



Australian Government

Australia's National Programme of
Action for the Protection of the Marine
Environment from Land-Based Activities

October 2006



case study 9: world wide fund for nature australia

World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF) is campaigning for control of land-based pollution sources in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area catchments. Its view is that a mix of new regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms are needed.

WWF is also working on wetlands law reform. In Queensland the organisation is considering if an Environment Protection Plan is needed to regulate activities that impact on wetlands. A summary report has just been produced – 'A case for Queensland wetlands law reform' and is available from the WWF website. The full report is available on request.

WWF is represented on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Water Quality Reef Advisory Committee. WWF staff also serve on a variety of committees around Australia and have partnerships with stakeholders (eg landholders, representative bodies) that aim to improve land and river management. However improving water quality is generally a secondary benefit behind other conservation outcomes.

A key new area of national policy for WWF is the abolition of ocean sewage outfalls in the medium term.

WWF is associated with a number of activities around Australia where participants are working to implement better land use practices that will benefit downstream aquatic and marine environments. In Western Australia, WWF has a project called *Wetland Watch*, which works with landholders in the Swan Catchment to encourage uptake of best practice management to protect and restore wetlands. This is a non-regulatory approach relying on grants and incentives to implement outcomes. As part of the *Wetland Watch* project, monitoring of wetland health is undertaken.

WWF also works with landholders as part of the *South-west Australian Ecoregion Initiative*, which again seeks to improve landholder practice to produce conservation outcomes, including in riparian areas.

WWF has a position based in Darwin that works in the Kimberley on wetlands conservation. This position works with traditional owners and landholders to guide the protection of wetlands. WWF also is represented on the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Wetlands Protection Program Reference Group, which assesses funding proposals for wetlands restoration projects. WWF recently commissioned the Queensland Environmental Defenders organisation to investigate opportunities for law reform to better protect Queensland wetlands.

The organisation occasionally commissions desktop studies to help formulate new policy. In June 2005, for example WWF funded a desktop study to identify conservation priorities for the biodiversity of Australia's Oceans. One of the priority strategies of this project reviewed Australian land-based sources of marine pollution and focussed on action priorities.

While WWF has no specific budget allocation for control of land-based sources of marine pollution, the *Wetland Watch* program employs two staff. Other areas of WWF's work in land management (advocacy, policy development and developing partnerships) have potential aquatic and marine environment benefits and at a rough estimate would employ two full-time equivalents.