



# Healthy Waterways

ONE CLEAR VISION

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017

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## Acknowledgements

This document acknowledges Healthy Waterways' Investing Network Members who are key enablers in the delivery of high quality outcomes for South East Queensland's waterways. Healthy Waterways also acknowledges the contribution of Nous Group Pty Ltd in the development of this document.

## Healthy Waterways Investing Network Members

### State Government Agencies

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

### Local Government

Brisbane City Council

City of Gold Coast (including Gold Coast Water)

Ipswich City Council

Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Logan City Council (including Logan Water)

Moreton Bay Regional Council

Noosa Shire Council

Redland City Council (including Redland Water)

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Somerset Regional Council

Sunshine Coast Regional Council

### Water Utilities

Queensland Urban Utilities

Seqwater

Unitywater

Industry

Stockland

Stormwater Industry Association

### Community

SEQ Catchments.

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## Supporting our economy, environment and community

### Healthy Waterways supports the environment and social and economic growth by protecting a valuable asset - our waterways.

Healthy Waterways is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with our members from government, industry and the community to protect and improve South East Queensland's waterways. Together with our members, we have one clear vision to achieve healthy waterways for a healthy economy. We believe that shared understanding, regional collaboration and targeted solutions across the whole water cycle are the key to improving and maintaining waterway health.

South East Queensland is blessed with beautiful waterways that underpin our unique lifestyle and cultural identity. Not only are the waterways a cultural, recreational and historical asset, they are vital to maintaining our economy. In 2011, our waterways were estimated to be worth over \$5 billion per year through industry, tourism, recreation and fishing, outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Summary of key economic values<sup>1</sup>

Sector	Current Value (\$m per year)
Primary Industries	1,390
Nature-based Tourism	2,850
Local Recreation	660
Recreational Fishing	210
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,110</b>

South East Queensland is the fastest-growing region in Australia with a predicted population growth of 1.6 million people by 2031. The increased demand for water supply, infrastructure, recreation and tourism places greater pressures on our waterways, including an increase in pollution.

Healthy Waterway's modelling studies have consistently predicted that without significant investment, our waterways will deteriorate. Half of our 48,000kms of creek and river network already require critical repair and restoration. The 2011 and 2013 floods have accelerated this deterioration and strengthened the need for investment in waterway health.

We must take action to support the region's economy, lifestyle and cultural identity by protecting our multi-billion dollar waterway assets and maximising the value-for-money associated with waterway investments. Improved waterway health in South East Queensland will safeguard the future of our economy through protecting valuable agricultural land and infrastructure, ensuring the security of our drinking water supply and supporting our significant tourism and recreation industries.

<sup>1</sup> 'Analysis for the future of our bay' business case, Marsden Jacob Associates, 2011

## Enabling waterway protection and improvement

### **Healthy Waterways enables understanding and improvement of waterway health**

Healthy Waterways understands and communicates the condition of our waterways to drive and influence future targets, policy and actions. We seek input and direction from our members regarding local and regional priorities while ensuring our activities are targeted to achieve maximum benefit and improvement for the waterways. Our independence and unique position as the central hub among our member organisations provides comprehensive and reliable insights to drive well-informed, equitable decisions and efficiency. Our collaborative knowledge sharing, independent science and evidence-based initiatives focus direction among our government, industry and community members to ensure waterway investments are targeted and cost effective. Healthy Waterways assists our members to fulfil regulatory and compliance obligations, while supporting core business to help achieve improved environmental, social and economic outcomes.

## Delivering initiatives to support waterway management

### **We monitor and report to drive cost effective, informed investment**

Through our programs and services, Healthy Waterways monitors and reports on the condition of our waterways and the effectiveness of waterway actions to ensure they are targeted and cost effective. We inform waterway investments based on priority needs determined by our members and set realistic and achievable waterway health targets. This condition assessment includes monitoring environmental, social and economic indicators and outcomes, while also providing regional insight into sediment loads in our waterways - the agreed number one water quality issue at a catchment scale. This monitoring and evaluation is a proactive program which informs, benchmarks and evaluates priority actions.

Healthy Waterways' Scientific Expert Panels provide independent, best practice scientific advice to inform member investments. Our suite of decision support tools enable members to identify the most targeted, cost effective investment through the production of outcome scenarios for different waterway actions. Healthy Waterways provides capacity building for water professionals and community groups, and supports reforms to policy and planning. We work with our members to facilitate regional collaboration that fosters the sharing of knowledge and resources. Our dedicated education programs and campaigns inspire and motivate the community to value and protect our waterways.

## Enhancing regional collaboration

### **We facilitate regional partnerships and ensures scientific integrity**

The Healthy Waterways Board of Directors has primary responsibility for the strategic, risk and financial governance of Healthy Waterways. The Board sets the strategic direction for the organisation and ensures it achieves and acts in accordance with the objects set out in the Healthy Waterways Constitution.

Healthy Waterways' members provide advice to the Board on the strategic direction for the organisation through the Strategic Executive Advisory Committee. Through the Network Committee, representatives from member organisations provide input and participate in key Healthy Waterways' programs and initiatives. The work of Healthy Waterways is informed by a number of Scientific Expert Panels and validated by an independent academic and peer review process. The Panels consist of scientists from universities, research organisations, industry, community and government agencies.

## Informing and supporting priority actions

Ongoing investment in maintaining and improving our waterways will benefit the environment, economy and essentially our quality of life. Healthy Waterways' Executive Scientific Expert Panel identified the following three environmental priorities that require attention to address the current trend in declining waterway health:

- Reduce sediment loads
- Maintain habitat and ecosystem connectivity
- Protect biodiversity.

The Scientific Expert Panels and our members also agree Healthy Waterways must focus on social and economic indicators and outcomes when monitoring and reporting.

Healthy Waterways and our members developed **six management themes** which capture the priority areas where members are, or will be, focusing investment and action. These support the three environmental priorities, while complementing and supporting growth in the region. Healthy Waterways' programs support and inform our members in the delivery of actions and investment under each management theme.

### 1. Community and Tourism Management

Healthy Waterways provides regionally consistent management tools and resources to ensure the community engage in safe recreational use of our waterways. We also actively educate the community about waterway litter impacts and deliver a Clean Up Program to help ensure our waterways have high amenity and value.

### 2. Construction Site Management

Healthy Waterways provides training to aid local governments and the development industry in reducing the impact of construction sites on waterways and mitigating associated costs. We develop comprehensive guidelines and resources which engage industry and government to improve their capacity to mitigate the impact of land development.

### 3. Stormwater Management

Through guidelines, training and policy reform, Healthy Waterways builds the region's capacity to manage stormwater and deliver sustainable urban water management. We facilitate 'Communities of Practice' and provide trusted, practical and independent advice to improve development outcomes.

### 4. Point Source Management

There is significant investment into managing and treating wastewater to prevent negative impacts on receiving waterways. Through ongoing monitoring and reporting, Healthy Waterways helps to deliver licence requirements and demonstrates improvements from effective local wastewater management and whole-of-catchment approaches.

### 5. Riparian and In-Stream Management

There is significant investment into maintaining and revegetating riparian zones (riverbanks and adjacent land) to protect against flood impacts, reduce erosion and improve habitat for wildlife. Through ongoing research, monitoring and modelling, Healthy Waterways helps to set achievable catchment targets to help protect our waterways, property and livelihoods.

### 6. Land Management

Healthy Waterways, through partnerships with SEQ Catchments and Queensland Wetlands Program, helps build the capacity of land managers to carry out best management practices such as managing waterbodies as well as designing farm run-off treatment systems.

## One clear vision and purpose

Healthy Waterways' strategic direction is supported by four central values, built on an aspirational vision and a targeted purpose.

### **Vision**

Healthy waterways for a healthy economy.

### **Purpose**

Healthy Waterways will understand and communicate the condition of the waterways to drive and influence future targets, policy and actions.

### **Values**

Integrity, respect, willing to partner and open to ideas.

## Strategic objectives and initiatives

In order to safeguard the future of our waterways and support the region's social and economic growth, we must enhance regional collaboration with our members and work together towards common goals. Healthy Waterways will focus on achieving the following strategic objectives and initiatives to support our members and our economy. Please see Appendix A for the full action plan with targets and success measures.

### **1. Understand and report on the condition of waterways**

- 1.1 Understand the condition and key factors impacting on waterways
- 1.2 Understand the link between waterway condition with social and economic objectives
- 1.3 Inform the development of cost-effective and targeted waterway management actions
- 1.4 Deliver an integrated assessment program to report on the condition of waterways and the effectiveness of actions

### **2. Educate people on the value of our waterways**

- 2.1 Articulate the value of investment in waterway health
- 2.2 Educate and enable action to protect and improve waterway health

### **3. Influence decisions, policy and actions to improve and maintain waterway health**

- 3.1 Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders
- 3.2 Influence catchment planning as it impacts on waterway health

### **4. Maximise member return on investment**

- 4.1 Diversify and grow Healthy Waterways' financial portfolio
- 4.2 Measure and report on member return on investment