WTL-JC 6: Reconnecting and Restoring Wetland Systems - Ninds Creek

Restoring and reconnecting the wetland systems throughout the Ninds Creek area will provide significant water quality and ecosystem service benefits. This is a very wet area with extensive existing wetland areas, which provide vital water filtering during periods of high flow.

This strategy delivers on these Regional Themes	Biodiversity	Biosecurity	Coastal Systems	Sustainable Industries	Water
	✓		✓		✓
This strategy delivers on these Strategic Outcomes	Supportive, policies, plans and regulations	Collaborative, adaptive planning and action	Traditional Owner Benefits	Sustained and diverse resourcing	Community stewardship, values and action
		✓			✓

Outcome	Rehabilitating and reconnecting the wetland systems within this area will result in many benefits, including: ▪ Improved water quality in freshwater river systems, in-shore lagoons and coastal and reef systems, including reduced sediment, pesticide and herbicide loads. ▪ Improved adaptability and resilience of our region's waterways to impacts of climate change. ▪ Improved aquatic habitat for fish breeding and movement. ▪ Enhanced social and community benefits through involvement in on-ground activities, resulting in strong community stewardship and ownership of projects. ▪ Increased community awareness, particularly for projects in high profile locations.
Justification	This area is particularly important due to its role in filtering large volumes of water from the Johnstone River during periods of high flow, which are the high pollutant risk times. Mapping has already indicated this area is a high hotspot for DIN. There are only a few landholders within this area and agricultural activities are limited due to waterlogging. Project activities to restore the wetland areas will provide significant improvements to water quality, not just in the local freshwater systems, but also in the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.
Key steps	1) Consult with all relevant stakeholders, including landholders, research organisations, industry, Traditional Owners and government, to identify exact project sites and develop a collaborative plan of action based on priority issues. 2) Develop options and costings for addressing the priority issues. Present results back to relevant stakeholders and agree on a solution. 3) Identify opportunities for funding and implementation, including cash and other contributions and develop a delivery mechanism relevant to the area and issue, which maximises landholder and community involvement and fosters long term stewardship. 4) Implement on ground actions and monitor environmental and capacity building outcomes.
Feasibility considerations	✓ There are already existing wetlands providing some level of function within this section of the landscape, which can be enhanced and rehabilitated. ✓ There are a small number of landholders, so there is potential for the entire sub-catchment to be included. ✓ Agricultural production is not high due to waterlogging, so landholders may be more willing to make land available for project activities. ✗ This is a large scale project which will require a long term commitment and funding to ensure success – difficult for many community groups, given short-term funding arrangements and volunteer succession. ✗ Wetland areas can be difficult to work in and often have poor access, steep, uneven terrain, risk of flooding and crocodiles.