

## **PLANNING POLICY NO. 1**

### ***Preparation of Ecological Assessment Reports and Environmental Management Plans***

#### **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this Planning Scheme Policy is to:

- encourage more ecologically sustainable development;
- outline existing ecological information about a site in order to inform the development assessment process;
- provide direction on how to minimise the adverse impacts caused by development and to maximise the beneficial impacts of the development; and
- provide guidance on the preparation and assessment of ecological assessment reports and environmental management plans.

##### *1.1 Application of the Policy*

The provisions of this policy apply to any assessable development where the application and / or proposal is to be supported by any of the following:

- an Ecological Assessment Report
- an Environmental Management Plan.

#### **2.0 Preparation of an Ecological Assessment Report**

An Ecological Assessment Report is a tool used to provide detailed information about the proposal, the potential ecological impacts of the proposal and the measures proposed to avoid or minimise those potential adverse impacts. As a result each Ecological Assessment Report is specific to the individual proposal.

##### *2.1 Report format and content*

Where a development site is subject to the provisions of this policy, the proponent is strongly encouraged to meet with Council Officers prior to lodgement of the application, this will assist in determining and clarifying the relevant items, identified below, to be addressed in the report. As a general guide the following format and contents description indicates the items required to be detailed:

- 1. Title and Address of Proposed Development**
- 2. Qualifications of Author**

The Ecological Assessment Report should be prepared by a suitably qualified person. References and experience of the



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author (such as other similar reports prepared by the consultant or consultants) should also be included.



**3. State Interests**

The report should address and reference any applicable State Planning Policy, such as SPP 1/92, SPP 1/02, SPP 2/02, SPP 1/03 and associated Guidelines. .

**4. Overview**

The aim of the overview is to provide a clear and concise summary of what is discussed in the report, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the reports detailed assessment of the proposals potential impacts and measures to minimise the potential adverse impacts. The following may assist in conveying this information.

- *Background and scope of proposal* - summarise the proposed development including the purpose and objectives, addressing the construction and operation of the project and associated infrastructure developments
- *Existing environment* - summarise the features of the physical, biophysical and built environment relating to the proposed development and associated infrastructure
- *Potential impacts of the proposed development* - summarise the main potential impacts of the project (direct, indirect and cumulative), both beneficial and detrimental, and any alternatives, on the existing environment
- *Impact monitoring, protection and management procedures* - summarise the safeguards, standards and management procedures proposed to protect the environment, including environmental monitoring and the methods proposed to ameliorate or alleviate the potential impacts
- *Conclusions* - summarise the key strategies and measures to the proposal to address any adverse environmental impacts

**5. Background and scope of proposal**

- Outline in detail the purpose and objectives of the proposed development
- Discuss the following to illustrate the background of the proposal:
  - The need for the proposed development or works
  - The history of the proposal's formulation
  - Any alternatives considered and reasons for choosing the preferred option
  - Action already taken to minimise potential adverse impacts
- Provide a description of the project, addressing:
  - The precise nature and scale of works
  - The location and site requirements
  - The plant and/or building layout, size and design and the development staging program
  - The range and quantity of materials to be produced



- The production process
- Possible waste discharges
- On-site works and operations
- Off-site works and operations
- Transport systems
- Infrastructure requirements (water, sewerage, energy, waste disposal)
- The workforce
- Project life and time scale for completion
- The possible future expansion of associated development/works
- Use of resources:
  - detail the implications of the proposal for the use of natural resources, including the quantity and source of water, raw materials and energy to be used

## 6. Existing Environment

The existing environment of the site and surrounding areas should be described in sufficient detail to allow the ecological impacts of the proposal to be accurately and adequately assessed, and to provide a baseline against which predicted and future changes can be established. This section shall address features such as, the physical, biophysical and built environment relating to the proposed development and associated infrastructure. The following provides a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list of elements, which may need to be discussed to enable an adequate assessment on potential ecological impacts.

- Site and locality
- Physical Features including:
  - Landform, Geology and Geomorphology
  - Hydrology (surface water and groundwater)
- Climate
- Water Quality
- Air quality
- Noise environment
- Coastal processes (if applicable)
- Waterways, including:
  - Details of adjacent waterways
  - Nature of the waterway (fresh / salt water)
  - Riparian vegetation
  - Existing disturbances
  - Plans showing tidal levels or banks
- Ecological status/significance including:
  - Types, structure and location of vegetation associations on the site and surrounding areas, including measures of foliage cover, health and natural regeneration
  - Species of flora and fauna (aquatic and terrestrial, native and introduced), weed and pest species, including the



- location and abundance of each species, especially the presence of rare or endangered species
- Conservation significance – local, regional and national status
- Special ecological values of the site such as refuge habitat, a breeding habitat, a corridor for wildlife movement and use by migratory species
- Social Cultural and Economic Characteristics
- Indigenous and cultural history, including consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency Indigenous sites database and Traditional owners regarding potential impacts to cultural heritage values
- Landscape Character and Visual Amenity
- Infrastructure, addressing items such as:
  - Transport
  - Water supply
  - Effluent Treatment and Disposal
  - Solid Waste
  - Power and Communications

Please note, where an information request requires a cultural heritage survey to be submitted for assessment, it is recommended the survey be undertaken in consultation with the relevant Indigenous owners and by a cultural heritage practitioner under a permit issued by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the *Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act 1987*.

#### **7. Potential impacts of the development on the existing environment**

Identify and detail the nature of any potential impacts, including cumulative impacts of the development on the existing environment including joint resolution of conflicts between economic, social and environmental impacts. These may be adverse or beneficial, direct or indirect, short or long term or incremental and are to be considered for both the construction and operation phases of the development. Detail any irreversible commitment of resources that would be involved if the proposed development is implemented. Discussion on the potential impacts of the development on the existing environment should include potential impacts on:

- Bio/Physical Features including:
  - Geology and geomorphology
  - Hydrology (surface and groundwater)
- Ecological status/significance
- Air quality
- Water Quality
- Noise levels
- Coastal processes (if applicable)
- Waterways, including:
  - Proposed disturbance to waterways
  - Reasons for the disturbance



- Disturbance of any marine or riparian vegetation
- Infrastructure
- Safety & Risk Assessment including:
  - Potential events
  - Safety program

**8. Impact monitoring, protection, risk management and post development management procedures**

An environmental management plan should be prepared for the development to outline measures to maintain or monitor potential impacts of a proposal (refer to Section 3.0 of this policy for detail on an environmental management plan).

**9. Consultation**

The applicant/consultant should consult with relevant interest groups and parties likely to be affected by the proposal, and issues generated should be documented along with any proposed measures to address these issues.

**10. References**

- List other reference material and literature used
- List authorities consulted and contributors to the report
- Cross-reference the reference material in the text to allow easier access to information

**11. Appendices**

- Include detailed technical information collected through the investigation, and
- Include relevant documents or correspondence from Government Authorities.

**3.0 Environmental Management Plans**

An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) seeks to ensure that the potential impacts of development on the environment are adequately controlled. An EMP is a written description of what levels of environmental impact are intended to be achieved or maintained and how it is proposed to achieve or maintain them. This can include construction, operational and decommissioning stages of a development. EMP's will vary for each site or location based on the different characteristics and issues for each proposal. The EMP allows the Council to assess how the issues associated with a proposal on site will be managed to maintain or enhance its environmental values.

The range of issues that may be addressed in an EMP include, but is not limited to, the following:



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- Acid Sulphate Soil;
- Air quality;
- Biting insects;
- Buffer area management;
- Building/structure conservation or retention;
- Bushfire risk management;
- Energy efficiency and management;
- Erosion and sediment control;
- Land stability;
- Loss of topsoil and associated dust problems;
- Management of activities and events, including monitoring and corrective action;
- Management of the impacts of land uses on surrounding sites;
- Natural and cultural heritage preservation/management;
- Noise control;
- Rehabilitation/landscaping;
- Rehabilitation of sites;
- Remnant Vegetation;
- Resource and waste management;
- Stormwater management;
- Vegetation management;
- Visual amenity;
- Water quality/waterway health;
- Weed control; and
- Wetlands.

#### **Essential components** of an EMP are:

- Identify all aspects of the project that require environmental management;
- Establishment of agreed performance criteria in relation to environmental and social impacts;
- Detailed practical and achievable prevention, minimisation and mitigation strategies (including design standards) for controlling environmental impacts of the proposal at specific sites;
- Details of the proposed monitoring of the effectiveness of remedial measures against the agreed performance criteria based on legislative requirements and government policies. The frequency of monitoring for each parameter and proposed location of monitoring sites should be shown to allow consideration of monitoring in risk assessment;
- Detail the features of alternatives investigated and the reasons for choosing the preferred option;
- Identify the authority and their responsibility for implementing management measures during both construction and operational stages of a proposal;
- Timing (milestones) of environmental management initiatives;
- Reporting requirements and auditing responsibilities for meeting environmental performance criteria;
- Establish procedures for monitoring and reporting incidents;



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- Detail courses of action (and responsibility) for responding to incidents or non-compliance and emergency events which may be detailed or arise; and
- Corrective actions to rectify any deviation from performance standards.

The following provides a guide to the type of information that might be included in an EMP and how it could be structured.

**SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FORMAT**

**Introduction**

- Description of the development proposal;
- The need for the EMP in relation to the development; and
- Structure and scope.

**AIMS OF THE EMP**

- Provide a framework for practically addressing and monitoring the significant environmental impacts of the proposal;
- Compliance with legislative requirements and government policies; and
- Evidence that the works and operations are being conducted in an environmentally responsible manner.

Identification of Environmental Issues or Environmentally Impacting Activities and Associated Management Actions

For each issue or environmentally impacting activity outline the following:

- Policy for addressing the issue/activity;
- Performance criteria;
- Implementation strategy;
- Monitoring program; and
- Details of how reporting will influence mitigation measures and how reporting is to take place.

