

*Encouraging Local Government
Leadership in Nature Conservation:
Some Good Examples*



Peter Creaser

Bushcare Program

Environment Australia

Overview

- Bushcare and Local Government
- Case Study: Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Why Local Government needs to be Engaged
- The Local Government Esky
- Five ways to Improve Capacity
- A Shift in Attitude & Opportunities
- Case Study: Ipswich City Council

Bushcare and Local Government

- Three key areas of activity
 - Awareness raising and education
 - Institutional reform
 - Project Development and Funding

Year	No. of projects	Bushcare (\$M)
96/97	38	.5
97/98	53	3.0
98/99	100	5.6
99/2000	131	7.8
2000/2001	126	8.0

Bushcare funding to Local Government

Year	No. of projects	Bushcare (\$M)
96/97	38	.5
97/98	53	3.0
98/99	100	5.6
99/2000	131	7.8
2000/2001	126	8.0

Hindmarsh Shire Council - Biolinks Project

- Key ingredients:
 - Champion - Mayor
 - Partners - GA, landcare, agencies, community
 - Mapping - priorities, clear objective
 - Funding - NHT, Corporate
- Positive spin-offs
 - Attitude change
 - Incentives - rate relief
 - Innovation eg. “pay back rates or surrender high conservation value lands”

Why local government needs to be effectively engaged

- Significant jurisdiction over freehold land
- Manage public lands
- Level of government closest to the people
- Community relates to local area
- Good needs to prevail over Bad and Ugly
- Triple Bottom Line & Integration more likely to be Reality than Rhetoric??

Local Government Esky

- Planning schemes, policies & by-laws
- Development assessments
- Incentives - rate relief, bonus rights, grants
- Materials, equipment, office space
- Admin & finance systems
- \$ - rates, environmental levy
- Leadership - political/corporate change

Ipswich City Council - the complete toolbox

- Environment Levy \$28/year per rateable property = \$1.3 m annual budget
- Acquisition
- Conservation Partnership Toolbox
 - Land for Wildlife
 - Voluntary Conservation Agreements
 - Rate Rebates
 - Grants
 - Free Plants
 - Information - field days, guides etc.

Ipswich Conservation Partnership

- No. of properties = 20
- Area protected under VCAs = 515 ha
- Rebates = \$9,740 /year
- Estimated value to purchase land = \$741,000/ha

Five ways to improve capacity

- Fund council reforms ie. planning schemes
- Legislatively enable and oblige but provide resources
- Translate/transfer regional data to local level
- Environment officer and/or networks realigned
- Education - Council to Council

A Capacity Building Approach

- Clear goal - ‘Net Gain’ or ‘No Net Loss’
- Benchmarks
 - political commitment
 - data and targets
 - action plan - planning scheme, bylaws, incentives
 - monitoring and reporting
- Training, education
- Incentives - \$ for outcomes

Attitudes and Opportunities

- Local Government shift in attitude
 - Local Government Biodiversity Strategy 1998.
 - Resolution 19, National Local Government General Assembly 2000 - Councils as leaders.
- Commonwealth/States/NGOs engage councils
 - NAP and NHT II - Reforms, resources and regions
 - Us!!- Think Global, (Plan Regional), Act Local