmanian NRM Framework is intended to link, and to help coordinate, natural resource management at all levels in the State. A key issue in developing the Framework was to establish the scale at which the integration of natural resource management can be carried out most efficiently – a Regional scale that allows planning, priority setting and coordination, without losing touch with local communities and issues.

Three NRM Regions have been established under the NRM Act using the boundaries of the three Tasmanian Local Government regional bodies – the Cradle Coast Authority for the north-west of the State, the Northern Tasmanian Municipal Organisation for the north-east of the State and the Southern Tasmanian Councils Board for the south of the State. Each Region has its own NRM Committee declared under the NRM Act. The Regional NRM Committees are referred to as Cradle Coast NRM, NRM North and NRM South.

Although Regional NRM Committees have no regulatory role, they identify Regional priorities, prepare and monitor Regional Natural Resource Management Strategies, and promote natural resource management principles.

3.4 The National NRM Framework

The 'Australian and Tasmanian Governments NRM Joint Steering Committee' assists and oversees the process for developing and accrediting the three Regional Strategies in Tasmania, in conjunction with the Tasmanian NRM Council.

Much of the Australian Government's involvement in natural resource management (NRM) is coordinated and funded through the Natural Heritage Trust, which supports on-ground works, planning, resource assessment and capacity building. There are also significant contributions through the National Landcare Program and the National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity.

Natural Heritage Trust funding to implement each Regional NRM Strategy, when accredited by the Australian and State Government, will be on the basis of the Regional Investment Proposal. This arrangement was established in the Bilateral Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust, signed in June 2003. (This document is available on the website www.nrm.gov.au by clicking on Publications.)

During the time that the Strategies were being developed, funding was made available for high priority projects where urgent action was required and information was needed to set benchmarks and targets for NRM. Such Priority Projects in the Cradle Coast Region include salinity hazard assessment on King Island and setting vegetation condition benchmarks for the Region (both funded by the Natural Heritage Trust), and management of rice grass in Robbins Passage (funded by the National Landcare Program). Smaller-scale funding continues to be available to community groups through the Australian Government's Envirofund.

National Standards and Targets Framework

The nationally-agreed Standards and Targets Framework is part of the Bilateral Agreement to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust. This framework specifies a set of National Outcomes and a minimum set of Matters for Targets, which must be considered in the Regional Strategy. The eight National Outcomes are aspirational statements about the natural resource outcomes desired for Australia. These National priorities have all been considered in developing the Cradle Coast Region NRM Strategy.

The desired National Outcomes are:

- The impact of salinity on land and water resources is minimised, avoided or reduced.
- Biodiversity and the extent, diversity and condition of native ecosystems are maintained and rehabilitated.
- Populations of significant species and ecological communities are maintained or rehabilitated.
- Ecosystem services and functions are maintained or rehabilitated.
- Surface and groundwater quality is maintained or enhanced.
- The impact of threatening processes on locations and systems which are critical for conservation of biodiversity, agricultural production, towns, infrastructure and cultural and social values, is avoided or minimised.
- Surface and groundwater is securely allocated for sustainable production purposes and to support human uses and the environment, within the sustainable capacity of the water resource.
- Sustainable production systems are developed, and management practices are in place, which maintain or rehabilitate biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintain or enhance resource quality, maintain productive capacity and prevent and manage degradation.

There is a minimum set of ten Matters for Targets associated with these Outcomes.

The ten Matters for Targets are:

- Land salinity
- Soil condition
- Native vegetation communities' integrity
- Inland aquatic ecosystems' integrity (rivers and other wetlands)
- Estuarine, coastal and marine habitats' integrity
- Nutrients in aquatic environments
- Turbidity/suspended particulate matter in aquatic environments
- Surface water salinity in freshwater aquatic environments
- Significant native species and ecological communities
- Ecologically significant invasive species.

Cradle Coast NRM has assessed these ten matters and set Regional targets for them all, as required by the Bilateral Agreement. The Cradle Coast NRM has also set targets for cultural heritage, air quality, greenhouse gases and ozone.

A set of indicators and methods of measurement have been developed for each Matter for Targets. Such consistent measurement methods will ensure the data collected for these indicators contributes effectively to the assessment of resource condition on a National scale. Indicators are currently being trialled.

The Regional NRM Strategy gives the overall direction for future NRM work and provides the foundation for developing an accompanying Regional Investment Proposal. This proposal will identify the costings and sources of funding to implement the priority management actions.

3.5 The Cradle Coast NRM Committee

The Cradle Coast NRM Committee was established as a committee of the Cradle Coast Authority and was first convened in January 2003. The Committee comprises 15 members representing, as required by the NRM Act, the interests of community, conservation organisations, the Aboriginal community, Local and State Governments, public land managers and industries in the Region. Appendix 8 provides a profile of each Committee member and more information is available on the website www.nrmtas.com.au (click on Cradle Coast Region).

The Regional Committee is responsible for:

- identifying NRM priorities
- preparing a Regional NRM Strategy and targets

- promoting NRM principles
- supporting the integration of NRM and planning activities
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategy
- ensuring there is appropriate education and training in NRM.

The Committee is undertaking these tasks, including considering all the National Outcomes and the ten Matters for Targets specified in the National Standards and Targets Framework.

3.6 The Cradle Coast Regional Investment Proposal

Investment Proposals set out the costing and potential sources of funding for implementing the highest priority actions in the Cradle Coast Region NRM Strategy.

The initial Investment Proposal is currently being developed to support the Regional NRM Strategy and takes into account community support of the Strategy. Investment Proposals will be developed in partnership with stakeholders and potential investors, which include the Tasmanian and Australian Governments through the Natural Heritage Trust and other funding programs. Members of the community will play an important part in developing and implementing the priority management actions.

The first Investment Proposal will seek funding for the first year of the implementation of the Strategy and is likely to be heavily reliant on Australian Government NHT funding. Future Investment Proposals will seek funding for three years. As partnerships are developed with potential co-investors in NRM activities, it is intended that subsequent Investment Proposals will contain increasing contributions from non-NHT sources.

Each Region is required to report progress regularly to the community and key stakeholders. Regions must also report their performance every six months to the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and other investment partners.

The Strategy has tentatively identified possible 'lead organisations' to take on the role of initiating and ensuring the implementation of the priority management actions. Consultation with these organisations is part of developing the Regional Investment Proposal. This proposal will identify the costings and sources of funding to implement the priority management actions identified in Management Action Packages.



3.7 Integrating Regional, State and National NRM

Integration of plans, policies, strategies and regulations concerned with natural resource management is necessary at a number of levels:

- State and Australian Government, and international legislation, policies and statutory management plans (such as threatened species recovery plans)
- sub-regional NRM plans, including NRM and catchment management plans
- municipal planning schemes and weed management strategies
- Rivercare plans for entire rivers or defined reaches.

Many other plans, such as integrated property management plans, are being developed by individual landholders on farms and other privately-owned properties, often as part of Regional and State-wide NRM initiatives. In the Non-Forest Vegetation Program, the State Government is working with landowners to develop vegetation management agreements to protect priority (important) vegetation communities. Although these agreements can be part of individual property management plans, the sustainable use and conservation of priority vegetation communities on neighbouring properties will help to protect biodiversity at the broader landscape scale.

As mentioned before, the Tasmanian NRM Framework is not intended to replace or override existing policies and processes. The Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) will continue to provide the overarching legislative framework for planning and development control. The Cradle Coast NRM Strategy integrates the Regional priorities with the RMPS and other relevant policies and plans. The Strategy addresses the policies in State and Australian Government Bilateral Agreements, such as protection of native vegetation. The Strategy is also consistent with the goals of *Tasmania Together*, a major guiding document for the State Government (Appendix 7).

Appendix 2 provides a list of the main Australian and Tasmanian Government legislation and policies relevant to natural resource management in the Region. Appendix 3 lists the numerous main existing plans, strategies and programs. These are all further detailed in the *Cradle Coast Region Natural Resource Management Strategy Situation Paper* (Sprod, Armstrong & Ketelaar, 2003), which is on the website www.nrmtas.com.au.

3.8 Integrating NRM across Regional boundaries

The Cradle Coast NRM Region shares boundaries with both the Northern and Southern NRM Regions. Because the Regional boundaries are based on Local Government areas rather than catchment boundaries, some water catchments are shared between Regions; for example the Gordon River and its catchment and the World Heritage Area are shared with the Southern Region. The Mersey catchment is shared with the Northern Region. Management of Public Reserves, weeds and threatened species are among the many natural resource issues that cross Regional boundaries.

Consultation between the NRM Regional Committees should ensure that NRM issues in these areas are dealt with in a coordinated manner. To facilitate this consultation, a member of each Regional Committee sits on the Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Council, which has a role in ensuring consistency and coordination of natural resource management across the State and in advising the Minister for Environment and Planning.

3.9 Monitoring and evaluation

The Region is committed to incorporating monitoring and evaluation in the Regional Strategy, as they are essential tools in managing and achieving sustainable use of our natural resources. Monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of this Strategy and its implementation, and will ensure accountability and compliance with statutory requirements.

Adaptive management will allow the Region to evaluate its actions, activities and progress towards achieving the Regional Resource Condition Targets, and to make changes where necessary. The Region will establish processes for managing these evaluations and implementing their recommendations. Evaluation of management actions will be particularly important, as changes in the resource condition may not be evident in the short term. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes will be consistent with the National Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. The Cradle Coast NRM Committee is committed to reporting progress in implementing this Strategy.

More details about monitoring, evaluation and reporting are in chapter 15.

4. Process for developing the Strategy

4.1 Introduction

The following sections provide an overview of the process used to develop the Strategy.

The 'Bilateral Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments for delivering the Natural Heritage Trust', signed in June 2003, set specific requirements for developing the Regional NRM Strategies. Each NRM Strategy must be accredited by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, to receive funding from the National Natural Heritage Trust. (The accreditation guidelines are in Attachment 6 of the Bilateral Agreement, available on the website www.nrm.gov.au – click on Publications).

For accreditation, the Cradle Coast NRM Committee has ensured that the Strategy:

- covers the full range of natural resource management issues
- is underpinned by scientific analysis of natural resource conditions, problems and priorities
- has effective involvement of all key stakeholders in the Strategy development and implementation
- focuses on addressing the underlying causes rather than the symptoms of problems
- includes strategies to implement agreed NRM policies to protect the natural resource base
- demonstrates consistency with other planning processes and legislative requirements applicable to the Region
- sets targets at the Regional scale, consistent with the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets
- identifies strategic, prioritised and achievable actions to address the range of NRM issues and achieve the Regional targets; this includes an evaluation of the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of such actions, and of any actions needed to address such impacts

- provides continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement of the Strategy.

Regional natural resource assets

A natural resource asset is a natural resource or landscape feature that has economic, social or environmental values. These assets include air, rivers, soil, mineral ores, vegetation and wildlife. The Region's natural resource assets provide a variety of 'ecosystem services', which include generation of oxygen, drinking water, generation and maintenance of soil, and pollination of crops. The assets also have intrinsic values, and are important for conservation of biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage.

The Strategy is targeted at maintaining and enhancing the Regional natural resource assets, not only for the sustainable use of resources in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism, but also to maintain their ecosystem services and other values.

There are various methods for defining Regional assets, but for the purposes of this Strategy we have identified them as in the list below. These 'Regional assets' are simplistic notions, as within each of these categories there is a complex array of assets; for instance, 'Land' comprises soil, minerals and geoheritage.

The Regional assets are defined as:

- Land (soil, minerals, geoheritage)
- Water (surface water, groundwater, freshwater ecosystems)
- Biodiversity (terrestrial ecosystems, vegetation, fauna)
- Coastal, Estuarine and Marine (coastal/estuarine/marine waters and ecosystems)
- Atmosphere (air, climate)
- Cultural Heritage (Aboriginal, European and landscape heritage).



These Regional natural resource asset groups are all strongly inter-related. They are only separated here so that each asset can be adequately described in the following chapters. In practice, NRM for the Region must be fully integrated across all Regional assets.

Ecosystems, for instance, incorporate more than one asset group but, for the purpose of this Strategy, freshwater ecosystems and wetlands are placed in the Water asset (chapter 8), native vegetation is placed in the Biodiversity asset group (chapter 9) and coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems are placed in the Coastal, Estuarine and Marine asset group (chapter 10).

The importance of integrated management is discussed in chapter 6: Integrated management of Regional assets.

Community capacity

The people and communities of the Region have a fundamental role in protecting and enhancing the natural resource assets. The NRM Strategy recognises that the community plays an important part in NRM and is committed to building community capacity – the abilities and resources of individuals, networks, organisations and communities to sustainably manage natural resources. This is discussed in the next section, in chapter 5: Building community capacity.

4.2 Setting Targets for the Region

The *National Framework for Standards and Targets* specifies a minimum set of matters for which targets must be set (see Section 3.4). Regional targets were set for all ten matters, and also for air quality, greenhouse gases and ozone.

The Region has set targets at three levels:

- Aspirational Targets (50-year time-frame)
- Resource Condition Targets (10- to 20-year time-frame)
- Management Action Targets (1- to 5-year time-frame)

These targets were developed for the Regional NRM Strategy by the community, Cradle Coast NRM Committee, key stakeholders and technical specialists.

Figure 4.1 shows the links between these targets.

Where possible, the proposed targets in the Strategy were aligned with targets in existing Tasmanian policies and strategies, including *Tasmania Together* (see Appendix 7).

Aspirational Targets

Aspirational Targets are long-term targets for the desired condition of natural resources over the next 50+ years. They may not be directly measurable, but provide guidance for the Region's long-term planning.

Resource Condition Targets

Resource Condition Targets (RCTs) are set for a 10- to 20-year time-frame. They are measurable targets so we can evaluate the success of the Strategy in improving environmental outcomes across the Region.

Resource Condition Targets measure the decline, maintenance or improvement in the condition of natural resources over time. The indicators and methods used to measure these changes in resource condition are specified in the National Standards and Targets Framework.

Resource Condition Targets must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. They will identify the amount of gain or reduction in asset condition for the relevant indicator (e.g. sediment levels in streams) by a particular date. For some of the nationally agreed indicators, however, we do not have adequate baseline data at a Regional level to allow Resource Condition Targets to be set with confidence. Where adequate baseline data is not available, a management action is required to collect the data to establish benchmarks and set Resource Condition Targets.

Setting appropriate Resource Condition Targets was complex, and involved considerable input from the community, stakeholders and technical experts. All target numbers will be subject to technical review in the first year of implementing the Strategy. The Bilateral Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments for the Natural Heritage Trust program (available on the website www.nrm.gov.au – click on Publications) specifies that Regions have up to three years (June 2006) from the date of signing to finalise these targets.

Management Action Targets

Management Action Targets (MATs) are short-term targets (1–5 years) that can also be described as performance indicators or milestones. Management Action Targets relate to management actions that will contribute to achieving the Resource Condition Targets.

The Management Action Targets reflect the priorities and resources we propose for making progress on a particular management action. At this stage, only preliminary Management Action Targets have been identified for the high priority

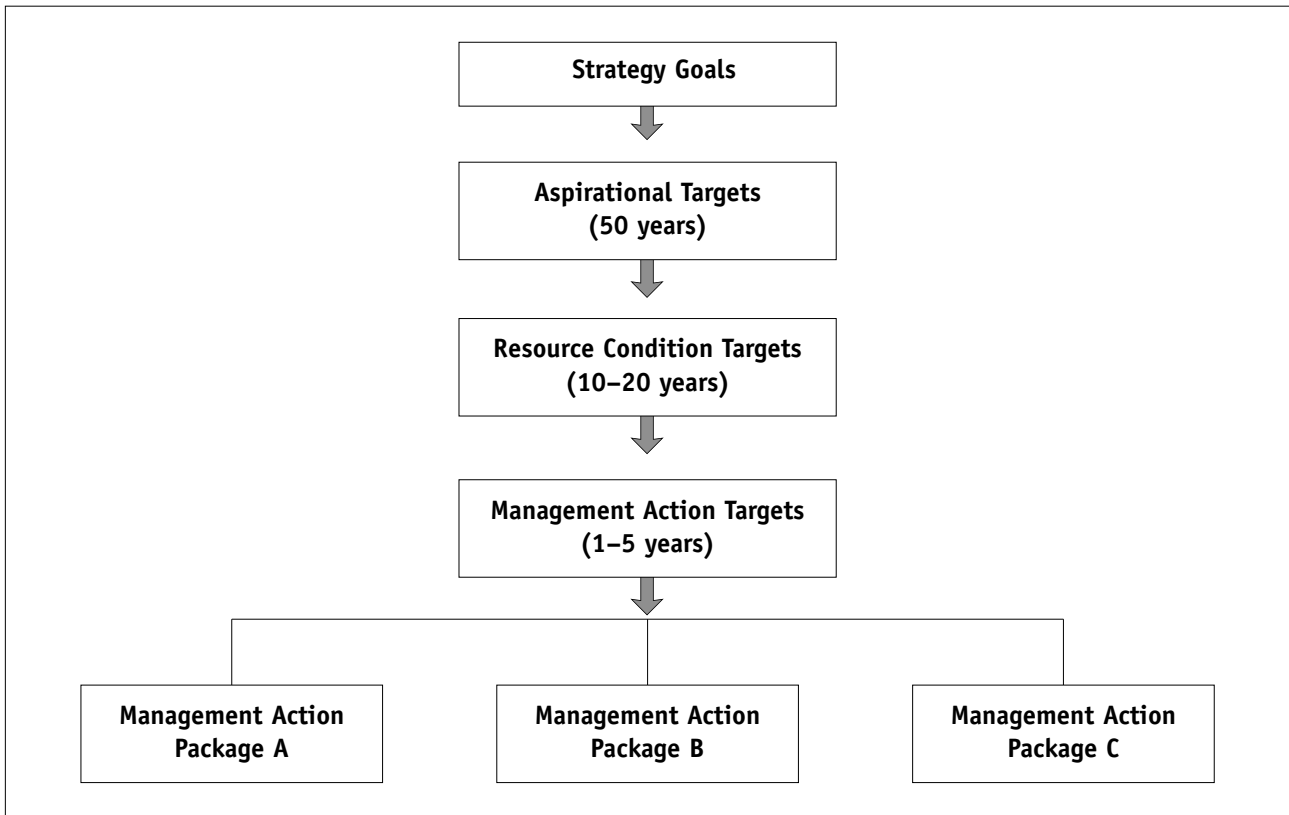


Figure 4.1 Relationships between the Strategy Goals, Aspirational Targets, Resource Condition Targets, Management Action Targets and Management Actions

management actions. The targets will be fully detailed and costed in the Investment Proposal, based on input from the community and stakeholders.

4.3 Developing Management Actions

For each asset group, draft 'Management Action Packages' to address the causes of degradation were prepared by the Committee and specialists, with assistance from Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM). Packages were also prepared for 'Community Capacity' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation'.

We need to set priorities so that our limited resources are invested in the projects that are most likely to achieve positive natural resource outcomes for our areas of highest priority. The Management Action Packages were given an initial prioritisation by assessing the benefits and risks of implementing them on environmental, economic and social grounds. The method is outlined in chapters 13 and 14, and set out in *Methodology for prioritising*

management actions, a Supplementary Document available from Cradle Coast NRM and on our website www.nrmtas.com.au (click on Cradle Coast Region).

The Management Action Packages are a suite of different projects (e.g. capacity building, planning, research, on-ground works) with a single purpose – to best protect, restore or enhance the condition of a natural resource asset. It is the combination of projects for each asset into packages that provides integrated solutions to particular NRM issues. Most NRM issues are too complex to be addressed by single actions.

In the following chapters, many of the recommended targets and management actions refer to the existing and State NRM plans, strategies and programs on which they are based. Many of these existing plans have been developed over the last few years with considerable community and agency input. It is important that the Region's NRM Strategy acknowledges all this work. The plans are detailed in Appendix 3.

4.4 Developing the Regional Investment Proposal

A Regional Investment Proposal is currently being prepared that sets out the funding requirements for implementing the highest priority actions as identified in the Strategy. Further prioritisation will identify the packages to be funded through the Investment Proposal. The Investment Proposal is being developed by the Cradle Coast NRM Committee and consultants Moore Consulting and Davey & Maynard, in partnership with stakeholders and potential investors, which include the Tasmanian and Australian Governments through the Natural Heritage Trust and other funding programs.

The range of actions contained in the Management Action Packages in the NRM Strategy that require funding are far beyond the scope of available funding sources. Therefore, through the Investment Proposal, a further process of defining which actions can be funded in the immediate future will take place.

4.5 Key stages in developing the Strategy

The process for developing the Cradle Coast Region NRM Strategy is described in detail below and shown in Figure 4.3 overleaf.

Stage 1 Establishing the status of NRM in the Region and developing the NRM Strategy Discussion Papers

The Cradle Coast Authority engaged consultants to prepare a Situation Paper to establish the status of NRM in the Region. The Situation Paper included a review of existing NRM plans, identified gaps in information, and recommended actions to remedy the gaps (Sprod, Armstrong & Ketelaar, 2003, available on the website www.nrmtas.com.au – click on Cradle Coast Region).

To assist in developing the Strategy, 17 technical Issues Papers on key natural resource areas were prepared by State Government staff, mainly in the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. These were used extensively to prepare the Strategy and are available on our website www.nrmtas.com.au.

Developing the Strategy required involvement from a diverse range of stakeholders in the Region. Small, targeted stakeholder meetings were held to determine the values, issues and priorities for NRM under four broad categories: social issues, water, sustainable production and biodiversity. From the

stakeholder meetings, the Cradle Coast NRM Committee prepared eight Discussion Papers covering key topics such as Sustainable Production, Biodiversity, Water, Air Quality, Climate Change and Greenhouse Effect, Use of Natural Assets on Public Land, Capacity Building and Community Engagement, and Culture, Heritage and Landscape Character.

The Discussion Papers considered the many linkages between these key program areas. They identified the values and current condition of each natural resource asset and set medium-term goals for the Region. They also proposed actions to achieve these goals.

The Discussion Papers were released to stimulate and obtain public input on the values, issues and actions required to manage the Region's natural resources in a sustainable way. The papers are also available on the website www.nrmtas.com.au (click on Cradle Coast Region).

Community consultation was undertaken (see next section 4.6) and all feedback was collated into a reference database by Cradle Coast NRM staff.

Stage 2 Establishing a Vision and identifying Goals for Regional assets and causes of degradation

Committee working groups identified and defined assets, asset services, issues and threats. Our natural resources services (asset services) include providing drinking water, energy generation and healthy living. The issues raised, which affect our natural resources, were grouped into 'threatening processes' or 'causes of asset degradation' (such as land use change, vegetation/habitat loss and weeds).

The most threatening causes of degradation to our asset services were identified and prioritised by the Committee at a two-day workshop. The Committee used a risk assessment process to identify the most threatening causes of degradation for the values and services provided by each of the Regional natural resource assets (Land, Water, Biodiversity etc.). The detailed process for the risk assessment (*Methodology for prioritising management actions*) is available as a Supplementary Document from Cradle Coast NRM and is on our website www.nrmtas.com.au (click on Cradle Coast Region).

Consultants Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) then assisted in identifying the dominant threatening processes affecting each asset. Most of the Regional natural resource assets are affected by the following causes of degradation:

- inappropriate land uses
- inappropriate land and water management practices now or in the past

- land use changes
- inadequate strategic planning
- inadequate knowledge
- economic forces.

A Vision for the Region was developed once the Committee had established those natural resources that are most valued and those that are under the most threat of degradation.

Stage 3 Setting targets and developing management actions in response to asset degradation

Long-, medium- and short-term targets for asset condition were set by the NRM Committee and expert working groups.

Draft ‘Management Action Packages’ to address causes of issues were prepared by the NRM Committee and specialists with assistance from SKM. SKM refined the information provided by the risk assessment to fit the ‘Asset-Issue-Cause’ structure used to develop the management packages of actions. The ‘Asset-Issue-Cause’ structure used by SKM identified two to four management issues that affected each asset, and two to four causes for each management issue (see the example in Figure 4.2). This generated a consolidated list of issues and causes, which was used to help develop packages of management actions to address issues and meet agreed targets.

Packages were also prepared for ‘Community Capacity’ and ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’. The packages for Monitoring and Evaluation are included with each asset package and all these packages are set out together in chapter 15.

Many of the management actions came directly from existing strategies or reports, while others were developed on the basis of our scientific understanding of natural resource management, and the feedback provided from the Discussion Papers.

Management Action Packages were prioritised by assessing the benefits and risks on environmental, economic and social grounds (see Table 13.1 in chapter 13: Developing management priorities).

The Draft Strategy was prepared by a professional writer and the NRM writing sub-committee, with input from the whole Committee.

Stage 4 Consultation on the Draft NRM Strategy and production of the final Strategy Document

After the release of the Draft Strategy, there was a six-week period for public comment and consultation. This included further local workshops and engaging with key stakeholders. The targets proposed in the Draft Strategy were refined and developed by the NRM Committee in response to community feedback. The NRM Committee worked to ensure that the Management Action Packages and all the targets are properly linked to each other.

At the end of the consultation period, the Strategy was finalised in light of community feedback and submitted for accreditation. Substantial changes were made to the draft version of the Strategy. A separate document detailing the processes used for consideration of the comments received on the Draft Strategy will be made available from the website at www.nrmtas.com.au.

Stage 5 Development of Investment Proposal

The first Regional Investment Proposal was prepared after changes were made to the NRM Strategy. The Investment Proposal was produced to attract investment in priority actions that are identified in the Strategy and to detail the actions that will be funded under each Investment Proposal cycle. Actions to be funded will generally address short-term Management Action Targets, which contribute to achieving the longer-term targets of the Strategy. The first Investment Proposal has been developed by the Cradle Coast NRM Committee and consultants Moore Consulting and Davey & Maynard, in

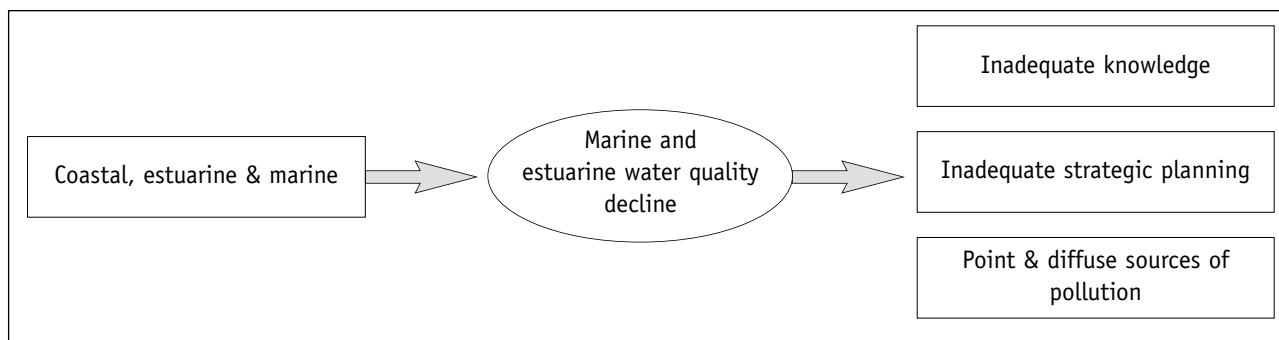


Figure 4.2 Hierarchy of assets, issues and causes (Donnelly, Abernethy & Callaghan, 2004)



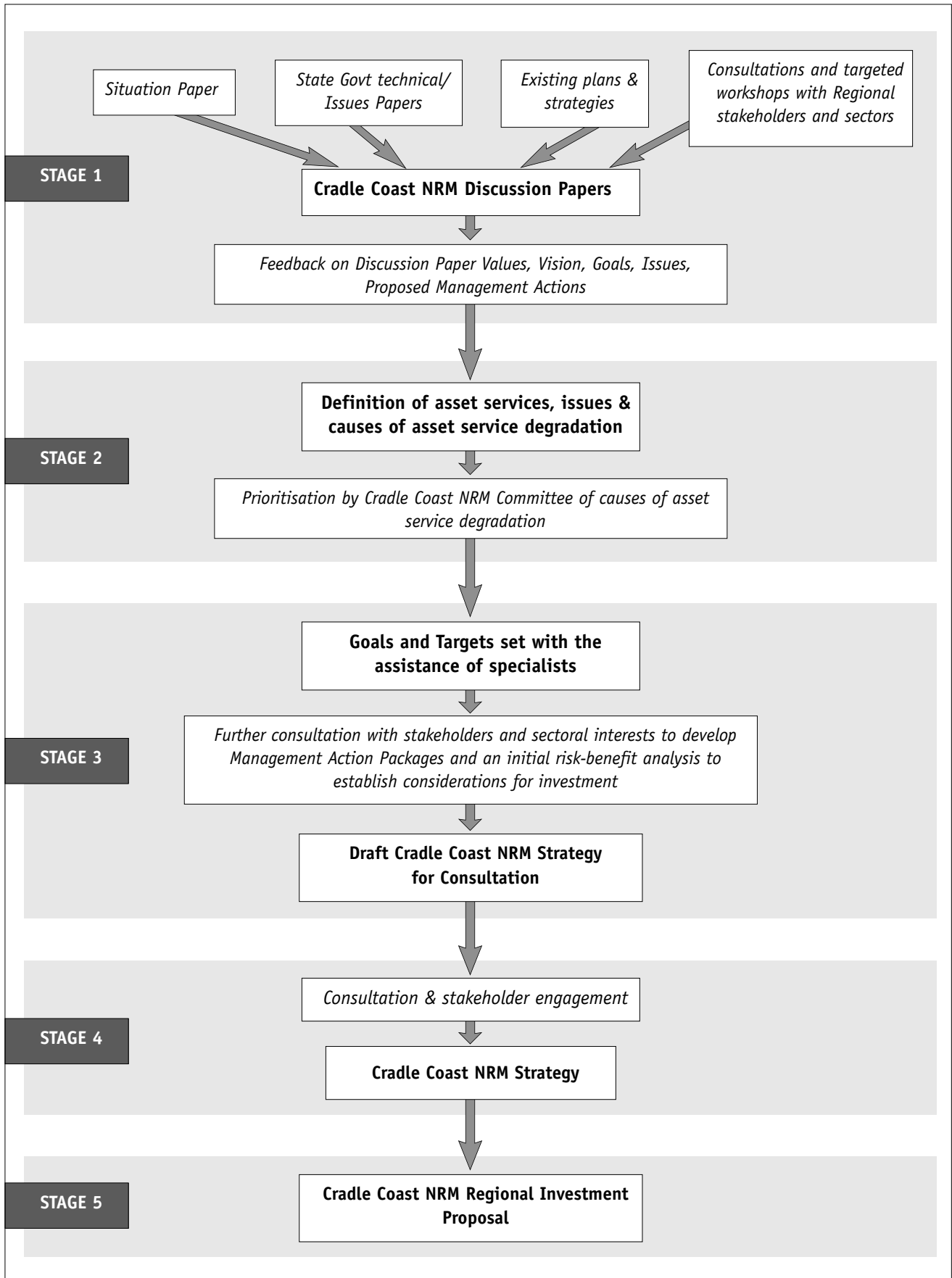


Figure 4.3 Strategy development process overseen by the Cradle Coast NRM Committee

consultation with the community and key stakeholders. Finalisation of the Proposal requires consultation with stakeholders and potential investors. There are not sufficient financial resources available to fund all of the proposed actions in the Management Action Packages identified in the NRM Strategy in any single Investment Proposal cycle. Therefore, in developing an Investment Proposal, there will be further prioritisation of identified actions. The process is fully explained in the Cradle Coast NRM Investment Proposal, which is separate to this Strategy document.

The first Investment Proposal is a rolling three-year plan with specific costing detailed for the first year of implementing the Strategy. It is envisaged that funding for the first year of the Investment Proposal will be released by the Australian Government by May 2005. Detailed Investment Proposals will be prepared on an annual basis. The Regional Investment Proposal will detail:

- priority management actions and how they contribute to specific targets
- outputs, outcomes, budgets and rate of return on investment
- timelines, milestones and performance indicators for each action
- proposed monitoring and evaluation strategy for actions
- potential sources of funding for each action.

4.6 Community engagement

Engaging the community in developing the Region's NRM Strategy was essential to inspire community ownership.

A 'Community Engagement Plan' was formulated to effectively involve all stakeholders and the general public to ensure that the Regional Strategy is accurate, comprehensive, well-coordinated and able to be implemented. The Plan is available as a Supplementary Document from Cradle Coast NRM and is on our website www.nrmtas.com.au (click on Cradle Coast Region).

The objectives of Cradle Coast NRM for its communications, as outlined in the Community Engagement Plan, are to:

- demonstrate that involvement with the community and relevant NRM stakeholders will be coordinated to maximise efficiency and consistency, reduce duplication, and demonstrate a willingness to adopt a collaborative approach
- clearly describe the principles for engagement, including principles of fairness,

equity of opportunity for involvement, inclusiveness, cultural sensitivity, relevance, and early and ongoing involvement in the whole planning and implementation cycle

- be based on an understanding and current profile of the range of stakeholders, community groups and sectors with interests in NRM in the Region (including their roles, responsibilities, and capacity to implement)
- outline the range of proposed engagement activities in each NRM planning phase, including responsibilities and time-frames consistent with State and Australian Government time-frames
- outline the organisational development activities that will support effective engagement practice (such as training in community engagement skills, development of a client database and evaluation process)
- provide a Regional channel for receiving and transmitting information
- build public awareness at the Regional level for the NRM Framework, strategic direction, and outcomes and impacts.

Outlined in the Plan are the many stages at which stakeholders were involved in developing the Regional NRM Strategy. The stages of engagement were as follows:

1. Introduction of NRM process to the community: March 2003–July 2003.
2. Consultation to develop Discussion Papers: July 2003–November 2003.
3. Consultation to obtain feedback on Discussion Papers: December 2003–March 2004.
4. Consultation workshops for Draft Strategy development: April 2004–June 2004.
5. Consultation to obtain feedback on the Draft Strategy: July 2004–October 2004.
6. Finalisation of Regional Strategy: November 2004–March 2005.
7. Implementation and review of Regional Strategy: post-March 2005.

The Cradle Coast NRM Committee consulted widely with the community and key stakeholders during the preparation of the Strategy. Seven facilitators worked with the community to build partnerships and involvement in the Strategy. Facilitators attended field days such as Agfest, and organised and delivered briefings and workshops to a range of organisations. As far as practicable, contact with the community was face-to-face.



As of June 2005, the Committee has progressed the Community Engagement Plan and completed stages 1–5 as listed above.

In the first stage, two open public forums were held to introduce the NRM process and to establish the NRM Committee.

In the second stage, 8 workshops were held with 36 organisations and 22 individuals to assist with developing 8 Discussion Papers.

In the third stage, 15 information sessions were organised and delivered to the general public in all municipalities to explain the Discussion Papers, with 123 people in total attending. In addition, numerous forums were delivered to key stakeholders to introduce the Discussion Papers. A total of 16 Local Government forums were held to ensure that the 132 elected representatives, Council managers and officers with the nine Local Governments in the Region could contribute to the Strategy. A total of 45 forums were held with 106 people representing 51 business and industry organisations. Another 7 forums were held with 35 people representing 6 community/conservation organisations. Another 15 forums were held with 85 people representing 11 'care' groups. In addition, 13 individuals were briefed through one-to-one meetings.

Feedback on the Discussion Papers was provided by 81 organisations and individuals, in the form of written submissions. Further feedback was gathered from the community at 52 meetings, with 366 individuals from 39 organisations.

In the fourth stage of engagement, 3 workshops were held with 41 individuals representing 9 organisations to set Resource Condition Targets. Workshops were also held with 1 organisation and 9 councils to enhance actions and issues. (For a list of stakeholders refer to Appendix 1.)

In the fifth stage, 18 Draft Strategy Feedback workshops and meetings were held with 149 people from 22 Local Government, industry, research and community groups. These events were held to ensure that processes for commenting on the Draft were understood by all stakeholders. Comments on the Draft Strategy were received from 116 individuals and organisations. Over 35 quick

surveys were also returned. Also, 94 Draft Strategy Feedback Briefings and Updates were held with 508 people from 94 Local Government, industry, community and Aboriginal organisations, as well as individuals, to allow for direct response to the Draft Strategy.

The NRM Committee greatly appreciates the quality of the input and believes that this will assist in building a stronger Strategy. The Committee considered all submissions, and records of the Committee's response will be held for public viewing at Cradle Coast NRM, after the release of the Final NRM Strategy.

4.7 Communications

Communication activities were developed and implemented through the Community Engagement Plan, to ensure wide community access to information and to encourage input into the Strategy. This included placing the Cradle Coast NRM Discussion Papers and the technical Issues Papers on the website www.nrmtas.com.au (follow the links from Cradle Coast Region).

Regular updates about the Strategy development were posted on the website and in the newsletter 'NRM News'. Six editions of the 'NRM News' have each been circulated to over 500 people and posted on the website. This newsletter was the main communications tool for promoting the activities of the Committee. The newsletters included an introduction to the Regional framework, updates on the Strategy, priority projects, Committee membership changes, funding opportunities and upcoming events.

The mass media has also been used to publicise the Strategy progress and avenues for community involvement. Articles and advertisements were printed in local and Regional newspapers and newsletters. Promotions, interviews and stories were also covered on radio and television.