

**Implementing the Water Quality Improvement Plan
Terms of Reference
Water Quality Sub Committee
January 2009**

Background

In late 2008, the Wallis Lake Implementation Group (WALI) undertook a review of their role and responsibilities and area of operation. While originally an implementation group for the Wallis Lake Catchment, the WALI group have since expanded their jurisdiction and committee membership to cover the Wallis, Myall and Karuah catchments (KWAMI). During workshops with committee, members the following functions were identified:

- Oversighting natural resource management in the catchments
- Facilitating networking and coordination, and
- Leading and supporting new visions.

As with the Coastal Catchment Initiative Advisory Committee, the KWAMI group identified the urgent need to collate actions from all catchment management plans to assist with:

- cross referencing the actions identified in each plan,
- tracking actions undertaken in all identified plans (mainly focussing on outputs), and
- identifying the key areas for the KWAMI to focus implementation.

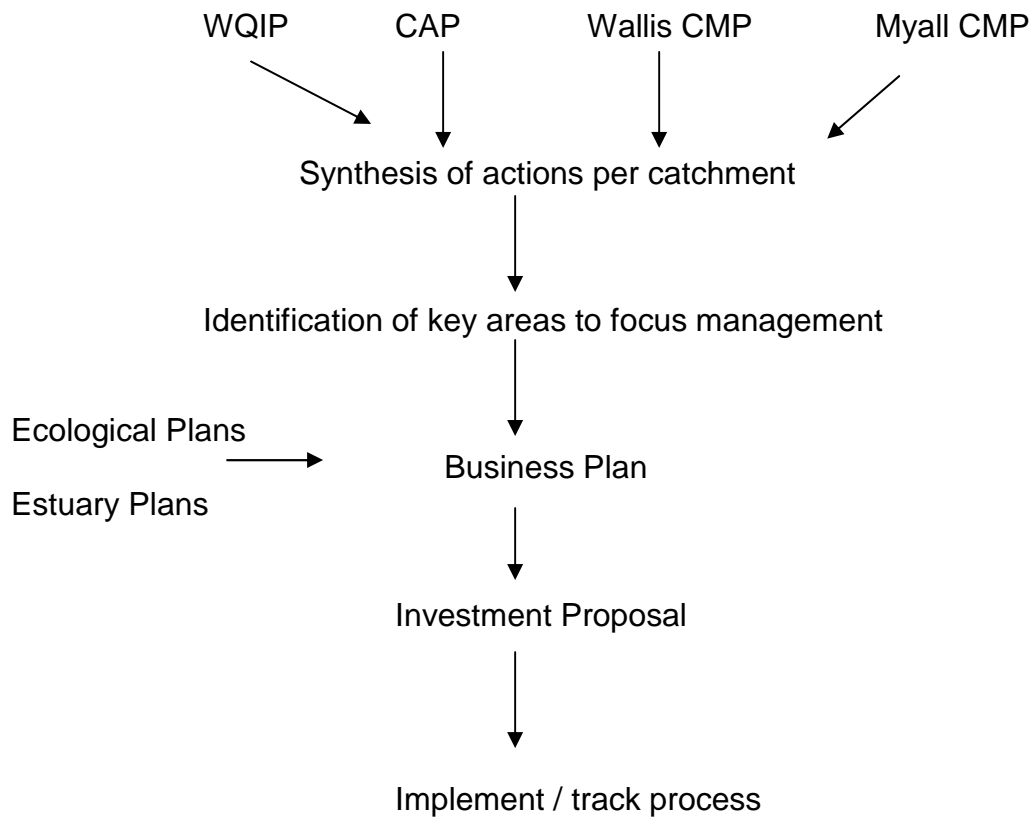
This task of collating actions from the plans will focus on splitting the individual actions into broad management strategies eg to improve ground cover as well as establishing a reporting database for the relevant plans. Catchment management staff will be keeping track of progress against the detailed management strategies, this action will be supported by the database of management actions established. The KWAMI group will then select an area of focus for the future implementation.

The plans that will be included in this collation exercise include:

- Wallis Lake Catchment Plan
- WQIP
- CMA Catchment Action Plan
- Myall Lakes Community Catchment Plan

The specific way that the collated actions would be used is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Synthesis of catchment plans and relationship to implementation



To ensure that all aspects of the Great Lakes Water Quality Improvement Plan are implemented, a water quality sub committee to the KWAMI group will be established.

Terms of reference, reporting mechanisms and governance for the committee are outlined below.

Terms of Reference

1. To secure formal management commitment from each of the agencies and others involved in implementing the WQIP to the actions that the WQIP commits them to;
2. to oversight embedding of WQIP commitments in agencies' activities - providing support, a forum for discussion and resolution of implementation issues, and to maintain ongoing commitment;
3. to act as champions to encourage Government resource the implementation of actions in the WQIP;
4. to act as champions for legislative and policy changes identified in the WQIP;
5. oversight the implementation of the adaptive management framework including the establishment of a monitoring program to track ecological outcomes related to catchment management actions, establish a reporting system suitable for managers and the community;
6. advise the KWAMI group on request in relation to water quality issues;
7. to promote consistency in the implementation of the WQIP and increase awareness of policies and principals of the WQIP and facilitate discussion;
8. consider and recommend the future role of the DSS in WQIP implementation.

Securing formal management commitment from implementing agencies involves two kinds of activity:

- each Committee member who is a representative of an implementing agency will be a champion for securing formal commitment from their agency to the WQIP actions; (this may entail some adjustments to the WQIP, but hopefully these will be rare); and

- for agencies that have key roles in implementing the WQIP, but are not represented on the Working Group, the Working Group should

make personal representations to staff in these agencies with a view to supporting these agencies making a formal commitment to their WQIP actions; key agencies who will need to be approached include the Department of Planning, State Forests, the Department of Lands, and NSW Health, an alternative approach would be to have members of the working group approach senior managers within these organisations to secure commitment to the WQIP.

Committee Representation

Given the Terms of Reference identified above, it is recommended that this committee is made up of a core group of managers from a number of Government agencies. The agencies will include:

- Great Lakes Council
- Greater Taree City Council
- DECC (NPWS)
- MidCoast Water
- DPI (Agriculture)
- CMA

Priority will be given for representation on the working group by members of the CCI Advisory Committee to ensure that the lessons learnt during the development of the WQIP are carried over into implementation. Additional agencies such as DECC Water Science, DECC (Policy) and DoP will be invited to attend meetings to provide advice on an as needs basis.

Reporting mechanisms / Governance

As discussed above, the Water Quality Working Group is proposed as a subcommittee of the KWAMI group. The working group will be comprised of agency representatives and the KWAMI group with its community representation will hold the group accountable for its progress.

When the working group is established it will agree an action plan based on their terms of reference. This action plan will include timelines and responsibilities for each action and form the foundation for reporting to the KWAMI group.

The working group will report progress to each KWAMI group meeting (4 times a year) in the first year and the reporting frequency will be reviewed in year two depending on the nature of the tasks remaining.

The Water Quality working group will liaise with the Estuary Management Committees on an as needs basis. The Estuary Committee will also have capacity to seek advice from the Water Quality Sub Committee

The role and necessity for the working group will be reviewed after 2 years. This would involve:

- The working group making a recommendation to the KWAMI group justifying the continuation or folding of the committee;
- Discussion at the KWAMI group meeting on the proposal;
- Joint agreement on the continuation or folding of the Working Group