

Wet Tropics Biodiversity Planning Assessment (BPA) Version 1.1

INFORMATION SHEET

The Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) has commenced a Biodiversity Planning Assessment (BPA) for the Wet Tropics (WET) bioregion using the Biodiversity Assessment and Mapping Methodology (BAMM) in conjunction with the Wet Tropic Management Authority (WTMA). This is the first time such an assessment has been undertaken for the bioregion.

The Wet Tropics bioregion is part of an internationally recognised global biodiversity hotspot extending from the Wet Tropics to northern New South Wales. Whilst rainforest is the predominant vegetation in the bioregion there are a number of other vegetation types including open woodlands and melaleuca swamps. The bioregion contains significant numbers and diversity of flora and fauna and especially species which are threatened and/or endemic. The World Heritage Area (which covers 45% of the bioregion) contains a range of World Heritage values such as important habitat for threatened species, and significant ecological, biological and evolutionary processes.

Even though 45% of the bioregion is in the World Heritage Area, there is a strong need to prioritise conservation values across the whole landscape. This will assist with planning within the World Heritage Area as part of the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan. The results will also assist with decision-making in areas subject to increasing development pressure especially around existing population centres on the lowlands. Therefore the assessment will cover the entire bioregion.

BPAs are focussed on assessing conservation values. Other values such as tourism or indigenous cultural heritage are not assessed, however indigenous groups will be consulted as part of the expert panel process to assist with identifying areas of significant conservation value.

The assessment will be based on version 10 of the regional ecosystem mapping. In addition, the assessment will incorporate the significant number of threatened and priority species records for the bioregion. Values identified by the relevant Aquatic Conservation Assessments (ACA) expert panels will be reviewed and incorporated where appropriate. The final BPA will also include any available and approved methodological updates to BAMM.

Expert panels are expected to be run before the end of April 2018 with the final BPA released by the end of November 2018.

For more information please see the links at the end of this information sheet.



What is BAMB?

The Biodiversity Assessment and Mapping Methodology (BAMB) has been developed to provide a consistent approach for assessing biodiversity values at the landscape scale in Queensland. It is being used by DES to generate Biodiversity Planning Assessments (BPAs) for each of Queensland's bioregions.

The methodology (Figure 2) has application for identifying areas with various levels of significance solely for biodiversity reasons. These include threatened ecosystems or species, large tracts of habitat in good condition, ecosystem diversity, landscape context and connection, and buffers to wetlands or other types of habitat important for the maintenance of biodiversity or ecological processes.

The methodology:

- provides a consistent approach for assessing relative biodiversity values at the landscape scale,
- presents raw and synthesised spatial information about biodiversity to a broad range of potential users,
- aims to optimise the use of existing data and information,
- uses existing Regional Ecosystem (vegetation) mapping created by the Qld Herbarium, and
- generates BPAs for each bioregion.

BPA applications

A BPA is the result of applying BAMB to a particular bioregion. BPAs can be used by DES or WTMA staff, other government departments, local governments, NRM bodies or members of the community to advise a range of planning and decision-making processes. For example:

- Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES),
- determining priorities for protection, regulation or rehabilitation of terrestrial ecosystems,
- development assessment,
- local and regional planning processes,
- contributing to impact assessment of large-scale development.

Assessments conducted to date

BAMB was initially developed in 2002 and since this time, has been used to assess biodiversity values of all Queensland bioregions, except the Wet Tropics and Northwest highlands. (Figure 3).

Accessing BPA results

Assessment of biodiversity values at the bioregional scale.

<http://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/biodiversity/planning/>

Search for "biodiversity planning assessment" at QSpatial.

<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au>

BPA results can be viewed through the Queensland Globe.

<https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/>

The results are also available through Biomaps.

<http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/biomaps/>

Queries to biodiversity.planning@des.qld.gov.au

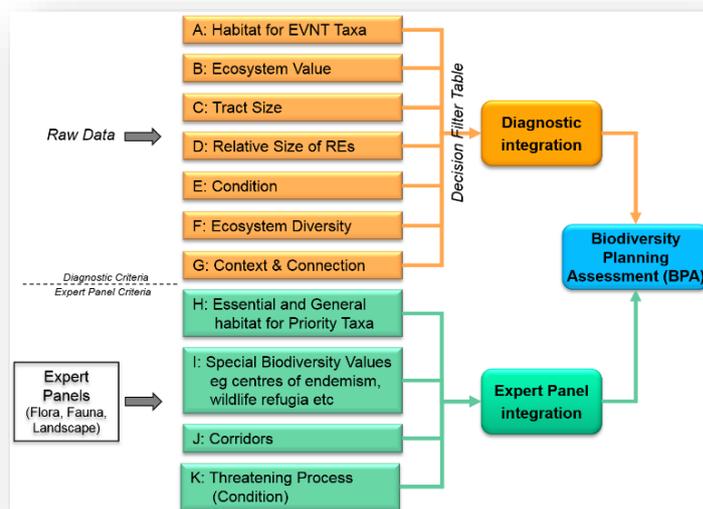


Figure 2 BAMB

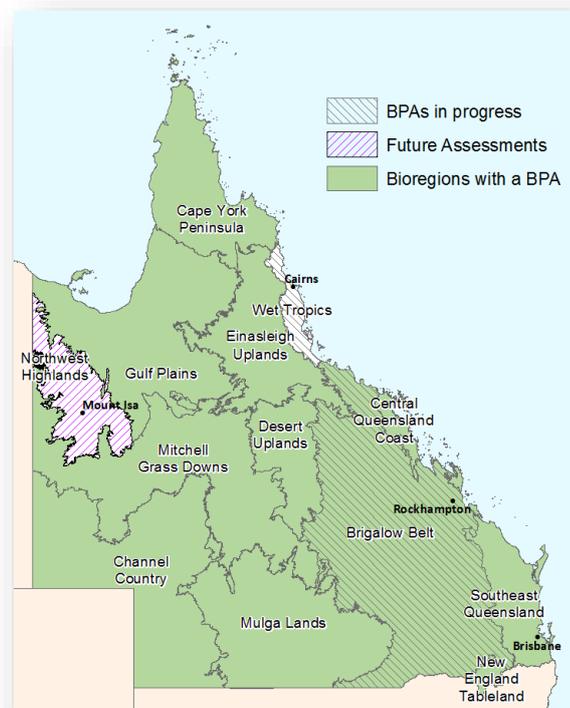


Figure 3 BPA assessment and release status