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**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022

**Re: Submission to the draft 2022 Reef Wetland Strategy**

Dear Christine,

On behalf of the Mackay Conservation Group and the North Queensland Conservation Council, the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) welcomes this opportunity to provide the following feedback to the draft 2022 Reef Wetland Strategy (RWS).

Additional actions, information and processes that are required to strengthen the 2022 RWS are outlined below.

**Theme 1: Improving wetlands information for decision making and action**

Additional actions to improve outcomes for wetlands under this theme are:

- Producing guidance material to inform how wetlands are protected, maintained and enhanced under legislation administered by other agencies, for example the *Water Act 2000*, *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and *Planning Act 2016*,
- Ensuring that local governments have adequate knowledge and capacity to assess impacts to wetlands from proposed developments,
- Producing information materials about the importance of wetlands for different audiences such as schools, industries and the general public

## **Theme 2: Wetland planning**

Additional actions to improve outcomes for wetlands under this theme are:

- Including wetlands as a State Interest under the State Planning Policy<sup>1</sup>,
- Ensuring that Regional Plans established under the Planning Act 2016 identify wetlands and wetland buffers,
- Ensuring that local government planning schemes identify wetlands and wetland buffers,
- Ensuring that Water Plans established under the *Water Act 2000* provide the flows needed to maintain the extent and ecological condition of instream, floodplain and estuarine wetlands,
- Ensuring that infrastructure required to manage waste and storm water from urban and other types of development is not constructed in and does not degrade wetland buffers

## **Theme 3: On-ground activities to protect, manage and rehabilitate wetlands**

Additional actions to improve outcomes for wetlands under this theme are:

- Providing information about how to assess the ecological condition of wetlands,
- Providing information about prioritising investment in wetland restoration and rehabilitation,
- Removing in-stream and other barriers that reduce the flow of water to wetlands,
- Requiring changes that have occurred to catchment hydrology from mining and other types of development that have caused adverse impacts to the extent and condition of wetlands to be rehabilitated

## **Theme 4: Engagement, education, communication and capacity building**

Additional actions to improve outcomes for wetlands under this theme are:

- Increasing DES's capacity to audit local government's compliance of wetland protection mechanisms

## **Theme 5: Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement**

Additional actions to improve outcomes for wetlands under this theme are:

- Requiring other agencies to report annually against the 2022 RWS objectives,
- Increasing the monitoring of wetland condition,
- Monitoring the effect of climate change on the extent and condition of wetlands,
- Increasing the regulatory strength of the RWS

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<sup>1</sup> <https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/state-planning/state-planning-policy>

**Conclusion**

As they will greatly enhance the protection and management of wetlands, we urge you to incorporate the above-mentioned recommendations in the final Reef Wetland Strategy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification regarding the matters raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely,

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On behalf of:  
Peter McCallum, Mackay Conservation Group  
Crystal Falknau, North Queensland Conservation Council