

Stakeholder engagement project

The Queensland Wetlands Program supports projects and activities that result in long-term benefits to the sustainable management, wise use and protection of wetlands in Queensland. The stakeholder engagement project is a key component of the second phase of the Program. It builds on the products and tools developed in the first phase by focusing on improving take-up of those tools and products by stakeholders.

Background

The Queensland Wetlands Program Phase 1 ran from 2003-2009. It produced a suite of integrated products and tools across the wetlands management spectrum from policy and assessment through to on-ground management, monitoring and communication. All these tools are freely available through *WetlandInfo*, Queensland's first-stop-shop for wetland information.

Tools include wetland mapping for the entire state, *WetlandSummary* and the interactive *WetlandMaps* server for delivering the mapping, wetland classification techniques; wetland management guidelines; buffer planning guidelines; rehabilitation guidelines, assessment and monitoring tools; a legislation discovery tool and education materials to name just a few.

Following the completion of Phase 1, feedback from stakeholders indicated that while the Program's products and tools have proved invaluable for wetland management and decision making, some information gaps and barriers to access however limited the take-up and usefulness of the tools.

The second phase of the Program is focusing on increasing the take-up of those tools through stakeholder engagement—talking to users, listening to what they have to say and best accommodating their needs.

Who are the Program's stakeholders?

The Program works with a wide range of groups and individuals, from federal and state government departments to members of the general community. The Program's wide variety of products and tools has been designed to meet each stakeholder's specific needs.

The Program's stakeholders include:

- natural resource management (NRM) groups
- local government

- state government
- federal government
- primary industry and environment industry bodies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- research and academic institutions
- schools and teachers
- general community
- landholders
- conservation groups and community groups
- national and international wetlands groups.



The Program provides informational displays such as these in a Queensland Government building celebrating World Wetlands Day in February 2011. Photo: EHP

Methods

The important activities of the stakeholder engagement project include the identification of stakeholder needs, promoting the Program's products and tools in meeting these needs, and dissemination of wetland information to partner and interested stakeholders.

The project will focus on improving the relationship between the Program and stakeholders by supporting and enabling them to utilise the products and tools of the Program to their fullest extent, and to assist in making their communities more aware of the values of wetlands.



Each stakeholder group will be engaged in a manner tailored to their needs, but the overarching methods to support stakeholder engagement are:

- information—providing information through networks and standard communications channels such as fact sheets, e-newsletters and media articles to keep stakeholders informed about the Program's projects.
- participation—providing opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in Program's projects, embedding Program's tools in stakeholders' decision-making processes, support take-up of tools through training workshops, and coordinating joint public relations and media activities.
- consultation—examining each group's needs for products and delivery by gathering information about previous stakeholder engagement activities and opportunities, and using this information to better understand stakeholders and plan future activities that further enhance engagement. Consulting widely on the Program's activities and projects through a variety of feedback channels to ensure ongoing improvement.
- collaboration—using the information and consultation mechanisms, the Program can form stronger relationships with stakeholders which ensure better targeted delivery of Program's products, and develop new projects that endeavour to meet stakeholder needs.



The Program worked with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to assist Brisbane City Council in the production of a documentary about migratory shorebirds in Moreton Bay in 2011. Photo: EHP

Outcomes

The stakeholder engagement project will result in the following products:

- a communications plan that guides the focus of each activity and acts as the benchmark against which all communications and stakeholder engagement activities are measured
- a program of focused engagement with stakeholder groups and their representatives
- a suite of communications materials that support engagement and invite feedback from stakeholders—including the *WetlandInfo* website, the *WetlandUpdate* e-newsletter, fact sheets on projects and existing tools

The project will also aim for integration across all levels of stakeholders and all of the Program's products and tools to ensure that the Program and its stakeholders work together toward the wise use of wetlands in Queensland.

The Queensland Wetlands Program supports projects and activities that result in long-term benefits to the sustainable management, wise use and protection of wetlands in Queensland. The tools developed by the Program help wetlands landholders, managers and decision makers in government and industry. The Program is a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland governments.

Contact wetlands@ehp.qld.gov.au
or visit www.wetlandinfo.ehp.qld.gov.au

QWP 2011/21 (updated 2013)