

# FRASER COAST DRINKING WATER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



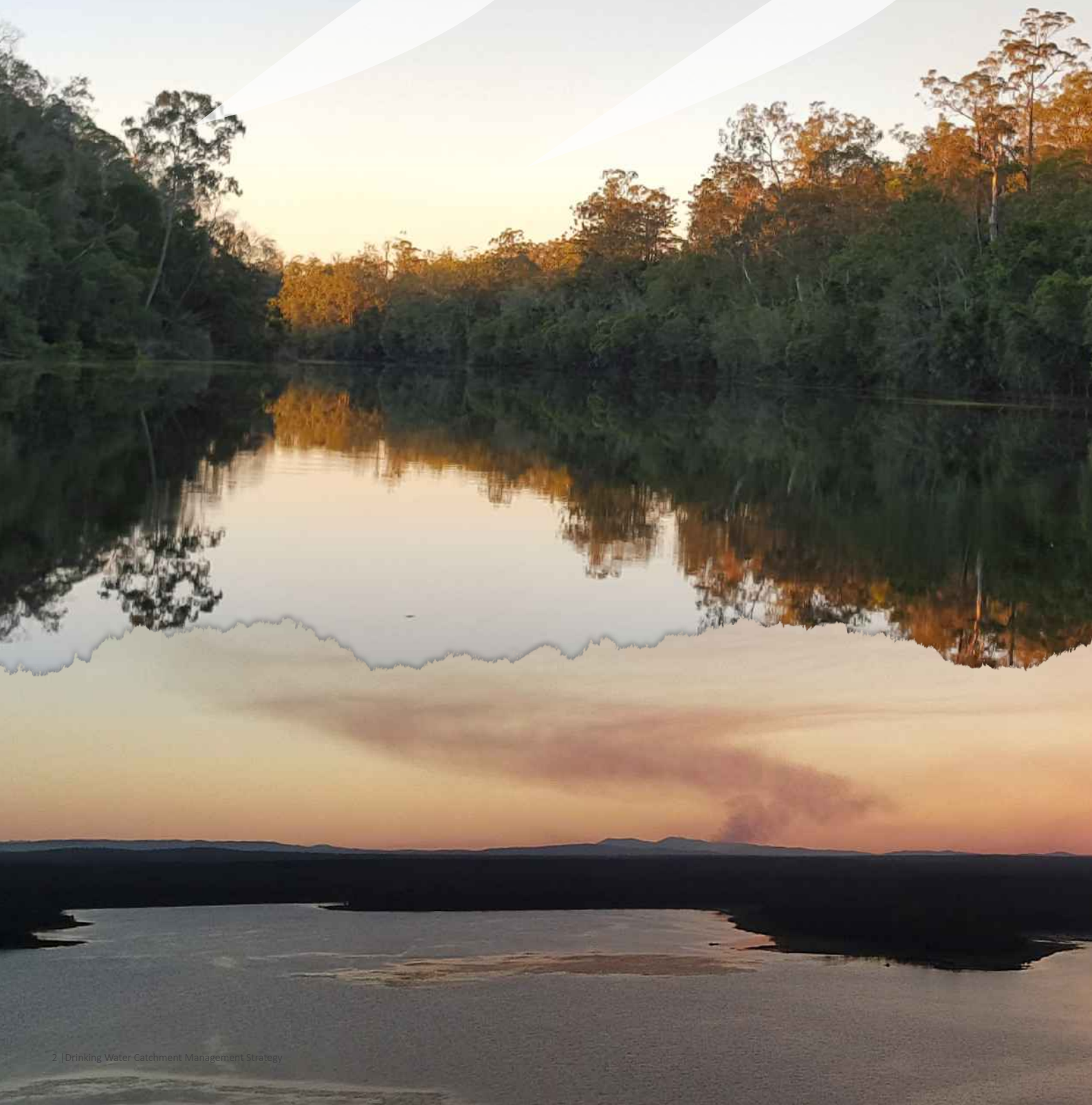
2023 - 2033



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*Healthy catchments,  
healthy water.*



## Foreword

Our drinking water catchments are diverse and cover large areas of private and publicly owned land. They provide us with a source of clean drinking water, but are also habitat for plants and animals, waterways for recreation, and land for sustainable agriculture and industry.

To provide an integrated approach to managing our drinking water catchments, we recognise the importance of collaborating and establishing partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including Traditional Owners, community groups, landowners, and regional and state Natural Resource Management bodies.

We understand that healthy drinking water catchments mean healthy drinking water for the community of the Fraser Coast, and we are committed to the management of our drinking water catchments through the implementation of this Strategy.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to promote the health and maintain the values of our drinking water catchments to protect and enhance the safe and reliable supply of drinking water for the community of the Fraser Coast.

## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of the land on which this Strategy is to be implemented. We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and the deep connections they have with the region's lands and waters.

We pay respect to the Elders - past, present, and emerging and acknowledge the significant contribution they have made in shaping the identity of our drinking water catchments.



# Introduction

## Why do we need this strategy?

Water is a vital resource that we rely upon every day to live, work and play. We manage that resource to ensure the community of the Fraser Coast has a safe and reliable supply.

This begins in our drinking water catchments where water is collected and stored before being treated and supplied to the community.

Drinking water catchments are areas of land where water collects and flows when it rains. As the water moves over and through the landscape, it flows into larger creeks and rivers and is captured and stored in barrages, weirs, and dams.

Our drinking water catchments are a shared resource that include places of economic, social, environmental and cultural significance, such as forestry and farmland, recreational areas, habitat for endangered species, and sacred sites for Traditional Owners.

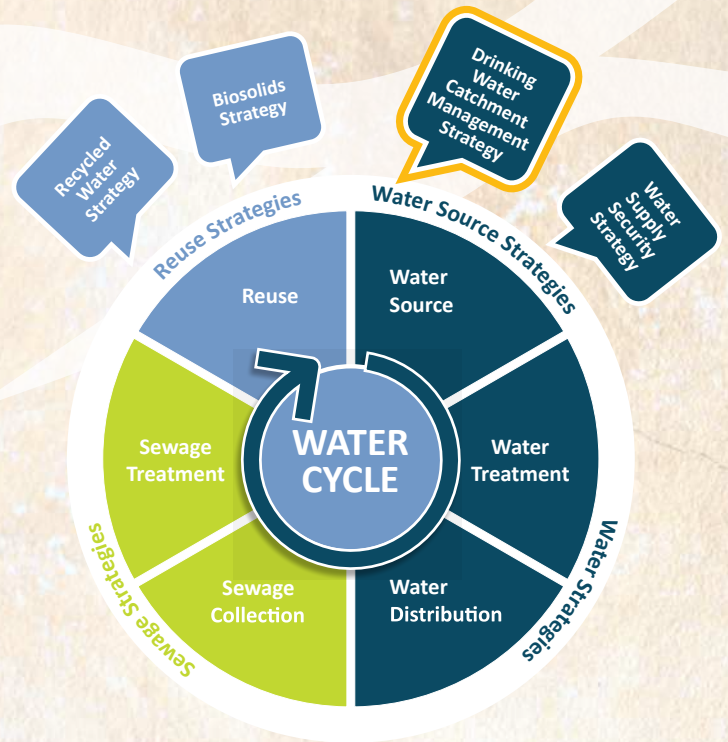
As our region continues to grow, the pressures on our drinking water catchments from community, commercial and recreational interests will increase, as will the demand for a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. In response, we have developed this Strategy to lead and facilitate effective management and protection of our drinking water catchments.

This Strategy provides our vision and mandate, for the next ten years, for the protection and improvement of source water quality in our drinking water catchments, whilst maintaining catchment values.

It details the principles, objectives and actions from which targeted and measured actions will be planned and implemented.

## How does this align with other strategies?

This Strategy forms part of our Water Resilience Framework contributing to securing our water future on the Fraser Coast and support us with meeting obligations under the *Queensland Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* and *Water Act 2000*.



This Strategy aligns with 'Focus Area 2 - Resilient and Environmentally Responsible Region' of our *Corporate Plan 2023-2028*, and supports the *Wide Bay Water Annual Performance Plan*. It also contributes to achieving the primary objective of our *Drinking Water Quality Policy* and *Drinking Water Quality Management Plan*, to provide the community with dependable, safe, high-quality water that consistently complies with the health-based parameters of the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*.

## Head of Power

### Legislation

- *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act*
- *Water Act*

### Standards

- *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*



# Our Drinking Water Catchments

## Where are our drinking water catchments?

Our drinking water is sourced primarily from three separate drinking water catchments located across the Fraser Coast and neighbouring local government areas. All our drinking water catchments are along natural waterways that form part of the Mary Basin, they include the Burrum River, Tinana Creek and Mary River.

The Fraser Coast's drinking water catchment management boundaries are aligned with the Queensland State Government drinking water supply scheme boundaries defined in *Water Plan (Mary Basin) 2006*. These boundaries are based on key rivers systems with water supply storages and infrastructure that supply urban areas.



Fraser Coast drinking water catchments.

# Burrum River Drinking Water Catchment

## Size:

- Length: 39km
- Area: 620km<sup>2</sup>

## Bulk Water Service Provider:

- Fraser Coast Regional Council

## Infrastructure:

- Lenthalls Dam
- Burrum River Weir No. 2
- Burrum River Weir No. 1

## Communities Supplied:

- Hervey Bay and surrounds

## Recreational Opportunities:

- Boating
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Camping

## Significant Environmental Values:

- Endangered Koala
- Vulnerable Wallum Froglet
- Black Breasted Button Quail
- Dry Vine Rainforest Scrub

## Culturally Significant Places

- Wongi Water Holes

The Burrum River Drinking Water Catchment connects with the upper reaches of the Burrum River system and borders the Seaview, Clifton and Robinson ranges. Six creeks within the catchment converge at Lenthalls Dam, which is located along the Burrum River in the Wongi State Forest and approximately 11km West of Howard. Further along the Burrum River, approximately 6km and 11km downstream of Lenthalls Dam, are Burrum River Weir No. 2 and Burrum River Weir No. 1.

Lenthalls Dam was originally built in 1984 and has formed Lake Lenthall. Releases are regularly made from Lenthalls Dam to feed the storage of Burrum River Weir No. 2, which overtops into the storage of Burrum River Weir No. 1, where water is extracted for treatment before being supplied to the community. Burrum River Weir No. 1 is the tidal limit of the Burrum River and the end of the drinking water catchment.

We own and operate Lake Lenthall, which represents approximately 1.5% of the total area of the drinking water catchment. All other surrounding land and waters upstream and downstream are privately owned for rural residences, hobby farms and cattle grazing, or controlled by the Queensland Government through State Forests and public waterways.



*Burrum Weir No.1 showing freshwater storage above the weir and tidal zone below.*



*Aerial image of Lenthalls Dam and spillway.*





## Did you know?

Lake Lenthall is a popular destination for camping, fishing, and boating. The lake is stocked with several species of fish, including Australian bass and barramundi, making it a popular spot for recreational anglers.

Lake Lenthall is also an important habitat for a variety of bird species, including pelicans, cormorants, and several species of waterfowl.



# Tinana Creek Drinking Water Catchment

## Size:

- Length: 67km
- Area: 1,200km<sup>2</sup>

## Bulk Water Service Provider:

- Fraser Coast Regional Council

## Infrastructure:

- Teddington Weir
- Talegalla Weir

## Communities Supplied:

- Maryborough

## Recreational Opportunities:

- Boating
- Fishing

## Significant Environmental Values:

- Iconic Mary River Cod
- Endangered Mary River Turtle
- Endangered Queensland Lungfish

The Tinana Creek Drinking Water Catchment is part of the Tinana Creek, which is a tributary of the Mary River. It commences in the South at the Tagigan Range and Mount Goomboorian, within the coastal region between Gympie and Noosa. The catchment is bordered in the North by Teddington Weir, which is the primary water storage in the catchment and located along the Tinana Creek approximately 14km South of Maryborough.

Almost all the land and waters (greater than 99%) in the catchment are either privately owned for rural residences, agriculture (e.g. sugar cane and macadamias) and cattle grazing, or controlled by the Queensland Government through State Forests and public waterways.



*Aerial image of Teddington Water Treatment Plant and Teddington Weir.*



*Teddington Weir.*



Lake Lenthall

Maryborough West

Maryborough CBD

Granville

Tinana

Teddington WTP

Teddington Weir

Tiaro

Bauple

Tallegalla Weir

Mary River

Tinana Creek

**LEGEND**

- ~ Fraser Coast Regional Boundary
- ~ Waterways
- Water Delivery Infrastructure
- 🏭 Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
- Weir

Gympie

## Did you know?

The Queensland Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*) is a unique fish species that is only found in the Mary and Burnett River systems in southeast Queensland, Australia.

It is one of the oldest living vertebrates on Earth, with a lineage that dates back over 380 million years to the time of the dinosaurs. The Queensland Lungfish is known for its ability to breathe air through a primitive lung, which allows it to survive in low-oxygen environments or even out of water for short periods of time. It is considered a conservation priority due to habitat loss, water pollution, and overfishing. The species has also been declared a “living fossil” and is protected under the *Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Tom Espinoza from Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG) undertaking research on the Queensland Lungfish.

# Mary River Drinking Water Catchment

## Size:

- Length: 160km
- Area: 6,930km<sup>2</sup>

## Bulk Water Service Provider:

- Sunwater

## Infrastructure:

- Mary River Barrage

## Communities Supplied:

- Tiaro

## Recreational Opportunities:

- Boating
- Fishing
- Camping
- 4WD

## Significant Environmental Values:

- Iconic Mary River Cod
- Endangered Mary River Turtle
- Endangered Queensland Lungfish



The Mary River Drinking Water Catchment is a part of the Mary River, from which Council is supplied water by Sunwater. It commences in the South at the Conondale Range flowing through the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Fraser Coast local government areas. The catchment is bordered in the North by the Mary River Barrage, which is located approximately 9km South-East of Maryborough.

Almost all the land and waters (greater than 99%) in the catchment are either privately owned for rural / urban residences, agriculture, cattle grazing and sand mining, or controlled by the Queensland Government through State Forests, Conservation Parks, and public waterways.



## Did you know?

The Mary River is home to a species of freshwater turtle that is considered one of the most endangered in the world. The Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) is only found in the Mary River and its tributaries and is listed as endangered under the Federal Government's, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.





# The health of our drinking water catchments

There are various issues that impact water quality in our drinking water catchments, which can affect the health of the environment and put stress on the drinking water treatment process. To maintain the health of our drinking water catchments and in turn the quality of our drinking water, this Strategy will consider the key issues outlined within this section.

## Contamination

Contamination typically occurs when pathogens, chemicals, sediment, and nutrients are introduced to waters from land uses and events such as recreation, farming, waste disposal, bushfires, flooding etc.

## Pathogens

Pathogens are disease causing microorganisms and in drinking water they pose the greatest risk to human health. Sources of pathogens in our drinking water catchments include:

- **Sewage** from failed or inadequate residential / commercial onsite sewage facilities (e.g. septic and biocycle systems)
- **Primary recreation** (i.e. swimming) in waterways and storages, particularly in close proximity to our drinking water offtake points.
- **Animal waste** from domestic animals, stock and wildlife present in waterways and storages.
- **Fertilisers** from poorly managed agricultural practices.
- **Inappropriate disposal of waste** from activities (e.g. boating, camping and fishing) in close proximity to waterways and storages.
- **Dead fish** within waterways and storages – can occur as a result of chemical contamination or naturally occurring reasons, such as algal blooms, increased aquatic plant growth, significant changes in water temperature or a drop in water oxygen levels.

## Chemicals

Chemicals used on land within our catchments are often hazardous and have the potential to poison waterways if used inappropriately. Sources of chemicals in our drinking water catchments include:

- **Pesticides and herbicides** in runoff from agricultural practices.
- **Hydrocarbons** from boating activities that spill into waterways and storages.

- **Stormwater** from roads, and residential / commercial properties that flow into waterways that are contaminated with chemicals (e.g. chemical spill from a tanker on the highway).
- **Inappropriate disposal of waste** within catchments that directly and indirectly leach chemicals into waterways and storages (e.g. ammonia leaking from an illegally dumped fridge).
- **Algae** and weeds that grow in waterways and storages, which can produce harmful toxins and drain the water of oxygen – this can often be exacerbated when nutrient levels are high.



## Sediment

Sediment are solids such as soil and earth that make their way into waterbodies. In drinking water catchments, sediments have the potential to reduce the capacity of water storages and affect water treatment performance, which may impact the quality of drinking water after treatment. The causes for sediment in our drinking water catchment include:

- **Loss of riparian buffers** along waterways that would otherwise filter sediment from naturally occurring runoff and stabilise the banks to prevent erosion.
- **Land clearing without controls** and poor land management practices that don't effectively control erosion and contain sediment.
- **Inappropriate development** leading to clearing in high-risk areas or within proximity of waterways and storages.
- **Poorly managed road maintenance activities** and building sites leading to soil disturbance.
- **Invasive plants and animals** destroying natural vegetation that would otherwise protect the banks of waterways from erosion.

## Nutrients

Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are difficult to remove from our drinking water using conventional treatment processes, and in excessive amounts can cause the growth of undesirable algae and weeds. Sources of nutrients in our drinking water catchments include:

- **Fertilisers** contained in runoff from agricultural practices.
- **Bushfires** that cause the release of nutrients stored in burnt vegetation and become more readily available for runoff into waterways and storages.
- **Sewage** from failed or inadequate residential / commercial onsite sewage facilities
- **Animal waste** from domestic animals and stock present in waterways and storages (e.g. Cattle accessing waterways and storages to drink).

## Climate change

Contemporary research suggests that we are now living in a time of relatively rapid climate change and global warming, which is likely going to impact our regions drinking water catchments.

The Queensland Government's *Climate Change Impact Summary (v1)* predicts that in the future, Queensland can expect the following:

- Increases in the temperature and the frequency

of hot days and the duration of warm spells.

- Decline in annual rainfall and prolonged dry periods (i.e. drought).
- Increased risk of bushfire and harsher fire weather (as a measure of fuel dryness and hot, dry, windy conditions).
- More intense storm events.

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of contamination in our drinking water catchments. Extended dry periods may lead to a shift in plant and animal species and will dry out vegetation, which will significantly increase the risk of bushfire and possible nutrient contamination.

In contrast, more extreme storms events will increase the speed and volume of surface water runoff into waterways resulting in increased sediment and nutrient loads. Extreme storm events will also increase flood impacts causing destabilisation and erosion of waterway banks and habitat for wildlife.

Climate change is also expected to increase the temperature of our waterways, impacting water quality parameters (e.g. pH, dissolved oxygen) that will affect drinking water treatment and may stress the natural ecosystem.

This Strategy will investigate and identify opportunities to manage the impacts of climate change within our drinking water catchments.







# Our catchment management principles

This Strategy has identified five principles that respond to a broad range of drinking water catchment related challenges and opportunities and will guide our catchment management activities over the next ten years.

Each of the guiding principles focus on a specific theme and set the objectives and subsequent actions.

They do not specify targets or outline specific activities, to enable flexibility to adapt to changing resources, policy, emerging opportunities and challenges over the next ten years.



# Principle 1 – Prioritise

## **PRIORITISE drinking water catchment management actions through long-term planning and investment.**

Our drinking water catchments are the start of an important process, where water is collected and captured before being stored, treated and delivered to the community as safe drinking water. We manage the quality of water at each stage of the process - this is called the multi-barrier approach. A multi-barrier approach is a well-established method for ensuring safe drinking water and recognises that water quality risks can be prevented or reduced at multiple points in the process and that no single barrier will manage all water quality risks.

Catchment management provides robust and effective barriers as part of the multi-barrier approach to ensure safe drinking water quality, and our drinking water catchments should be considered assets in the water treatment process.

A lack of resourcing, strategic planning and prioritisation in catchment management increases the likelihood of human health risks and increases

our reliance on water treatment processes - this contradicts advice of water industry bodies and best practice guidelines for the management of drinking water.

We will prioritise appropriate planning, investment and resourcing in catchment management. Council activities will be managed to ensure they don't negatively impact catchment management objectives and we will make healthy drinking water catchments the priority where Council activities pose a high risk to drinking water quality.



## Objectives

### **1.1 Our statutory and strategic planning should ensure drinking water catchment water quality is prioritised and is not negatively impacted.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Review land development schemes, standards and codes.
- b. Influence planning, development, industry and agricultural activities across the Fraser Coast to operate in an ecologically sustainable manner to protect and improve water quality in our drinking water catchments.

### **1.2 Ensure investment and resourcing in drinking water catchment management is appropriate and is prioritised.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Plan and develop a business case for funding of Council drinking water catchment management activities and projects.
- b. Explore grant funding opportunities to fund drinking water catchment management activities and projects.

### **1.3 Investigate regulatory opportunities to protect water quality within drinking water catchments.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Explore options for partnerships with regulatory agencies to improve enforcement of regulation surrounding drinking water sources.

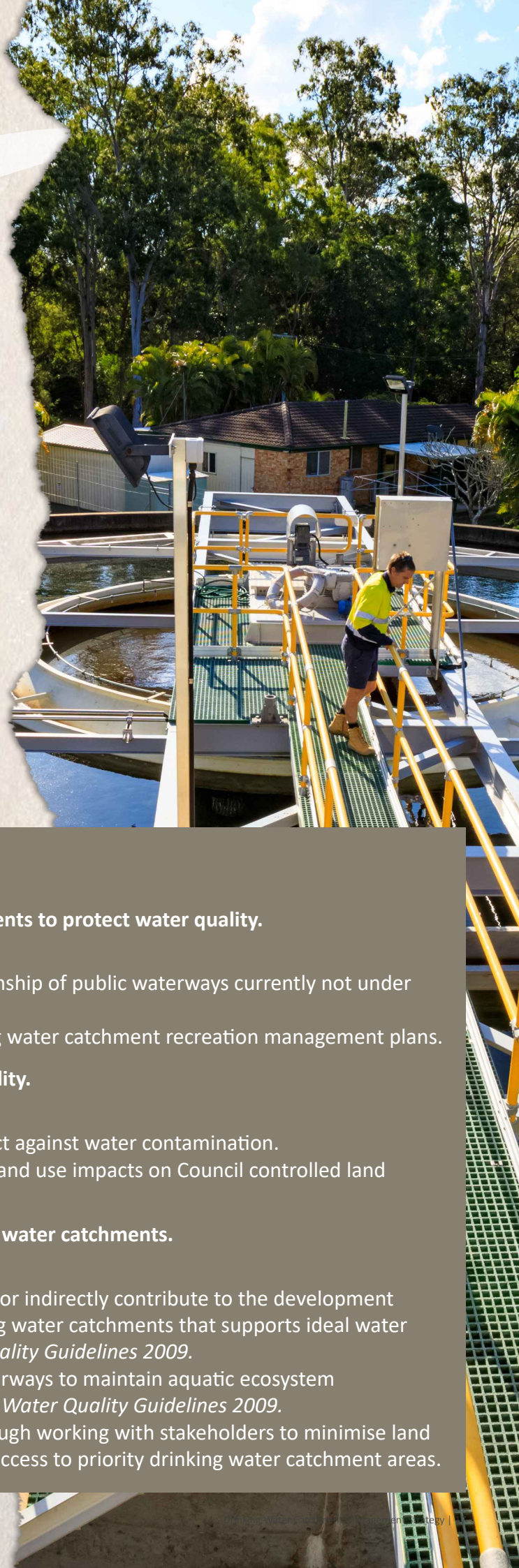
# Principle 2 - Protect

**PROTECT** our drinking water catchments through Council run and key stakeholder lead programs and projects.

As required under the *'Framework for Management of Drinking Water Quality'*, detailed in the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*, we have undertaken Source Water Assessments of our drinking water catchments. The assessments followed the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) *Manual for the Application of Health-Based Targets* and determined that our drinking water catchments fell into the highest risk categories, being Category 4 - Unprotected and Category 3 - Poorly Protected.

The Source Water Assessments indicate a high level of risk for source water contamination within Council's drinking water catchments. The *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* advises that the most effective barrier against contamination is the protection of water at its source, as it provides much greater surety than other barriers such as treatment.

We will plan and deliver programs and projects in our drinking water catchments that will establish barriers to protect against water contamination and to safeguard and enhance our water quality.



## Objectives

### 2.1 Manage water use in our drinking water catchments to protect water quality.

#### Actions:

- a. Explore opportunities to obtain custodianship of public waterways currently not under Council control.
- b. Review and develop appropriate drinking water catchment recreation management plans.

### 2.2 Improve land use impacts on drinking water quality.

#### Actions:

- a. Investigate appropriate barriers to protect against water contamination.
- b. Develop a program of works to manage land use impacts on Council controlled land within drinking water catchments.

### 2.3 Maintain healthy waterways within our drinking water catchments.

#### Actions:

- a. Investigate opportunities to directly and/or indirectly contribute to the development of a program of works within our drinking water catchments that supports ideal water ecology as per the *Queensland Water Quality Guidelines 2009*.
- b. Monitor water quality in catchment waterways to maintain aquatic ecosystem protection values as per the *Queensland Water Quality Guidelines 2009*.
- c. Improve riparian zone management through working with stakeholders to minimise land clearing, manage weeds and limit stock access to priority drinking water catchment areas.

## Principle 3 – Understand and apply

**UNDERSTAND and APPLY this understanding in our drinking water catchments through targeted monitoring, surveillance investigation, and research actions.**

Understanding how our drinking water catchments behave is vital for informing and improving water quality planning and decision making. Understanding the characteristics of a drinking water catchment is often recognised as one of the most important barriers in the multi-barrier approach. Understanding the behaviour of catchments also supports Principle 2, as it helps to inform, justify and prioritise programs to protect against water contamination.

We manage water quality within our drinking water system using a risk management framework, as detailed in our *Drinking Water Quality Management Plan*. For drinking water catchments, this framework is entirely reliant on understanding and defining catchment hazards and controls to enable incidents to be responded to proactively and priority catchment areas to be targeted.

A thorough understanding of drinking water catchments requires detailed knowledge of the unique catchment factors. For example, an open access catchment would benefit from a land use survey that identifies if cattle are grazing near drinking water offtakes. This would then prompt regular inspections of cattle grazing sites and water quality sampling.



Participation in local research is also important for expanding knowledge of drinking water catchments and improving understanding of unique characteristics.

We will undertake proactive and reactive monitoring and surveillance of our drinking water catchments to enhance the knowledge and understanding required for sound decision making and to meet legislative requirements. Where applicable, we will invest in research of our drinking water catchments to ensure that our knowledge and understanding aligns with the latest industry findings.



# Objectives

## 3.1 Field data from catchment monitoring will inform management activities.

### Actions:

- a. Review and update current catchment sampling/monitoring to develop an integrated monitoring program to support regulatory and operational requirements.
- b. Develop a fit for purpose drinking water catchment water quality reporting framework for the distribution of information to key stakeholders.

## 3.2 Undertake research of the physical, chemical, and biological processes in our drinking water catchments.

### Actions:

- a. Investigate research opportunities with tertiary institutions, industry groups and/or Natural Resource Management groups.

## 3.3 Field monitoring within our drinking water catchments will inform land management activities.

### Actions:

- a. Develop a process to capture and record drinking water catchment risks.
- b. Expand the current catchment sampling program to include monitoring and reporting on land management practices impacting water quality.

## 3.4 Use our drinking water catchment monitoring data to improve catchment understanding and inform policy and risk assessment outcomes.

### Actions:

- a. Develop a program of proactive and reactive surveillance.
- b. Utilise drone technology to provide live and up-to-date aerial images and to undertake catchment monitoring investigation programs.
- c. Utilise technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to undertake desktop assessments of vegetation and land use mapping within drinking water catchments and surrounding areas.
- d. Investigate the use of new innovative technologies and sampling techniques to monitor biodiversity values and pest animal species in our drinking water catchment water storages.



# Principle 4 – Educate and collaborate

## **EDUCATE and COLLABORATE with the community and key stakeholders about drinking water catchment knowledge, resources and projects.**

Our drinking water catchments have a diverse range of land uses, which pose a risk to drinking water quality through contamination from surface water runoff. It is recognised that contamination of water from catchment land use is the biggest issue to overcome in achieving improved water quality outcomes.

Council has limited direct control over land use activities in the drinking water catchments, as the land is primarily owned by private landholders or the Queensland Government. However, a recognised alternative in-direct approach to managing catchment land use is through communicating, educating, and engaging with the community on the importance of water protection in drinking water catchments.

This approach is detailed within the framework from the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and is known to positively influence land management and lower the contribution of contaminants to waters from land use activities.

We will work towards establishing open communication and partnerships with key stakeholders, catchment landowners, community, industry groups and Traditional Owners with a focus on sharing knowledge about processes affecting source water quality and alternative sustainable land management strategies. We will develop engagement and education programs that will facilitate collaboration with key stakeholders and promote ownership and advocacy for catchment management issues and investigate opportunities for funding and resources from regional catchment investment opportunities.

## Objectives

### **4.1 Build community understanding of catchment management objectives and processes.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Develop and implement a drinking water catchment education program for key stakeholders and the general community.
- b. Investigate opportunities for catchment focused advertising and media campaigns.

### **4.2 Collaborate with key stakeholders to promote advocacy, influence land use, and access funding, resourcing, and research.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Establish partnerships with catchment landowners.
- b. Develop partnerships with Natural Resource Management and catchment management groups.
- c. Explore possibility to establish community working groups.
- d. Identify opportunities for collaboration within other Council programs.

### **4.3 Establish partnerships with industry groups.**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Investigate training options to develop and improve catchment management expertise within Council.
- b. Seek memberships to relevant professional industry groups.
- c. Promote awareness of catchment management objectives and activities across the Fraser Coast community.
- d. Build relationships with industry groups, to promote awareness of catchment management objectives and activities, to encourage good land and waterway stewardship.

# Principle 5 – Value

## **VALUE our drinking water catchments beyond the provision of safe and reliable drinking water focusing on environmental, cultural, social, and economic values.**

Our drinking water catchments are important for community wellbeing. They are home to significant and environmentally sensitive species of plants and animals and include culturally and spiritually significant areas for Traditional Owners.

Drinking water catchments also provide opportunities for recreation and tourism and support many forms of local and regional agriculture and commercial industries.

The four key values of our drinking water catchments recognise and acknowledge:

- **Environmentally** waterways provide habitat for plants and animals and are critically important in sustaining much of our region’s native biodiversity.
- **Socially** they are important community assets providing opportunities for recreation, lifestyle,

wellbeing, and connection with nature and with each other.

- **Culturally** they are places of memories, ancestral and pioneering history, and hold deep cultural and spiritual connection with the land for Traditional Owners.
- **Economically** waterways provide benefits, through provision of drinking water, water for livestock and agriculture, and commercial and industrial businesses, and places for travel and tourism.

## Did you know?

The Mary River has been known by many names, with the First Nations, Jinibara and Kabi Kabi Peoples of the upper Mary River, calling it Numabulla and the Butchulla People in the lower catchment calling it Moonaboola, meaning ‘place of many bends’.

## Objectives

### 5.1 Define the cultural value of the Fraser Coast’s drinking water catchments.

#### Actions:

- a. Build relationships with Traditional Owners and develop a shared vision for the management of our drinking water catchments.

### 5.2 Identify recreational values within drinking water catchments and waterways.

#### Actions:

- a. Define fit for purpose public access to freshwater for recreational activities.
- b. Address any risks to drinking water quality and public health caused by recreation.
- c. Review existing recreational activities on waterways and source water storages within our drinking water catchments.

### 5.3 Better understand the environmental value of our drinking water catchments.

#### Actions:

- a. Ongoing management and protection of terrestrial and aquatic environments within our drinking water catchments.

### 5.4 Recognise the economic value of our drinking water catchments

#### Actions:

- a. Enable appropriate and sustainable tourism and economic development opportunities that do not negatively impact on the health of our drinking water catchments and water quality.

# How did we develop this strategy?

This Strategy has been developed in-house utilising the technical capabilities and experience of Council officers and incorporating the latest best practice catchment management research and industry standards.

Throughout the development of this Strategy there were various levels of stakeholder and community engagement (with over 900 participants) to seek input and direction on what land and water values were most important in our drinking water catchments. This feedback helped to identify areas of focus and priorities for the principles.

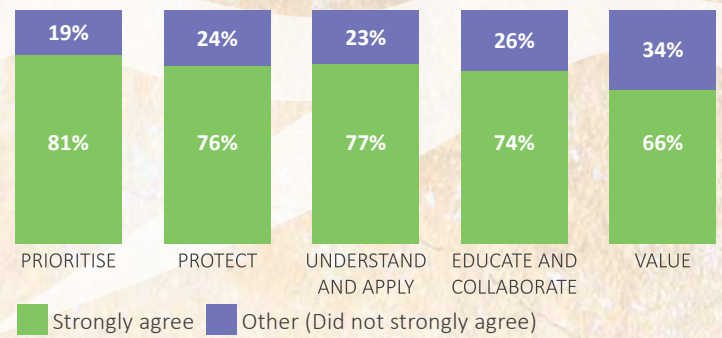
Engagement was undertaken in two consecutive phases, including workshops with key internal and external stakeholders followed by the launch of Council's Engagement Hub, including a public survey, and market stalls for the general community.

Further feedback from the community clearly indicated that the most important land and water value and use for our drinking water catchments (as rated by 83.5% of respondents) was as a 'source of cleaning drinking water'. This was followed by 'sustainable agriculture, industry and development' as the most ranked second value and use (as rated by 58.8% of respondents) and then 'cultural and spiritual values' as the most ranked third value and use (as rated by 44.9% of respondents). The least important value and use was as an 'unspoilt natural areas for recreation' (as rated by 55.7% of respondent).

The first phase informed the development of a series of drinking water catchment management guiding principles as well as catchment-based priorities, and the second phase gauged the community's level of support for the guiding principles, and uncovered what values and priorities they considered most important in our drinking water catchments.

Feedback from the community indicated strong support for the guiding principles as demonstrated below.

## Drinking Water Catchment Management Principles

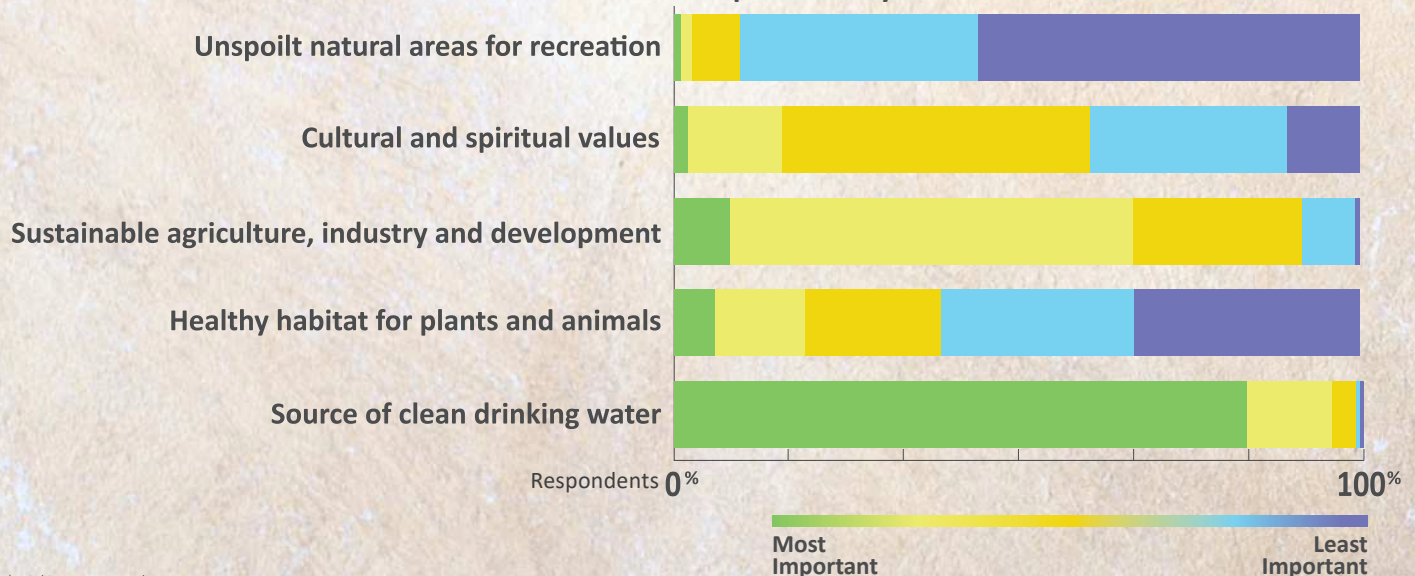


Community and key stakeholder feedback on the draft Principles.

When asked about competing values within our drinking water catchments the community feedback indicated that they would support closing a recreation site near a water catchment area if the activities had a negative impacting on drinking water quality.

When provided an open-ended question on what specific activities they did not want to see in and around our drinking water catchments drinking water catchments, the communities most common response was related to motorised vehicles such as boats, jet skis, trail bikes and 4WDs. A summary of the results from this questions are shown on the following page.

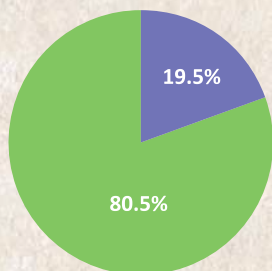
## Which catchment land and water values or uses are important to you?





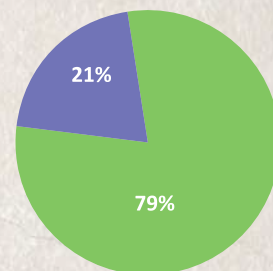


**If drinking water quality was being negatively impacted by activities in an adjacent recreation area, would you support closing the recreation area?**



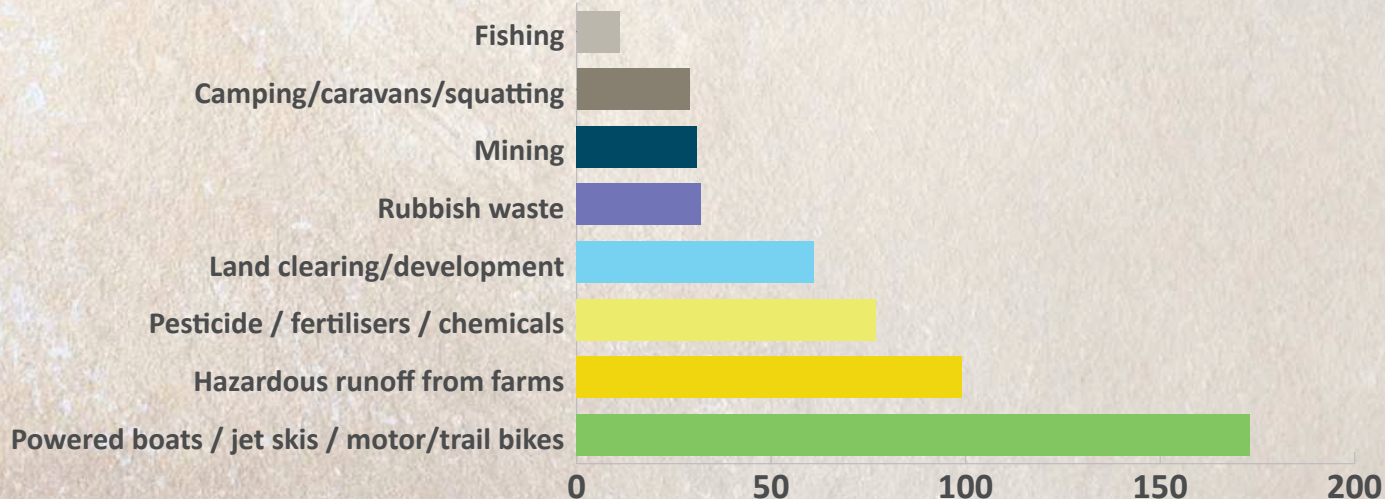
Yes No

**Are you supplied drinking water by the Fraser Coast Regional Council?**



Yes No

**What specific activities DON'T you want to see in and around our drinking water catchments?**



Community and key stakeholder responses toward activities considered not suitable in drinking water catchments.

# How will we implement this strategy?

## **Operational Plan**

Delivery of this Strategy will be managed through an Operational Plan, which will be developed in consultation with key Council stakeholders.

The Plan will be flexible and adaptive to respond to funding opportunities and resource availability. The Operational Plan will define the targets and provide steps to achieving the actions and objectives of this Strategy.

## **Assessment and review**

Implementation of this Strategy and progress towards achieving the objectives will be reviewed and assessed annually, in consultation with key Council stakeholders, against performance outcomes set out in the Operational Plan.

Measures of success, effectiveness of activities and programs and any adaptive management recommendations will be reported in an Annual Progress Report.

An adaptive management approach will ensure that the objectives of this Strategy remain on track, enabling us to assess the effectiveness of activities and actions, and make adjustments or updates in response to changes in catchment conditions, changes in standards and legislation, and emerging opportunities or challenges.





WIDE BAY  
**water** 

A Business Unit of  **Fraser Coast**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL