

WTL-HC 5: Stone River Catchment Systems Repair

Restoring the waterways in the Stone River Catchment will reduce sediment and improve water quality flowing into the GBR, as well as provide terrestrial connectivity for the Mahogany Glider and Southern Cassowary.

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	Restoring the waterways in the Stone River Catchment will achieve multiple outcomes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved water quality in freshwater river systems, in-shore lagoons and reef systems, through reduced sediment, pesticide and herbicide loads. ▪ Improved adaptability and resilience of our region’s waterways to impacts of climate change. ▪ Increased habitat and connectivity, benefiting a range of terrestrial species including the Mahogany Glider and Southern Cassowary. ▪ Enhanced social and community benefits through involvement in on-ground activities, resulting in strong community stewardship and ownership of projects. ▪ Reduced bank erosion and sediment loads in waterways and coastal systems. ▪ Increased community awareness, particularly for restoration projects in high profile locations. ▪ Increased recreational and tourism opportunities around waterways. ▪ Providing potential for Traditional Owner involvement and benefits. 				
Justification	While this area is a known hot spot for sediment loads in the Herbert Catchment, there is community support for waterway restoration. We can capitalise on the high level of community support and involvement in waterway restoration projects, by building on existing projects and transferring successful methodology to additional areas. A systematic approach to waterway restoration, based on agreed criteria and priorities, will provide extensive benefits to the health of our waterways. The Stone River catchment is culturally and environmentally significant and may provide opportunities for Traditional Owner involvement.				
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including landholders, research organisations, industry, Traditional Owners and government, develop an action plan based on priority issues for each of the waterways, using the Systems Repair Prioritisation and Community Engagement Toolkit developed by Terrain. 2) 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. 3) Implement on ground actions and monitor environmental and capacity building outcomes. 				
Feasibility considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is already strong community capacity and support to plan and implement successful waterway restoration projects. ✓ There are many supportive landholders and stakeholders willing to contribute to restoration of these waterways. ✓ There has already been some on ground work in this system and landholders are generally well engaged and aware of the issues that erosion and sedimentation cause. ✗ This is a large scale, long term project which may seem overwhelming. It will require ongoing commitment and funding to ensure success – difficult for many community groups, given short term funding arrangements and volunteer succession. ✗ Riparian areas can be difficult to work in and often have poor access, steep, uneven terrain and risk of flooding. ✗ Riverbank stabilisation can be very costly and, in some instances, may require canefarmers to set their crop back from the bank. ✗ We need to be realistic – there is only so much that individuals can take on. 				