

# **COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER GROUP EMERGING AREAS OF CONSENSUS – SEPTEMBER 2002**

During the Options Development and Recommendations Stage of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion Assessment, a number of areas of consensus emerged among the Community Stakeholder Group. A summary of the emerging areas of consensus is provided below.

## **Value: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

### **Agreed**

- There should be an education campaign to improve the understanding of protection of Aboriginal sites and legislation and policies relating to site management. This should be done to help encourage private landholders to notify Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) of sites on their property.
- There are opportunities for :
  - joint management of some areas of State forests and national parks / nature reserves -with local Aboriginal communities;
  - ownership and/or leaseback arrangements of areas of State forest / national park; and
  - straight transfer of some areas of State forest with high cultural heritage and social values, taking into account their conservation values.
- There are requirements for Cultural Heritage surveys before any development in the bioregion.
- There is a need to be respectful of men's and women's business.
- All conservation reserve outcomes to include the options of Aboriginal Ownership or Joint Management as desired by the Aboriginal Community.
- There should be control and management of access of the Aboriginal Sites Register by Local Aboriginal Communities, with copies to be held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (a possible arrangement could be for NPWS/SFNSW remain as custodians of the registers (maintenance and updating) and LALCs control who has access to register).

- The Department of Mineral Resources will undertake to include as a condition of an Exploration License or Petroleum Exploration Licence that the holders are to inform the relevant ALC of the grant of the Exploration License.
- The Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) will add all ALCs to the DMR's publication MINFO mailing list. MINFO contains information on current mineral, petroleum and coal exploration development projects as well as information on existing applications and granted exploration titles.

### **Value: Job Security**

#### **Agreed**

- There was agreement that the local communities should be recognised in the goal of "No net job loss".
- Establish new employment opportunities, especially for Aboriginal people.

### **Value: Private Land Conservation**

#### **Agreed**

- Delivery of private land conservation incentives should be a community and Government partnership (eg Landcare, Liverpool Plains Management Committee).
- Plantations of salt tolerant native species (non-monoculture, not necessarily for short-term timber return) are one way to assist rehabilitation of areas of high salinity. This would create jobs in planting and maintenance of plantations.
- Delivery of private land conservation incentives must be fully integrated with cultural heritage
- Landowners' fear of land use restrictions arising from their acknowledgment of biodiversity values is an impediment to the achievement of conservation goals on private land.
- Government should fund a private land conservation strategy that:
  - increases financial and other targeted incentives available for long-term conservation by private landholders;
  - enables voluntary purchase of high conservation value private lands in the region, and of leasehold land within State Forests and other Crown lands; and
  - includes an identified component for Aboriginal landowners.

### **Value: Community Vitality**

#### **Agreed**

- Communities must be enhanced for long term viability through improved services, new and value added industries as a result of the assessment process.
- Government funding is required to initiate and support new and value added industries within the region – especially to generate community vitality in small communities.
- Products need to be locally derived and processed to retain \$\$ in communities.

- Small communities need investment from Local, State and Federal governments to increase levels of community vitality. Community vitality would be enhanced through wealth generated through new and value added industries. Government funding is required to provide infrastructure, research and development, marketing and to attract private investment into new and value added industries. This funding would assist progression to self-sufficiency.
- There is also a need to cultivate niche markets as a stepping stone to new income sources. Possible new industries include:
  - quandong
  - nadoo
  - plantations (salt tolerant eucalypts, other species for long term)
  - managing cypress regrowth on private land
  - worm farms
  - ethanol fuel
  - hemp
  - broombush
  - eucalypt oil
  - pharmaceutical oils and medicines
  - bush food
  - native nurseries
  - native flowers
  - timber industry (see Job Security above)
- It is important that, no matter what the outcome, that new and value added industry opportunities be fully optimised.
- Recognise, encourage and fund the management of white cypress regrowth for timber on historically modified agricultural land.
- Enhance regional development through:
  1. Significant investment in ecologically sustainable plantations for timber, firewood and fenceposts on historically cleared land.
  2. the promotion of a regional network of nature based and cultural heritage tourist destinations;
  3. ecologically appropriate tourism development based on new parks and reserves, and on State Forests;
  4. promoting environmental education and scientific research opportunities provided by the region;
  5. enhancing the role of planted forests and woodlands in the control of salinity, carbon absorption, and in biodiversity benefits of local native species
  6. providing employment through ecosystem restoration , ecologically sustainable plantation development and thinning programs;
  7. future services and products provided from improved forest and plantation management programs proposed above;
  8. publicly funded and labour intensive threatened species recovery initiatives.
- Facilitate and encourage small scale, sustainable native crops and forest products on private land that deliver products such as eucalyptus oil, pharmaceutical products and bio-fuels.
- New enterprises based on landscape restoration.

These proposals should be assessed for their economic viability and social benefits before being commenced.

- The group endorses the “Aboriginal Forest Management Works!” funding proposal (8 Sept).
- Western Conservation Alliance proposes that “no cypress quotas be cut for one year to allow timber industry adjustment and new project planning to be phased in”. (source WCA Media release “Parks and Jobs for the west – dated 11 September 2002).

### **Value: Reserve System and Protection of Native Vegetation, Biodiversity & Natural Processes**

#### **Agreed**

- A high proportion of ironbark trees need to be left as habitat values.
- Adequate funding should be made available for management of biodiversity values no matter who manages the land.
- A funding package is needed for research into the importance of understorey and the complexity of forest structure for biodiversity.
- There is a need for a feral animal census (numbers, distribution, preferred habitat), and to implement efficient & comprehensive feral animal and weed control programs across all tenures.
- All stakeholders recognise the values of wilderness areas.
- All reserve outcomes to include the options of Aboriginal Ownership or Joint Management as desired by the Aboriginal Community.
- Provide financial support for conservation management of Travelling Stock Reserves and Crown Reserves.
- Active community involvement in management of isolated small reserves. This would involve funds to allow the contracting of neighbouring landholders or local Aboriginal people to manage weeds, feral animals, fencing and the interface with neighbouring properties.