

## **Caring for our Country Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan**

**Wet Tropics to Annan River National Park Wildlife Corridor Rehabilitation  
and Lakeland Salvinia Eradication**



## Document review details

*Keep track of your continuous project quality management by using the box below*



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# 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Community Solutions for Managing Natural Resource Challenges in South Cape York Project MERI Plan

The continuous and integrated cycle of **monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement** is referred to as **MERI** in the Australian NRM context.

A project MERI plan articulates all the different aspects of MERI that will be needed and how they will be implemented over the life of the project.

This project MERI plan:

- Guides MERI for the **Community solutions for managing Natural Resource challenges in South Cape York** project of Caring for our Country in accord with the stated Caring for our Country outcomes and targets (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/me/index.html>) and consistent with the Caring for our Country MERI Strategy (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/me/index.html>)
- Provides a base from which to review the progress the project is making towards the agreed Caring for our Country targets and outcomes and from which to learn about successful implementation strategies and to adapt in response to lessons learnt.

## 1.2 Broader MERI Context

This plan is nested within:

- The NRM MERI framework (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/me/index.html>)
- The Caring for our Country Outcomes 2008-2013 (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/index.html>)
- The Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009-10 (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/index.html>)
- The MERI Strategy for Caring for our Country Strategy 2009-13 (<http://www.nrm.gov.au/me/index.html>)

## 2: Scope

### 2.1 Project description

The project operates in a larger environment but must have boundaries that align with the Caring for our Country outcomes and targets as well as within the project budget and resources. The project context is included in the box below.

This project will utilise and build upon local capacity within our community to;

- Fully control an outlier infestation of the Weed of National Significance (Won's) *Salvinia molesta* on Cape York Peninsula and 3ha of Lantana from Wet Tropics WHA riparian areas.
- Increase the recruitment and retention of volunteers in community groups involved in managing natural resources by undertaking community projects consistent with the targets of Caring For Our Country in the region, including riparian rehabilitation, Won's control, training and monitoring.
- Engage the Yuku Baja-Muliku Land Trust Nyungkal Rangers and Certificate II indigenous Conservation and Land Management students to protect Riparian habitat by constructing a 6.5 km cattle exclusion fence around 5 km of riparian vegetation along the Wet tropics to Annan river National park wildlife corridor.
- Engage Indigenous Rangers to protect the Wet tropics to Annan river National park wildlife corridor from wildfire by constructing a fire breaks and by developing a fire management plan for the Mt Amos Valley then working with all landholders to undertake fire management.
- Engage Indigenous Rangers to propagating up to 4000 native species from seeds collected from local provenance for next wet seasons riparian revegetation works

### 2.2 Project methodology

The **Wet Tropics to Annan River National Park wildlife corridor rehabilitation and Lakeland Salvinia eradication** project will utilise and build upon local capacity within our community to deliver targets for the following 2 subprojects using the following methodology:

**“Lakeland Salvinia Eradication”** In 2008 South Cape York Catchments in association with the National Aquatic Won's Coordinator, Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Project, Biosecurity Queensland and the Lakeland Community developed a highly effective methodology to control 250 ha of Salvinia in the Honey Dam. Activities included containment booms, biological control, chemical control, manual removal and follow up surveys. These activities are proven, effective and feasible. For this project we will use these same methods to control Salvinia in Bullhead creek. We have the necessary equipment, knowledge and appropriate licenses to deliver a successful outcome. We will integrate weed control and community engagement targets by having the Laura Rangers actively undertaking Salvinia control works. Proposed activities are strategic because Salvinia in Lakeland is an outlier Weed of National Significance infestation on Cape York that threatens the values of 3 nationally listed wetlands.

The **Wet Tropics to Annan River National Park Wildlife Corridor Rehabilitation** project will work with Indigenous rangers to improve the riparian condition of Scrubby creek by; fencing out unmanaged cattle, controlling Lantana, undertaking fire management and by revegetating degraded areas. In addition monitoring (and training) activities will engage Indigenous rangers, schools, and community to demonstrate the effectiveness of this project and to raise awareness of the importance of connectivity in the landscape. These activities will be hosted by indigenous and community groups and supported by guests specialists. Activities undertaken are appropriate for our community because they are projects people are passionate about undertaking and were identified by the community and Traditional owners. This program is feasible because participants want to see their project succeed and now have the opportunity and capacity to make a difference, consequently community follow up will ensure that the benefits of these activities will continue after the life of this project. This program is strategic because it increases the number and type of people involved in NRM activities (by meeting the targets of increasing community knowledge and skills, increasing participation in natural resource management and engaging the indigenous communities). It will continue to inform and build capacity for the community to effectively coordinate and oversee NRM in our region.

## 2.3 Caring for our Country targets and outcomes

Table 1: Caring for our Country targets to which the **Community Solutions for Managing Natural Resource Challenges in South Cape York** project will contribute (as per relevant Business plan)

| Caring for our Country Target/s                      | Funded Activity to be undertaken  | Expected contribution of project  |
|--|---|---|
| Reducing the impact of Weeds of National Significant | <p>Fully control an outlier infestation of the weed of National Significance <i>Salvinia molesta</i> on Cape York Peninsula.</p> <p>Three ha of Lantana removed from riparian corridor works.</p> | <p>329 ha of Salvinia fully controlled in the Honey Dam and Bullhead Creek, Lakeland</p> <p>5x Laura Rangers engaged</p> <p>5x Nyungkal Rangers</p> <p>5x Yuku Baja Rangers</p> <p>2x Indigenous/TO's employed to control 3 ha of Lantana</p> |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Managing World Heritage areas</b></p> | <p>Improve connectivity in the landscape by rehabilitating 300 ha of riparian vegetation corridors between the Wet Tropics WHA and the Annan River National Park.</p>                                   | <p>Address critical key threats to 300 ha employing;</p> <p>2x flora surveys</p> <p>2x Indigenous ranger groups<br/>10x people engaged</p> <p>2x QPWS fire regimes</p> <p>1x Rural Fire brigade</p> <p>1x community volunteers</p>   |
| <p><b>Increasing native habitat</b></p>     | <p>Increase the Native Habitat of Scrubby and Trevethan Creeks</p>  | <p>3ha Lantana weed control 10 people engaged</p> <p>5x Revegetation events 3ha of priority sites revegetated</p> <p>2x seed collections 10 x people engaged</p> <p>2x propagation events 10 x people engaged</p> <p>1x fencing event 5km riparian fenced (6.5 Km of fencing) 10 x people engaged</p> <p>Fire management 10x engaged</p> <p>Priority Fire breaks constructed</p> |
| <p><b>Indigenous participation</b></p>      | <p>Nyungkal and Yuka Baja Rangers engaged in works associated with the Wet Tropics/ Annan River corridor.</p> <p>Laura Rangers will continue their involvement in the Salvinia eradication Project.</p> | <p>1x fencing training event 5x people engaged</p> <p>2x TRAC riparian condition monitoring assessments of Scrubby Creek 10x people engaged</p> <p>1x fire management 5x people engaged</p>  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>2x seed collection event 5x people engaged</p> <p>2x propagation events 8x people engaged</p> <p>3x Revegetation events 10x people engaged</p> <p>3x Fauna surveys 5x people engaged</p> <p>Continue to monitor Honey Dam and Control Salvinia in Bullhead Creek and the Laura River</p> |
|--|--|---|

## 2.4 Users of the Plan

Table 2 shows the primary users or the key people who will use this MERI plan to organise data collection, analysis and reporting. The Secondary users are people who may benefit from understanding and being aware of this MERI plan.

**Table 2: Key users for this MERI plan**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Primary users: who will reflect and adapt</b>          | <p><b>South Cape York Catchments Committee</b></p> <p><b>SCYC Coordinator Jason Carroll</b></p> <p><b>SCYC project officers Sue Marsh and Sam Hobbs</b></p>  |
| <b>Secondary users: who need to be aware of this plan</b> | <p><b>South Cape York Catchments members</b></p> <p><b>Laura Rangers – Edward Less</b></p> <p><b>Head Ranger Queensland Parks and Wildlife - Tina Alderson</b></p> <p><b>Yuku Baja-Muliku Rangers - Mick Hale</b></p> <p><b>Nyungkal Rangers – Marilyn Wallace</b></p> |

## 2.5 Key evaluation questions Table 3

| Key Evaluation Questions   | Other-evaluation questions ( <i>sub questions or questions relating to assumptions in the program logic</i> )   | Monitoring methods and evidence sources ( <i>including information on what key measures/indicators will be used</i> )  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>EFFECTIVENESS -</b>   |   |  |
| <p><b>To what extent have the planned activities achieved? Why or why not?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the planned activities contributed to a reduction of the threats posed by Salvinia to the wetlands of Lakefield National Park?</li> <li>• How many hectares of Salvinia have been controlled? How many Indigenous participants were involved in the control program? How many partnerships were formed?</li> <li>• Has the works undertaken at Scrubby creek increased/enhanced the native habitat?</li> <li>• Did we effectively engage and support indigenous groups to undertake NRM through on ground works and training activities?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular follow up surveys of control sites</li> <li>• Photo points</li> <li>• GIS Mapping</li> <br/> <li>• Record number of participants, hectares of revegetated, hectares of weeds controlled, and biophysical surveys undertaken</li> <br/> <li>• TRAC index increase and Wildlife survey diversity increase</li> <br/> <li>• Number participated, feedback forms, informal discussions</li> </ul> |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>What other activities/strategies that might be more effective?</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were any of the activities ineffective and why and what might work better?</li> <li>• Which activities were the most effective and why?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnings from steering committee meeting discussion and presentations</li> <li>• Results from monitoring analysed</li> </ul>  |
| <b>IMPACT</b>   |   |   |
| <b>What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the Indigenous and community members learn anything at the training events?</li> <li>• Did we rehabilitate/protect riparian sites?</li> <li>• Did we fully control Salvinia a Weed of National Significance on Cape York Peninsula?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback/evaluation forms distributed and general discussion after events to determine uptake of knowledge</li> <li>• Determine which stakeholders were engaged and what partnerships resulted by post event debrief</li> <li>• Regular follow up surveys at project sites – interpret results</li> <li>• Follow up Salvinia surveys</li> <li>• Photo points</li> <li>• GIS Mapping</li> </ul> |
| <b>To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the project interventions?</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did we have the impact we were aiming for?</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all project outcomes by MERI committee</li> </ul>  |
| <b>APPROPRIATENESS</b>  |   |   |
| <b>To what extent are the activities/ investment strategies proving useful in engaging and influencing the targeted stakeholders?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project engage the appropriate people to be involved in the project activities?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of feedback data.</li> <li>• Count the number of Indigenous and community groups that were engaged to deliver project outcomes and on ground works</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Which demographic of our community adopted projects and why?</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What community projects lead to the greatest adoption by participants?</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback/evaluation forms distributed on completion of project and if possible again 2 years later.</li> </ul>   |

| EFFICIENCY   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>To what extent has the project attained the highest value out of available resources?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities used resources more efficiently than others, and what can be learnt from these projects?</li> <li>• Did the project planning lead to efficient use of resources?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project plan and review, budget reports, staff timesheets, project evaluation meetings</li> <li>• Project completed on time and on budget</li> </ul>                               |
| <b>What other ways could we invest for greater return?</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could we have run projects differently to achieve a greater return on investment?</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning's of current and past projects documented</li> <li>• Formal discussion at SCYC meetings</li> <li>• Continue investigating opportunities for kind contributions</li> </ul> |

## 2.6 Workplan and budget

MERI workplan and budget for **Wet Tropics to Annan River National Park wildlife corridor rehabilitation and Lakeland Salvinia eradication** project.

| Monitoring  |   |  |   |                          |         |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------------|---------|
| Measure   | Method of collection  | Timeframe ( <i>When &amp; how often?</i> )                         | Responsibility ( <i>Who?</i> )                    | Duration ( <i>Days</i> ) | Cost \$ |
| Ha of all on-ground works undertaken including, sites rehabilitated and weed control.<br>Follow up surveys of Salvinia site | Collection of GPS and GIS and photo point data, visual survey undertaken by all control staff, Laura rangers and community volunteers | At the beginning and end of the project and bi weekly for Salvinia | Project staff<br>Indigenous rangers<br>Volunteers | 40                       | \$5,330 |
| The number of community volunteers and Indigenous rangers engaged in delivery of awareness raising and on ground projects   | Contacts database records and project reports   | At every event   | Project Manager                                   | 1                        | \$410   |
| Effectiveness of delivery and value of support to Indigenous rangers and how they value our support                         | Evaluate feedback forms, informal discussions with Elders and Traditional Owners  | Before, during and after project works                             | Project staff                                     | 2                        | \$500   |
| TRARC survey (flora) corridor site  | Field assessment  | March 2011   | Project staff                                     | 3                        | \$2820  |
| Wildlife survey corridor site   | Field assessment  | November 2010 & November 2011                                      | Project staff                                     | 6                        | \$2340  |
| Evaluation  |   |  |   |                          |         |

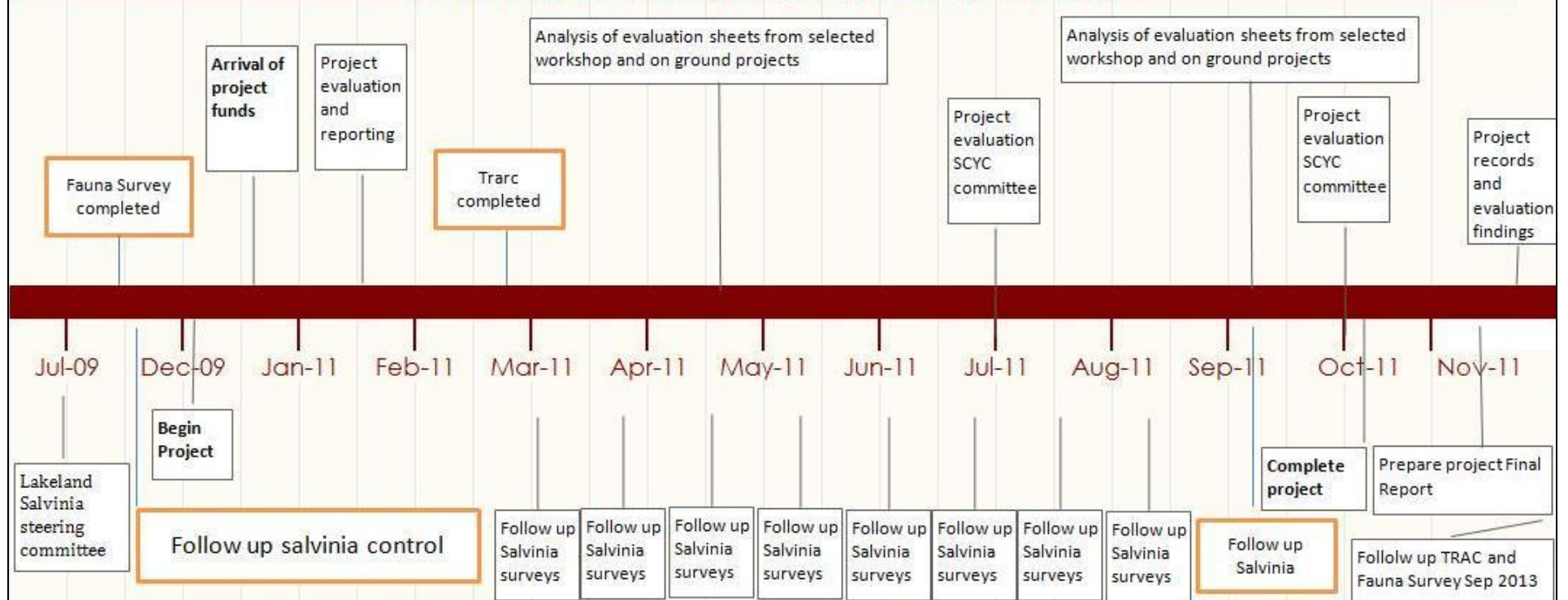
| <b>Evaluation activity</b>  | <b>Participants</b>   | <b>Timeframe (When?)</b> | <b>Responsibility (Who?)</b> | <b>Duration (Days)</b> |        |
|---|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Analysis of evaluation sheets from selected workshop and on ground projects | SCYC committee  | Quarterly monthly        | Project staff                | 1                      | \$410  |
| Lakeland Salvinia steering committee  | National Aquatic weeds Coordinator<br>QPW<br>SCYC committee<br>CYWAFAP<br>Community members<br>Indigenous rangers | August 2011              | Project Manager              | 3                      | \$1230 |
| Project evaluation during SCYC general meetings                             | SCYC committee  | Bi monthly               | Project Manager              | 3                      | \$1230 |
| <b>Reporting</b>  |   |                          |                              |                        |        |
| <b>Report</b>   | <b>Information sources</b>  | <b>Timeframe (When?)</b> | <b>Responsibility (Who?)</b> | <b>Duration (Days)</b> |        |
| Prepare Performance Report to Aust Govt                                     | Project records and evaluation findings   | Every 6 months           | Project Manager              | 4                      | \$1640 |
| Prepare SCYC project communications material                                | Project records, photos, Video clips  | On-going                 | Project Manager              | 2                      | \$820  |
| Prepare performance reports to SCYC committee                               | Project records and evaluation findings and performance reports   | Bi monthly               | Project Manager              | 2                      | \$820  |
| Prepare project Final Report  | Project records and evaluation findings   | July 2011                | Project Manager              | 3                      | \$1230 |
| <b>Improvement (acting on the story)</b>                                    |   |                          |                              |                        |        |

| Activity                                     | Methodology for capturing and using lessons learned   | Timeframe (When?)         | Responsibility (Who?)           | Duration (Days) |                 |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Review MERI Plan                             | Meeting notes and incorporate changes into project MERI plan  | June 2011                 | Project Team and SCYC committee | 1               | \$1900          |
| Review corridor project outcomes             | SCYC committee, presentation of field data  | June 2011                 | Project Team and SCYC committee | 1               | \$1900          |
| Lakeland Salvinia Steering committee meeting | Steering committee meeting in 2011. Minutes of discussions recorded with monthly email updates for committee comments | Monthly updates via email | Project Staff                   | 1               | \$1510          |
| <b>Total MERI cost</b>                       |   |                           |                                 |                 | <b>\$19,790</b> |



## 2.7 Timeline of Planned MERI activities

## Timeline of scheduled MERI activities



## 2.8 Reports

Table 4: reporting requirements

| Type of report                                  | Requirements   | Recipient | Timeframe  |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| <b>MANDATORY CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY REPORTS</b> |  |           |  |
| Interim progress report                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Results to date against targets using Caring for our Country reporting template</li> <li>▪ Summary of expenses</li> <li>▪ For the period July to 30 November of each year that the project is funded</li> </ul>   | AG        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With in 60 days of the 30 November for each year of the project</li> </ul>  |
| Annual progress report                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Results to date against targets using Caring for our Country reporting template</li> <li>▪ For the period December to 30 June of each year that the project is funded</li> <li>▪ Financial year funding acquittal for period July to June for each year that the project is funded</li> </ul>   | AG        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With in 60 days of the 30 June each year of the project</li> </ul>          |
| Final project performance report                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final compilation and assessment of all the Project data/results (<i>May include information from mid-year reports, annual reports, and other research reports</i>)</li> <li>▪ Summative conclusion on achievements biophysical and /or social, cultural economic or environmental change that has occurred.</li> <li>▪ Final project financial acquittal for the whole of the projects life</li> </ul> | AG        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With in 60 days of the specified completion date for the project</li> </ul> |
| Milestone report                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mandatory report specified against a milestone</li> </ul>   | AG        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As specified in Deed of Agreement</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>OTHER REPORTS</b>                            |  |           |  |
| Regular updates to SCYC management committee    |  |           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly</li> </ul>  |
| Salvinia steering committees                    |  |           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2011 + monthly updates via email</li> </ul>                                 |

## 3. Program Logic

### 3.1 Assumptions within the logic and managing risk

The hierarchy at figure 1 and the rationale rest on some particular assumptions about how change will occur throughout the levels of outcomes over time. The assumptions are listed at the relevant level of the logic model along the right hand side.

**Table 5: Managing risk**

| Assumptions   | Likelihood of assumption being wrong<br>1–5 (1 = rare, 5 = almost certain) | Consequences for longer-term outcomes if assumption is wrong<br>1–5 (1 = extreme, 5 = insignificant) | Key evidence to support this  | Assumption will be tested    |
|---|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| We assume that community volunteers and indigenous rangers will want to be involved in this project           | 1  | 1  | SCYC has spoken to all stakeholders prior to this project and has received a very positive response                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| We assume that our strategic control plan for Salvinia in Cape York will be effective                         | 1  | 1  | SCYC has proved it's effectiveness in the fight against Salvinia in the Honey Dam and bullhead Creek                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| We assume that on ground projects will result in an increase of community knowledge and skills and engagement | 3  | 3  | SCYC has a solid background in delivering targeted, appropriate projects in our region that deliver successful outcomes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| We assume that the wildlife corridor project will result in positive biodiversity outcomes for the system     | 2  | 3  | SCYC has delivered a similar projects that has delivered positive biodiversity outcomes                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

## 5. Improvement

### 5.1 Reviewing the MERI plan

Regular reflection on data, strategies, management processes and progress informs an adaptive management approach for continuous quality improvement of the project.

Table 7 provides a model for the review of the MERI plan, associated program logic(s) and for recording changes to achieve improvements in project implementation.

Table 7 MERI Plan Review Schedule

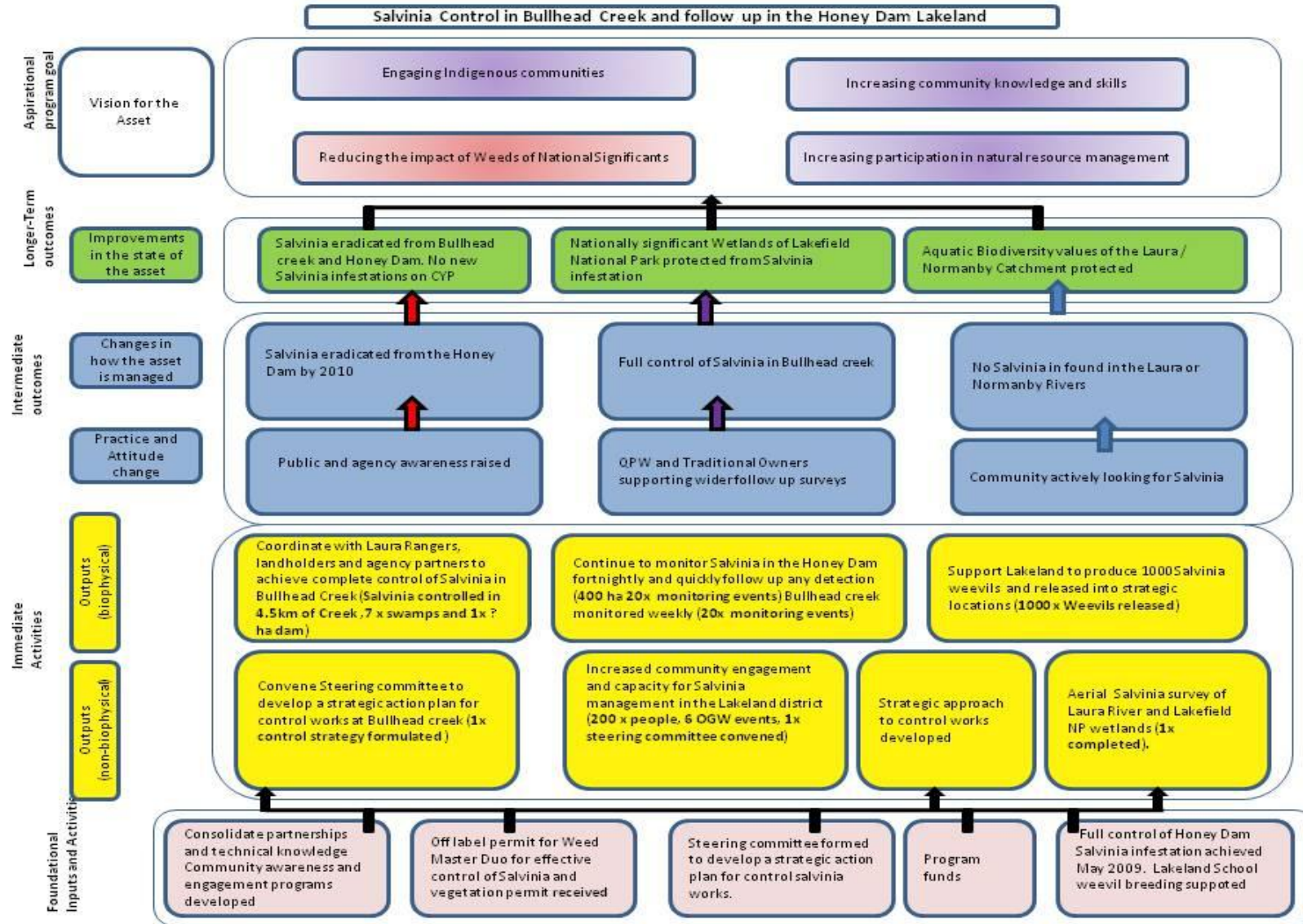
| Date | Participants                            | Type of review          | Resources/materials required                   | Agreed adaptive management strategy        | Communicate results                                 |
|------|---|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| 2011 | SCYC executive<br>SCYC project officers | Learning and adaptation | Meeting room<br>Transport for site inspections | Critical reflection                        | Emailed report to SCYC members and project officers |
| 2011 | Lakeland Salvinia<br>Steering committee | Learning and adaptation | Meeting room<br>Transport for site inspections | Provide strategic and operational guidance | Emailed report to project stakeholders              |

### 5.3 Communicating results

Below is the communication strategy that will be used by SCYC to deliver the **Wet Tropics to Annan River National Park wildlife corridor rehabilitation and Lakeland Salvinia eradication** project.

| Strategy  | Target Audience                                 | By whom         | When             |
|---|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Project up dates and NRM information  | Emailed to SCYC members and interested people   | Project Manager | Monthly          |
| Project updates   | SCYC members and stakeholders                   | Project Manager | Bi monthly       |
| Press releases in Cooktown Local news                                       | Community members who read the local newspapers | Project staff   | Monthly          |
| Collection of Multi media images of project works for up loading to website | SCYC members and stakeholders                   | Project Manager | When appropriate |
| ABC Local radio   | General community                               | Project officer | When appropriate |
| Attend meetings of stakeholder groups                                       | Community-based groups in CYP                   | Project manager | As required      |
| Displays at community events  | General community                               | Project staff   | As requested     |
| Involvement in forums organised externally to the project                   | Specialised groups                              | Project manager | As requested     |
| Develop an appropriate process to manage feedback from the community        | Community                                       | CYPPMAG         | Ongoing          |
| Maintain SCYC.com.au web site   | General community                               | Project staff   | Ongoing          |

# Attachment 1



# Attachment 2

