

## **RLOSAC Landscape Corridors Forum - Report**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

On 27 November 2009 a forum was held at Esk to identify the high level outcomes and delivery mechanisms needed to advance work on the provision of landscape corridors in South East Queensland, as proposed in the *SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031*. Fifty-two people drawn from government, professional, community and industry sources participated in the forum to meet at the non air-conditioned Community Hall in Esk on a day that reached 38°C.

The format of the forum was as follows:

- The Chair of RLOSAC set the objective of the forum as to provide advice on the development of a policy framework for landscape corridors, within an environment that takes into consideration the need to improve the resilience<sup>1</sup> of the landscape, given the current rate of regional development, and the need to adapt to climate change.
- Two supporting documents, *Landscape Corridors Primer* and *Towards a common approach for implementing Landscape Corridors in Southeast Queensland*, were referenced from the documentation for the forum.
- The group were asked to develop an appreciation of the status of landscape corridors in five years time, based on their appreciation and knowledge of the situation in the region.
- A series of presentations were made of partnerships that were made or in train in the region that provided experience relevant to the development and maintenance of corridors (Summary and rationale at Appendix 2).
- A series of preliminary core concepts were developed based on the group's earlier discussion, and elaborated in terms of the desired outcomes and the delivery mechanisms available to implement them.
- Participants were then provided the opportunity for final comments elaborating on the points made.
- The Chair undertook to report back to RLOSAC over the next two meetings, and indicated that there would probably need to be a working group formed to carry forward the project over the next six months.

### ***OPENING CONVERSATION***

The Facilitator invited Participants to consider what they wanted Open Space to represent and deliver *in five years time*. This represents a summary of observations and comments in the opening.

- In five years, we will be able to clearly identify areas of open space in our environment
- We will have a plan that can define the various functions eg habitat
- We will have clear areas to target for preservation
- Responsibilities and rewards will be defined and delivered upon – accountability

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<sup>1</sup> Where 'resilience' is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance to undergo change and still retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks

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- We will have a set of mountains to mangroves corridors or at least one – where you can walk and not realise you are in an urban area.
- Corridors will be valued as green infrastructure – no boundaries between urban and rural
- Clear direction will be apparent on how open space areas can be used.
- There will be clear rules and regulations and policing
- We will control consistently activities that can damage the open space values
- Provide our children with open space for exploration, play, risk taking and adventure
- Avoid being hedged in ,not too much focus on compliance – too restricting in enjoying space
- Public access must be allowed in some places without loving them to death.
- Implementation of open space principles on a property scale needs to recognise the need for assistance in management
- Those enjoying the benefits must be prepared to pay those with the responsibility for land management
- Budgets and resources must be set and the beneficiaries be made to pay
- Need to look at life-time management strategies – holistic approach
- Corridors in urban areas also need defined managerial responsibilities
- Resilience is the key – what's the point of corridors with no resilience
- Review what we are doing every five years and be ready to defend the preservation of the corridors against what will be much increased pressure to make other use of these areas.
- The political and developmental pressure will be enormous.
- Must articulate values in order to identify, protect, fund, manage
- Corridors must not be too narrow – buffer areas should be recognised and funded.
- Landholders doing the right thing end up with penalties (eg feeding the local wildlife when theirs is the only place with water or feed or shelter.)
- Concern that regional landscape may be seen as a lower priority for protection
- We need to ensure a matrix of corridors, not over-reliance on one or two key areas – too much pressure
- Network of corridors is required.
- Beware calling them high or low value – find other terms or low value areas will be excised
- Must educate the community
- Community ownership is to be fostered – recognise their responsibilities
- Information provision is easy – votes to influence government
- It may all mean different things to different people
- Environmental awareness education is critical to support these concepts
- Humans are not outside the system, we are part of the system
- Reconnect with the outdoors
- Challenge of urban dwellers moving in Tree Change to peri-urban or regional areas without an appreciation of necessary land management skills re fire, vegetation management, weeds and water.
- Media drives social change – marketing
- Create opportunities to interface with people, field days, Welcome Packs from Councils
- If local governments get responsibility for corridors how do they pay for them – how is additional money raised, and what mechanisms?

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- Align policy agenda for property for open space across the three levels of government – same agenda
- Pressure is on local governments to allow for nature refuges – we must complement the various initiatives.
- \$50m is 1% of infrastructure costs – it would be enough.
- A number of funding mechanisms are available – need a cohesive plan for how we spend that money.

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### ***THE LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS IN FIVE YEARS TIME***

Participants combined into six groups to provide information on the desired state of the landscape corridors in five years time, when the next review of the Regional Plan is scheduled. Analysis of the comments using the Tropes Zoom package identified four main clusters, with their components listed below:

Table 1: Results of the forecasting exercise to project major outcomes in the next five years

<b>Corridors</b>		
<p><i>Characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defined - use the characteristics to describe elements</li> <li>• Seamless</li> <li>• Provide habitats</li> <li>• Urban and rural</li> <li>• Do not form barriers</li> <li>• It is clear when you are in a landscape corridor</li> <li>• Need a matrix of corridors – not just a few big ones</li> </ul>	<p><i>Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear ownership, uses</li> <li>• Rules for sustaining appropriate values</li> <li>• Public access</li> <li>• Local scale recognised</li> <li>• Compatible with planning language</li> <li>• Damage control</li> <li>• Manage not just the corridors</li> </ul>	<p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries clarified</li> <li>• Private owner subsidy, incentives</li> <li>• Value of corridors to the Urban Footprint and urban residents quantified</li> </ul>
<b>Education and community engagement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support environmental education in schools</li> <li>• Community education and awareness</li> <li>• Multiple values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Promote community ownership</li> <li>• Make part of people’s lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide children with experiences</li> <li>• Greater understanding and care for values</li> <li>• Community buy-in</li> </ul>
<b>Government</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land acquisition</li> <li>• Environmental investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear direction</li> <li>• Holistic policy, not local</li> <li>• Align the three levels of government</li> <li>• Protect buffers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council packages to assist landowners in environmental management</li> <li>• Security of intent to harness investment</li> </ul>
<b>Costs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Infrastructure in rural and urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developer contributions</li> <li>• Direct and indirect costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community ownership</li> <li>• Best investment of offsets</li> </ul>

These components indicate elements that could be addressed in the five year period and form part of the framework for managing landscape corridors.

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### ***KEY ELEMENTS OF POLICY***

Following review by the Plenary, the Participants agreed on the following as critical components to be included in any consideration of Policy Frameworks supporting preservation and enhancement of sustainable open space.

1. Construct AND Communicate the Story – the potential Purpose, what are landscape corridors and how could they contribute to a resilient landscape? Why do we need corridors? Start now : communicating and engaging people in what we want – tell the corridor story in terms meaningful to all the decision-makers - create a shared vision, framework, core values, SEQ REGIONAL PLAN policies and planning framework,
2. Full engagement of all partners!
  - a. Shared communication and information
  - b. Community education
3. Alignment of Government (public) and private sector objectives
  - a. National legislative status for landscape corridors eg. under Infrastructure corridors programs (eg. COAG negotiations)
  - b. Industry, private, government alignment
4. Funding Options & Expenditure Targets
5. Land Management Incentives and Rewards (Acquisitions or Management Alignment)
  - a. Recovery action plan
  - b. Multiple value management plans eg. Outdoor recreation, sense of place (& scenic amenity), heritage, biodiversity, water
  - c. Identification of 'non-dollar' values for land valuation and land use planning
6. Coordination through Partnerships
7. Landscape planning/management instruments
8. Landscape planning tools
  - a. GIS Mapping tools consistent across agencies, industry and community groups
  - b. Information made accessible to permit use, awareness and understanding

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### ***GROUP ACTIVITY SUMMARY***

The participants generated a range of aspects to be considered, based on reviewing the circumstances of the Karawatha – Greenbank – Flinders Peak corridor. The main points from the six groups are set out in Table 2.

**Table 2: Main focus for action identified from the corridor analysis exercise.**

1. Community local groups advocate safeguarding corridors and high value areas – in the future there will be increased grass roots involvement.
2. Plans and mapping of a matrix of connected reserves and corridors, with a robust ecosystem categorisation of optimised values, compatible land uses and values.
3. Limit population growth and development in surrounding areas, with a management plan for designated areas, and clarity of koala policies.
4. All stakeholders need to be included, with awareness of their needs, identification of large tracts of land, design of appropriate management regimes, including the implication of Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation<sup>2</sup> and private land with no protection agreement.
5. Consolidate population around transport hubs; consolidate conservation areas, and develop ecological recovery plans.
6. Make corridors a landscape category in planning, and covenant expectations (private and public) for land use in landscape corridors.
7. Conserve and actively buy land (especially in the Protected Landscape category under the IUCN<sup>3</sup>) and at least maintain the current greenspaces and expand to allow for future growth now.

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<sup>2</sup> PMAVs are property-scale maps certified by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). They show the boundaries of areas that can be cleared without approval, and areas for which approval may be required before clearing can be done. Landholders should be aware that new arrangements protecting regrowth vegetation took effect on 8 October 2009. These arrangements replace the regrowth moratorium which ended on 7 October 2009. (Source: <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/vegetation/pmavs.html> accessed 15 December 2009)

<sup>3</sup> IUCN is the World Conservation Union. IUCN has defined a series of six protected area management categories, based on primary management objective. CATEGORY V is **Protected Landscape/Seascape**: a protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. It is defined as: “An area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area”.

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8. Consider corridors as a series of interconnected parts with an optimal use in each section (conservation, water quality, scenic amenity) based on conservation and infrastructure.
9. There should be enduring protection of land tenure dedicated for conservation; developers should be responsible for conservation of a buffer zone, not the landowner. Covenant private landowners' use of land in a corridor, and ensure that the corridor is not populated to above its carrying capacity.

This represents a summation of common points identifiable from the group reports. The detailed response summaries are given in Appendix 1.

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### ***FINAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS***

At the end of the forum, participants were asked to highlight elements that they wished emphasised in the development of landscape corridors. A summary of their comments is given in Table 3.

#### **Table 3: Summary of final points raised by participants.**

##### Involvement:

- Hoped to have had a discussion - maps, priority areas
- Can we participate in final document?
- Social processes have to be built in

##### Planning:

- Planning needs to be practical, grounded, with achievable outcomes
- Actually need to plan for 200 years ahead, to have a robust ecosystem framework, with a core and other areas branded and protected, with known core costs
- Recreation planning
- Need a new regional land use category
- Protected landscape category as in UK, Europe
- Roads etc need to be separate from landscape corridors
- Need to connect the Rail Trail to other corridors
- Stress the people impact, as the government will put people before wildlife
- Koala mapping did not include koala corridors

##### Management:

- Management needs to be practical, grounded, with achievable outcomes
- Community ownership of activities
- Areas most endangered are State government owned
- Effectiveness and efficiency have to be always emphasised
- Use all policy tools currently available, especially ecosystem services
- Waterways
- Scenic amenity should be taken to third stage (education)
- Implications if we get it wrong are great for the big picture

### ***CONCLUSION***

The meeting was terminated at this stage, as it was considered that there was sufficient information to provide a basis for further work.



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### Appendix 1: Detailed consideration of the aspects to be developed.

<b>ISSUE: Construct and communicate the story</b>			
<p><i>Defined values and uses –</i> Aesthetic Heritage Biodiversity Recreation Sense of place</p>	<p><i>Key defined concepts:</i> Urban and other Connection and connectivity Creation of a journey versus experience (e.g., water travel versus canoe)</p>	<p><i>Emphasis:</i> Character and identity of corridor Need to plan before it is too late</p>	<p><i>Outcome:</i> SEQ Environmental Infrastructure Plan (cf Chesapeake Bay program and Action Plan) Sustainable Development Fund (fully hypothecated) with clear return on investment.</p>
<b>ISSUE: Full engagement of all partners</b>			
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Progressive awareness, ownership, valuing Sustained community participation Improving skills within key communities, land managers around the corridors Develop community, industry and planning partnerships that are involved at all stages in decision making Be aware of and involve relevant community leaders</p>		<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i> Rigorous evaluation reporting mechanism e.g. report card – easily understood, publicly accessible, inputs, current status Put dollars where mouth is ≡ decentralisation of State Government agencies Living the vision Opportunities to improve knowledge of corridor values among landowners ≡ community-based social marketing; share personnel – local community engagement group Management advisory groups involve all land managers relevant to key locations within a corridor e.g. Brisbane River corridor Corridor Management Board.</p>	
<b>ISSUE: Coordination of partnerships</b>			
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Identify partners Open, honest communication Shared ownership Shared goals Agreed governance model Justified and targeted investments Full community support Need to find common goal among all stakeholders and repair the existing tensions and build trust between stakeholders</p>		<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i> SEQ Catchments Declaration of interests Shared commitment Communication hub for landholders Finding overlaps and creating synergy Investment broker Promote NIMBY</p>	
<b>ISSUE: Scenic amenity</b>			
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Scenic routes – rivers, roads Conflict of use if trail bike riding associated Is a scenic amenity route a landscape corridor?</p>		<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i> Recognition and definition</p>	

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<b>ISSUE: Funding options</b>	
<p><i>Outcome:</i>                      Full cost of development is recognised as the region attracts people artificially</p> <p>Full cost recovery for services including environmental costs</p> <p>Invest now as the problem is likely to get worse</p> <p>Harness all resources – volunteers, green groups, community, offsets – to a common cause</p> <p>Managed benefits in urban and coastal communities and costs (rural communities)                      →better flow</p> <p>Ecosystem services flow</p>	<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i>                      External costs of development are internalised e.g. water, congestion, power, diminished liveability, extractive industry</p> <p>Levy on water, power to meet environmental costs</p> <p>Target social security mechanism to achieve equity <b>not</b> globalised price subsidies</p> <p>Offsets allocated strategically (not site by site) regionally</p> <p>Assess cumulative impacts.</p>
<b>ISSUE: Expenditure incentives</b>	
<p><i>Outcome:</i>                      Money must be allocated to ensure management actions happen</p> <p>Paradigm shift from natural assets as liability to a valued asset to be managed sustainably</p> <p>Champion results – need information – funds invested usually means four times volunteer investment</p> <p>Ensure bang for the buck</p>	<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i>                      No political back flips – stay with commitment</p> <p>Allow for green infrastructure to be funded through infrastructure charges (environmental restoration, fauna crossings)</p> <p>Education of all stakeholders on why important</p> <p>Duty of care charter</p> <p>Use equivalent funds to keep on an as is basis as to develop and preserve corridors</p> <p>Redevelopment of existing funding program – extension officer to spread the message</p> <p>Well disguised surcharges, e.g. 0.1c per kilometre or \$10 transfer duty</p>
<b>ISSUE: Land management</b>	
<p><i>Outcome:</i>                      Recovery and mitigation</p> <p>Resilience</p> <p>Value land and water for inherent wellbeing outcomes <b>not</b> fiscal</p> <p>Individual actions within a landscape context using focused incentives (as a corridor mechanism)</p> <p>Management objectives to conserve, enhance, restore</p> <p>Limit urban sprawl</p>	<p><i>Delivery mechanism:</i>                      Recovery action plan, multiple value management plans (outdoor recreation, scenic amenity, heritage, biodiversity, water, sense of place)</p> <p>Protected land tenure mechanism with onus on developers to mitigate impact and demonstrate multiple rewards</p> <p>Statutory requirements -council to buy and protect green space</p> <p>Regional approach</p> <p>Grant funding and seed funding to maintain and purchase landscape corridors</p> <p>Identification of non-dollar values for land valuation and land use planning</p> <p>Catchment and sub-catchment scale activities by a community of landholders and organisations (coordination to achieve holistic results)</p> <p>Incentives and rewards are the glue</p> <p>High density and infill limit expansion into natural open space areas</p>

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### **Appendix 2: Preliminary report on the RLOSAC Landscape Corridors Forum**

**Lyceum Hall, Esk – 27 November 2009**

**(as provided to RLOSAC Meeting #32, 7 December 2009)**

#### **Background**

RLOSAC formed a Working Group which met on 18 September to discuss and agree the format of the Landscape Corridors Forum that was held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

The WG agreed that following the release of the SEQRP 2009-2031 and changed institutional relationships there was a need to get 'endorsement' of the multiple values of corridors and some form of jointly agreed 'Implementation Policy'. The invitation-only forum would also facilitate the focus of multiple lines of 'investment' (e.g. time, effort, money) currently dispersed spatially across jurisdictions and issues.

It was hoped the 'invitation-only' approach would be beneficial in differentiating the audience and focussing attention on the higher level outcomes, agreement for collaborative actions for presentation to relevant governance bodies.

It was recognised that this approach would reduce opportunities for direct community engagement, but, given the collaborative intent, this issue could be ameliorated provided representation of the multiple values was maintained and the outcomes were properly communicated by stakeholders.

The forum structure was initially divided into three main sessions:

1. A series of Case Studies
2. A discussion/ debate and agreement on a collective Policy position
3. A discussion and agreement on a process to implement the policy position

This was modified on the day in accordance with the emerging directions.

52 participants attended, representing government, community and industry from across SEQ, including local Council and community groups.

Assoc/Professor Darryl Low Choy opened the day with a brief reference to the preparatory papers: his *Landscape Corridors Primer*; and Neil Davidson's *Toward a common approach for implementing Landscape Corridors in Southeast Queensland*.

Darryl's opening address discussed landscape values in the context of resilience, where:

- *Resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance to undergo change and still retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks.*

He then asked:

- *Has urbanisation and associated development in the SEQ region moved the socio-ecological systems of the region beyond their resilience threshold into a different regime? And*
- *Consistent with the Resilience definition, how will landscape corridors improve the resilience of the regional landscape given the current rate of regional development, and in the longer term, assist in the adaptation to climate change?*

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Darryl then provided a flowchart suggesting a way forward (attached).

The following plenary session asked for key reasons for establishing linear corridors in the landscape; who cares and consequences if we don't do it? How to create future resilience?

### **Case Study Speakers and rationale**

Presentations were heard from a range of relevant speakers (appended):

1. Powerlink – Neil Young & Jim Binney – Greening Lockyer Program

This presentation was programmed to demonstrate the positive outcomes of the Corporate Social Responsibility demonstrated by Powerlink in the Lockyer Valley. Powerlink's process helped to build community & environmental capacity, trust, seed new research partnerships. It also had unforeseen positive outcomes (increased community use and tourism outcomes)

2. Bunya Community Environmental Association Inc – David Gregor

This presentation was programmed to provide a 'grass roots' perspective – when community recognition of values exists and community willingness and capacity exists, where to get the resources, how to get the outcomes?

3. Energex - Abermain to Lockrose 110kV powerline upgrade – Michael Jones

This presentation was programmed to allow Energex to demonstrate a willingness to learn from existing models (e.g. Powerlink's) and offer to work with those willing at the design and planning stage.

4. Oxley Ck Catchment Association – (Anne Clarke)

This presentation was programmed to allow Anne Clarke to showcase the connections of the Oxley Creek Catchment with the Karawatha-Greenbank-Flinders Peak Corridor. Unfortunately Anne was unable to attend on the day and forwarded her apologies.

5. National Reserves System Initiative – Kristy Thomson

This presentation was programmed to recognise the contribution being made through Federal Government investment in the National Reserve System and the targeting of that spending in partnership with the 11 SEQ Councils, DEWHA and DERM.

A number of Poster Displays were also provided for perusal during breaks; including:

- SEQ Water – Brisbane River rehabilitation
- Breaking the Barriers – Engineering Solutions to Ecological Problems
- Nature Refuge Priority Investment Areas
- Ecosystem Service Maps – individual layers/ confluence maps
- In addition, Mick Petter from SEQ Catchments displayed composite maps and 'values confluence' maps on his laptop.

### **Active Learning – Developing a Linear Corridor Plan for the Karawatha – Greenbank – Flinders Peak Corridor**

Six groups participated in a structured interactive process according to a one page *Task Prompt* aimed at identifying the issues, barriers and opportunities associated with Landscape Corridors (unfortunately one key map was not available, but the broader concepts were still able to be conveyed).

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After lunch Saleena Ham (facilitator) summarised and presented the key points from each group. This formed the introduction to a plenary discussion to explore how to **Build the Policy Framework** in the context of the recent learning experience and observations made. Additional comments were refined on-screen with group input.

Group discussions continued until it was agreed that sufficient material had been collated to inform the RLOSAC Secretariat in the next stage of refinement, integration and implementation. Final comments were taken from individual participants and will be integrated with the notes in the final write-up. The Forum finished early.

Note: A late paper was received from Mr Ted Fensom on behalf of the SEQ Koala Alliance and a copy is attached for the Committee's information.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1.** That the Committee consider the formation of a Working Group to further consider the outcomes of the Forum early in 2010 when the outcomes have been more fully documented, and when discussions and feedback on the papers has been received and integrated.
- 2.** That the Committee thank Saleena Ham for facilitating, Darryl Low Choy for chairing, Peter McKay for taking notes, the DIP Team for organisation and logistics, Somerset Regional Council for being gracious hosts, the sponsors (Qld Gov, SEQ Active Trails, SEQ Catchments, Powerlink, Redland City Council, Somerset Regional Council, SEQ Water) for contributions, those that provided poster displays, the participants for attending and the Esk Lions Club members for the after-Forum refreshments on a very hot but productive day.