

R-CM 6: Future Expertise in Invasive Species

Develop a region-wide succession plan for ensuring the retention of technical skills and knowledge in the region (initially related to invasive species, but could be expanded to NRM in general).

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	<p>A region-wide succession plan aimed at retaining technical skills and knowledge will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increased pool of professionals that are available for advising on a wide range of topics related to tackling invasive species (as a starting point, with the possibility for expansion to other aspects of NRM). ▪ The capture of a wide range of existing skills and knowledge currently available within the sector. ▪ Professionals already within, or entering the sector, have access to, and make use of, tools and processes for increasing their skills and knowledge.
Justification	<p>The Wet Tropics has attracted professionals in this area for decades and there is an enormous amount of expertise, skills and knowledge already within the region. It is critical to make sure that we don't lose this expertise, and that we are building the next generation of experts and professionals in this area. With people retiring, leaving the area or passing away, knowledge is lost, and the wheel can be constantly reinvented as a consequence. Systematic but innovative ways of capturing, storing and sharing that expertise is essential.</p>
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Undertake an audit of the existing people and knowledge resources within the region – generate a portfolio of how to find knowledge/information or who to talk to on a particular issue. 2) Capture the knowledge and skills and store it in a place that is accessible to the public or other professionals. Build on this over time. 3) Identify opportunities/activities/processes for succession planning – building skills (including working with the tertiary education sector), to prevent loss of professional knowledge, and the value of people and their experience. 4) Develop innovative and interactive tools for capturing, storing and then sharing this knowledge (e.g. through the use of processes such as “Walking the Landscape”, story maps).

Feasibility considerations

- ✓ There are tools that are being built through the Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country (e.g. Walking the Landscape) that provide interactive, visual, engaging ways to capture knowledge and share it widely, amongst professionals as well as the community.
- ✓ NRM professionals are generally very generous with their knowledge and are happy for it to be shared.
- ✗ There is limited resourcing to build the sector and investment in NRM, including invasive species management, has been on a downward trend for some time. Major down-sizing in local and state governments have meant many of the older professionals have taken redundancies or moved to other areas.
- ✗ The NRM field is not attracting the professionals it needs ... How do we make the NRM field appealing to the next generation of school leavers and university graduates?