

# **SEQ Ecosystem Services Framework:** relationships with the planning and policy framework of south-east Queensland

**Research Project**  
Ecosystem Services Policy Analysis



Version 3

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# 1. Introduction\*

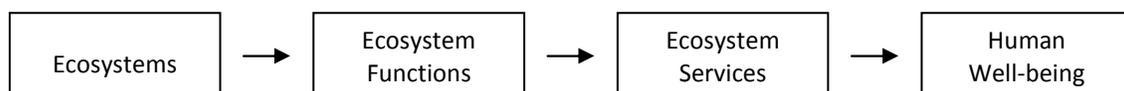
*Ecosystem services* (ES) is the term given to the goods and services provided by natural, semi-natural and non-natural ecosystems that benefit, sustain and support the well-being of people. These include the production of food and medicines, the regulation of climate and disease, provision of productive soils and clean water, and landscape opportunities for recreation and spiritual benefits. In short, ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems.

Ecosystem services are derived from the complex interactions between the components and processes that occur within an ecosystem (ecosystem functions). It is the diversity of the components (*i.e.* biodiversity) and interactive processes within and between all ecosystems that produce the extensive range of essential services required for humans to survive.

The growing interest in ecosystem services and the role these play in supporting the economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability of south-east Queensland (SEQ) has been reflected in two important planning documents: the SEQ Regional Plan 2009 – 2031 and the SEQ Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan 2009 – 2031. SEQ Catchments (SEQC) has been working with expert panels and technical working groups to develop a framework for ecosystem services. The SEQ Ecosystem Services Framework (SEQ ES Framework) is based on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment established by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The steps required to develop the Framework included:

- a) identifying the ecosystems of SEQ;
- b) mapping the ecosystems in SEQ;
- c) identifying and describing the ecosystem functions occurring in these ecosystems;
- d) determining the link between ecosystems and these functions;
- e) relating ecosystem functions to data and then mapping ecosystem functions;
- f) identifying and describing the ecosystem services provided by these functions;
- g) determining the link between ecosystem functions and the services these provide; and
- h) exploring the linkages between ecosystem services and the constituents of human well-being that these support.



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\* This introduction relies heavily on the work of Simone Maynard, Coordinator of the SEQ ES Project. Parts of this work have been completed in fulfillment of the requirements of her PhD with Australian National University, Canberra. Her work has been reproduced here with permission.

The above process resulted in the development of the following outputs, which constitute the SEQ ES Framework:

1. Lists and descriptions of the four main components identified for assessment (ecosystem reporting categories, ecosystem functions, ecosystem services, constituents of well-being) (see Appendix 1);
2. A series of matrices linking the components; and
3. A series of maps identifying where Ecosystem Functions are derived from in the SEQ region.

A website that will house this information is currently under construction. Once complete this website will ensure that the SEQ ES Framework is accessible to all stakeholders.

The SEQ ES Framework aims to provide the tools to enable government, industry, business, researchers, non-government organisations and land managers to apply the concept of ecosystem services in their management and planning practices. An assessment of the ecosystem services in SEQ will better enable decision makers to manage ecosystems in ways that maintain or enhance the current level of ecosystem services provided and may, where relevant, allow them to better understand losses in service resulting from development activities. The SEQ ES Framework may also allow them to suggest appropriate actions to ameliorate such losses.

This report is one output of a research project focused on the relationship between the SEQ ES Framework and planning and policy frameworks in the SEQ region. The aim of the project is to determine the extent to which local governments can utilise the SEQ ES Framework in planning, and identify mechanisms by which this may occur. The purpose of this report is twofold: firstly it provides background regarding the regulatory and non-regulatory planning and policy frameworks of the SEQ region (sections 1, 2 and 3). Secondly, it will contribute to the development of a set of guidelines, designed to assist local governments to integrate the SEQ ES Framework in their planning and policy (sections 4 and 5).

This report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides background to this project. Section 3 provides an overview of the planning and policy framework of SEQ. Section 4 relates the SEQ planning framework to the SEQ ES Framework by drawing linkages where potential to integrate an ecosystem services approach exists. Section 5 provides a summary of the linkages discussed in section 4, and discusses the mechanisms required for integrating the SEQ ES Framework in to on-ground activities. A brief overview of existing and potential on-ground implementation tools

that may incorporate an ES approach is given in section 6. The final section concludes by discussing the gaps that remain and the way forward from here.

Although this report provides an overview of the planning and policy framework of SEQ, it should not be considered exhaustive in scope. The resources available for this project have not allowed for discussion of the full range of current plans, policies and strategies in SEQ. Rather, this report focuses on the key planning documents, and does not include, for example, nature conservation strategies, water resource strategies and biodiversity strategies.

## 2. Background

The basis for this research project is the recent inclusion of the SEQ ES Framework as a recommended program for achieving principles and policies in two desired regional outcomes (DROs) in the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 (SEQ Regional Plan) (Queensland Department of Infrastructure and Planning [DIP] 2009a). The SEQ ES Framework has been identified as a program to achieve the following two principles of the SEQ Regional Plan:

### **Principle 3.1 *Regional landscape values***

Principle 3.1 is: 'Protect, manage and enhance the multiple values of the regional landscape and optimise the contribution these values make to the region's liveability, health, lifestyle and economy' (DIP 2009a, p. 56). Section 3.1.2 indicates that the SEQ ES Framework could be used to '...identify and evaluate the multiple benefits provided to communities by regional landscapes and ecosystems' (DIP 2009a, p. 56).

### **Principle 4.3 *Ecosystem Services***

Principle 4.3 is: 'Protect, maintain and enhance the capacity of the region's ecosystems to supply ecosystem services' (DIP 2009a, p. 71). Section 4.3.2 indicates that the SEQ ES Framework could be used to '...identify and measure ecosystem services' (DIP 2009a, p. 71). Further, the notes state that '[c]oordination of actions to maintain SEQ's ecosystem services should be aligned with the SEQ Ecosystem Services Framework, which lists, defines and maps the region's ecosystem services' (DIP 2009a, p. 71).

The SEQ Regional Plan is a statutory instrument under the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992* (Cth), which has the force of law under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (Qld) (SPA) (s 24). As such, the provisions included in the SEQ Regional Plan are required to be taken into account in planning and development decision-making processes, at state, regional and local levels. At the state level, all plans, policies and codes that relate to the SEQ region must reflect and align with the SEQ Regional Plan (DIP 2009a, p. 5). From a local government perspective, planning schemes and other local plans and policies must also reflect the SEQ Regional Plan. Where conflict exists, local government planning schemes must be amended to reflect the SEQ Regional Plan (DIP 2009a, p. 5). Further, as part of the SPA, development applications under the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) must *have regard* to the SEQ Regional Plan. This regard is deemed to have been met if the application complies with the sub-regional narratives in Part C and the regional policies in Part D of the SEQ Regional Plan (DIP 2009a, p. 5). The regional policies in Part D include DROs, principles (including 3.1 and 4.3 relating to ES), policies and programs (including the SEQ ES Framework) to address regional growth (DIP 2009a, p. 38).

The SEQ Ecosystem Services Framework, as identified in the SEQ Regional Plan, includes a regional scale ecosystem function (EF) map, which shows the current arrangement of regional ecosystems that support ecosystem function crucial for providing ES to the community (Figure 1). This map could be taken to be the baseline for protecting, maintaining and enhancing ES, as outlined in the SEQ Regional Plan. When considering the achievement of principle 4.3 of the SEQ Regional Plan, this map illustrates the areas that require protection, for the provision of ES at current levels. It does not attempt to deal with the enhancement of ES provision. This regional map employs regional scale data to allow the treatment of the region as a whole, and will not allow for effective planning at a property level. However, it does provide a regional snapshot of what contribution local governments should be supported to make through planning mechanisms.

Many local governments will possess more accurate mapping which can be applied to the SEQ ES Framework to enhance planning and policy responses at a property scale. The development of such local scale mapping will involve some cost, either through engaging an outside source or allocating some local government mapping resources to identify and substitute local datasets into the regional EF map. However, a scaled down version of the regional map is currently available for each local government area as a starting point. This map employs regional data that may be adequate for the purpose of some local governments, or provide an option that fits within the budgetary constraints of council.

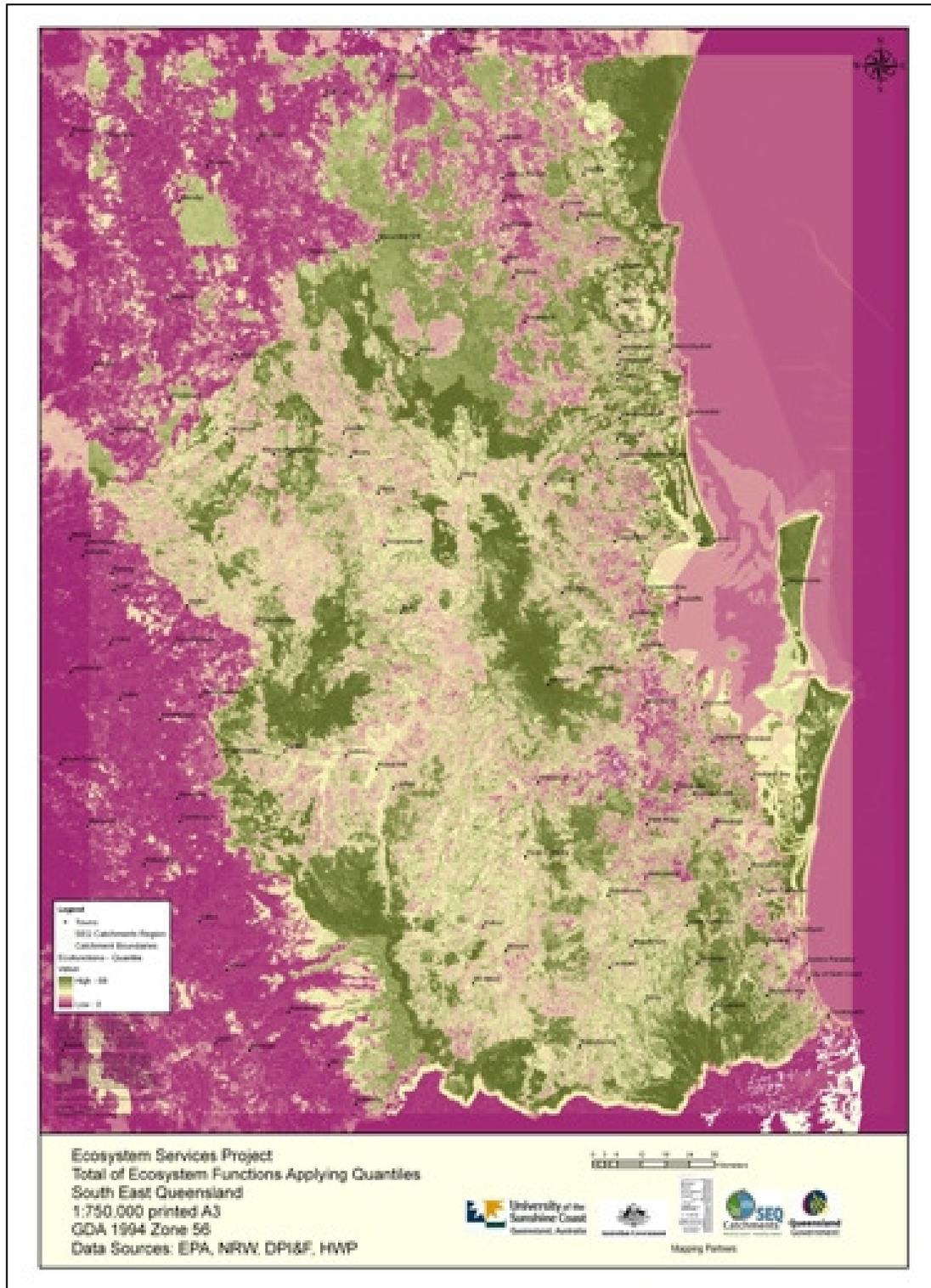
The SEQ Regional Plan sits within a complex web of regulatory frameworks, statutory and non-statutory planning and policy at all levels of government, and on-ground activities that vary between local government areas. The consequences of the inclusion of the SEQ ES Framework under principles 3.1 and 4.3 of the SEQ Regional Plan are largely unknown by many stakeholders, including state agencies, local governments, planners, developers, landscape architects, natural resource managers and policy decision makers. The inclusion of ES in the SEQ Regional Plan will affect each of these stakeholders to some degree: however, this report is focused on determining the significance of these changes with respect to local government whose jurisdiction lies within the area covered by the SEQ Regional Plan. These local governments are:

- Brisbane City Council
- Gold Coast City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Logan City Council
- Moreton Bay Regional Council

- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Redland City Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Regional Council

The Regional Landscape and Open Space Advisory Committee (RLOSAC), auspiced by DIP and reporting to the Regional Coordination Committee (RCC), has a mandate to contribute to policy in DRO 3 of the SEQ Regional Plan. To this end, RLOSAC will be approached to provide comment on the content of this report and subsequent work undertaken as part of this project. Further, the SEQ Regional Coordination Group (SEQ RCG) are custodians of DRO 4 of the SEQ Regional Plan, with a primary focus on the development and implementation of the SEQ Natural Resource Management Plan (SEQ NRM Plan). The SEQ ES Framework is included as a program associated with policy 4.3.1 in DRO 4 and therefore falls under the auspices of the SEQ RCG. This report, along with the guidelines that will be developed, will be presented to the SEQ RCG for their consideration in the achievement of policy 4.3.1 of the SEQ Regional Plan.

**Figure 1. Regional Ecosystem Functions Map** (Total scores - dark green highest areas of ecosystem functions and therefore high potential for services and red lowest potential)

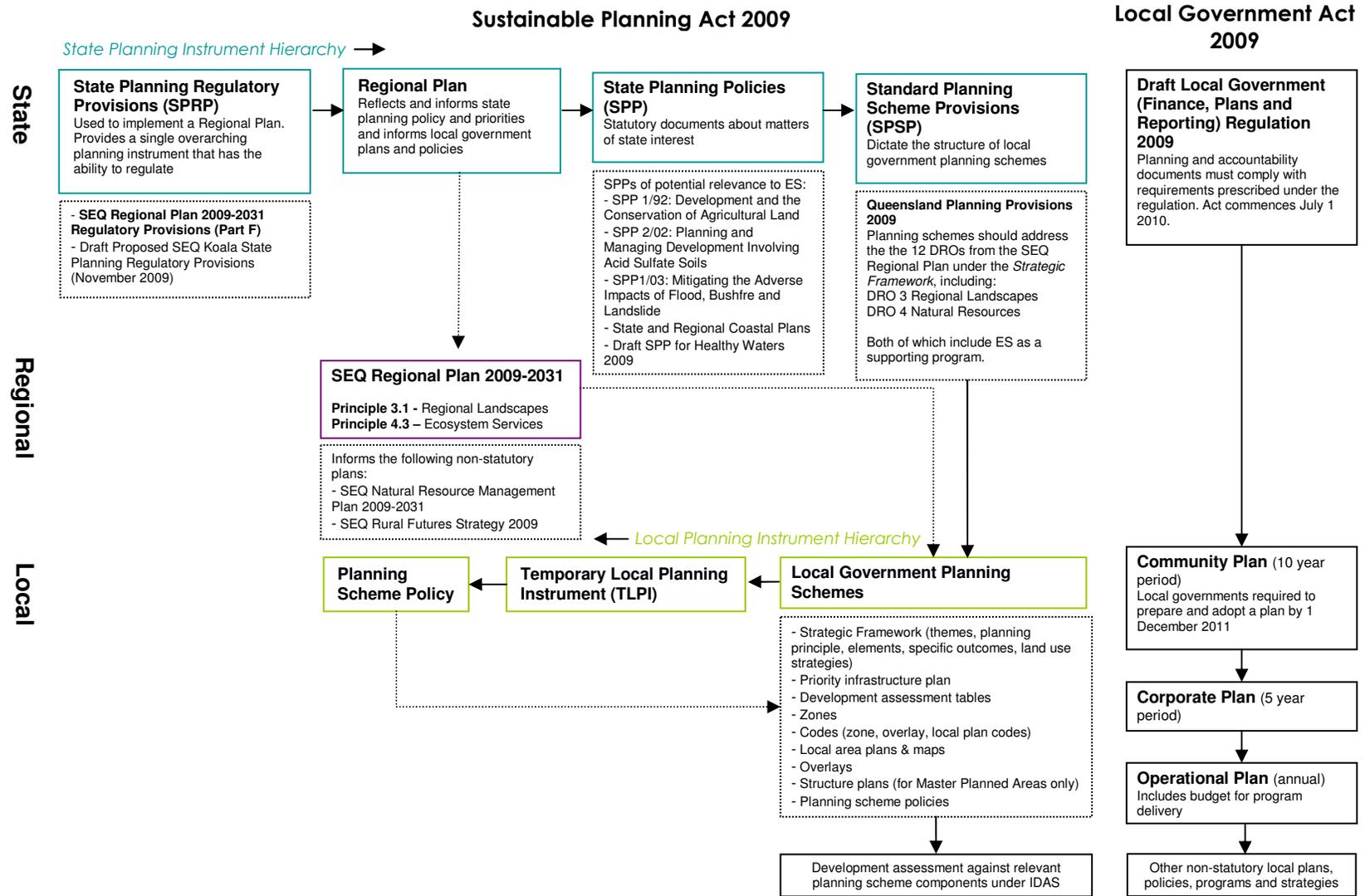


### 3. Planning and Policy Frameworks in SEQ

There are two main pieces of state legislation that are relevant to the inclusion of the SEQ ES Framework in local government planning and activities – the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (Qld) (SPA) and the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld) (LGA). This section provides an overview of the structure and provisions of each Act in turn. The capabilities, limitations and scope of each planning instrument are outlined, in addition to a discussion regarding the hierarchy and relationship between the planning tools.

Figure 2 has been compiled from the contents of the SPA and the LGA and shows the mechanisms by which these Acts are able to influence planning in the context of ES. The frameworks shown here ultimately inform all other planning, policies, programs, strategies and on-ground actions taken by local governments.

Figure 2. Ecosystem Services: Regulatory frameworks in SEQ



### **3.1. Sustainable Planning Act 2009**

The *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) is the preeminent planning legislation for Queensland. It dictates the obligations of state agencies and local governments with regard to the assessment of development applications under the Integrated Development Assessment Scheme (IDAS) and grants statutory force to *planning instruments* at both state (see Figure 2 – blue squares) and local (see Figure 2 - green squares) levels. The purpose of the SPA is to *seek to achieve ecological sustainability* (SPA 2009, s 3). This is achieved namely by:

- (a) managing the process by which development takes place; and
- (b) managing the effects of development on the environment; and
- (c) continuing the coordination and integration of planning at the local, regional and State levels (SPA 2009, s 3).

An important aspect to note about the SPA is that it only applies in the event that development is proposed. It has no power to act retrospectively, and therefore the instruments described in the following sections apply only when a development application is lodged.

#### **3.1.1. State planning instruments**

State planning instruments have statutory force under the federal *Statutory Instruments Act 1992* (Cth). Each state planning instrument will be discussed in turn, and in hierarchical order.

##### **3.1.1.1. State Planning Regulatory Provisions (SPRP)**

SPRPs prevail over all other planning instruments (or any plan, policy or code under the SPA) to the extent of any inconsistency (SPA 2009, s 19). Provisions in the SPA allow for SPRPs to (SPA 2009, s 16):

- (a) provide regulatory support for regional planning or master planning, or
- (b) provide for a charge for the supply of infrastructure, or
- (c) protect planning scheme areas from adverse impacts .

The SPRPs implement the SEQ Regional Plan by specifying categories of development and dealing with matters relating to development assessment requirements (DIP 2009a, Part F).

##### **3.1.1.2. Regional Plans**

A regional plan prevails to the extent of any inconsistency with another planning instrument, plan, policy or code under the Act, other than the SPRP (SPA 2009, s 26). Regional plans are

developed by the State in consultation with stakeholders, including local government and the community. The provisions included in a regional plan are required to be taken into account in planning and development decision-making processes, including local government planning schemes and other plans and policies. Any plans, policies and codes being prepared by state agencies that relate to the region must reflect and align with the regional plan (DIP 2009a, p. 5). The SEQ Regional Plan reflects and informs both state planning policy and priorities (DIP 2009a, p. 7) and local government plans and policies (DIP 2009a, p. 7).

### **3.1.1.3. State Planning Policies (SPP)**

SPPs are statutory documents about *matters of state interest* that prevail over a local planning instrument to the extent of any inconsistency (SPA 2009, s 43). A *state interest* is an interest which affects an economic or environmental interest of the state, or part of the state, including sustainable development (SPA 2009, Schedule 3). SPRPs (SPA 2009, s 18) and regional plans (SPA 2009, s 25) are also taken to be matters of state interest under the Act. An example of a state interest provided by the legislation is a tourism development involving broad economic benefits to the state. A state interest may also involve ensuring that there is an efficient, effective and accountable planning and development assessment system (SPA 2009, Schedule 3).

SPPs establish assessment criteria and provide policy support for local planning instruments. Consideration must be given to SPPs when making or amending a local planning scheme. The current SPPs are as follows (DIP 2009c):

- SPP 1/92: Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land
- SPP 1/02: Development in the Vicinity of Certain Airports and Aviation Facilities
- SPP 2/02: Planning and Managing Development Involving Acid Sulfate Soils
- SPP 1/03: Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide
- SPP 1/07: Housing and Residential Development
- SPP 2/07: Protection of Extractive Resources
- State and Regional Coastal Plans – made under the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 (Qld)
- SPP 1/09: Reconfiguration of a lot code for land in Indigenous local government areas to which a local planning scheme does not apply
- Draft SPP for Healthy Waters 2009

### **3.1.1.4. Standard Planning Scheme Provisions (SPSP)**

SPSPs are contained in the *Queensland Planning Provisions 18 December 2009, version 1.0* (QPP) (DIP 2009b). These provisions mandate a consistent form of planning schemes across

Queensland through standardised structure, format, land use and administrative definitions, zones, levels of assessment, overlays, priority infrastructure planning provisions, development assessment codes and other administrative matters (DIP 2009b, p. 4). To the extent of any inconsistency these provisions prevail over local planning instruments (SPA 2009, s 53). SPSPs do not regulate development in its own right, but rather, have effect only once incorporated into a local planning instrument (SPA 2009, s 52). SPSPs do not apply to existing schemes (DIP 2009d).

### **3.1.2. Local planning instruments**

Local planning instruments have statutory force under the federal *Statutory Instruments Act 1992* (Cth). The function and affect of each local planning instrument will be discussed in turn, and in hierarchical order.

#### **3.1.2.1. Planning Schemes**

State planning instruments prevail over a local planning scheme to the extent of any inconsistency (SPA 2009, s83). Planning schemes manage future development rather than proactively changing existing land use patterns. Planning schemes achieve this by discouraging development that is inconsistent with the planning scheme. Planning schemes can only impact *development* as defined in the SPA (2009, s 7).

When the SPA was enacted, one major change from the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* (Qld) was the prescription of a standard format for planning schemes. Prior to the SPA (2009) the structure of planning schemes was not prescribed, allowing local governments a degree of freedom as to the format and content of their scheme. The QPP (DIP 2009b) outlines a standard format for planning schemes, which will be reflected progressively as new schemes are made under the SPA (DIP 2009d). Planning schemes consist of the following components:

Mandatory elements:

- Strategic framework
- Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP)
- Zones
- Declared master planned areas
- Development Assessment Tables
- Codes

Optional elements (where relevant):

- Overlays
- Local area plans
- Planning Scheme Policies (PSP)

By way of the above components, planning schemes must address the *core matters* contained in the SPA (2009, s 89) and must *coordinate* and *integrate* the matters dealt with, including the state and regional *dimensions* of those matters expressed through regional plans and SPPs (DIP 2009d, p. 14).

- *Core Matters*

Planning schemes must deal with the core matters, including the local, regional and state dimensions of the matters. The core matters that planning schemes must deal with are (SPA 2009, s 89)\*:

1. *Land use and development* – includes the location and relationship between land uses and the effects of development, mobility, accessibility and development constraints;
2. *Infrastructure* – the extent and location of proposed infrastructure;
3. *Valuable features* – includes resources or areas that are of ecological significance (includes places supporting biodiversity or resilience and features contributing to the quality of air, water and soil); areas contributing significantly to amenity; places of cultural significance; and resources of economic value.

- *State Dimensions*

The Minister decides what the states interests are. State dimensions of a planning scheme matter are dimensions of *state interests* (SPA 2009, s 90(4)). State interests can be expressed as:

1. State Planning Policies (SPPs) – as outlined in section 3.1.1 above.
2. State Interest Planning Policies (SIPPs) – policies endorsed by the responsible state agency (e.g. Department of Environment and Resource Management [DERM]) which describe how planning schemes can be shown not to adversely affect the state interests of the agency. Currently DERM has published SIPPs for the following:
  - Air Quality
  - Nature Conservation
  - Noise Management
  - Queensland Waters
  - State forests, Timber Reserves and Forest Reserves
  - Waste Management and Contaminated Land

- *Regional Dimensions*

Regional dimensions of the core matters must be addressed in a planning scheme. Section 90(3) of the SPA defines a regional dimension about a planning scheme matter as an element -

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\* s 89 of the SPA provide comprehensive definitions of each of the core matters.

- a. about which a **regional planning committee report** makes a recommendation; or  
*e.g –*
  - Regional Nature Conservation Strategy for SEQ;*
  - Regional Vegetation Management Plan;*
  - SEQ Regional Air Quality Strategy;*
  - SEQ Regional Water Quality Strategy;*
  - Regional Coastal Management Plan;*
- b. reflected in a **regional plan**; or
- c. that can best be dealt with by the cooperation of **2 or more local governments**.

### **3.1.2.2. Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI)**

A TLPI may suspend or otherwise affect the operation of a planning scheme for a period of one year, but does not amend it (SPA 2009, s 104). A TLPI may be made by a local government in the instance that there is significant risk of serious environmental harm and the delay involved in amending the planning scheme would increase the risk (SPA 2009, s 105).

### **3.1.2.3. Planning Scheme Policy (PSP)**

PSPs are instruments made by the local government to support the local dimensions of the planning scheme (SPA 2009, s 108B). These are often applicable in development assessment to provide guidelines for dealing or deciding on development applications (SPA 2009, s 114). Where a PSP and any other planning instrument deals with the same matter in an inconsistent way, the other planning instrument will prevail over the PSP to the extent of any inconsistency (SPA 2009, s 112).

### **3.1.3. Integrated Development Assessment Scheme (IDAS)**

As previously noted, the SPA only applies when a development is proposed. All development in Queensland takes place as per the IDAS, which dictates the level of assessment required for specific types of development proposals and describes the process by which the proposal must be assessed. IDAS classifies development under the following categories:

- Exempt development
- Self assessable\*
- Development requiring compliance assessment\*
- Assessable development\*
- Prohibited development

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\* May require code or impact assessment

Development categories that require assessment may be subject to either code assessment, impact assessment or both. Where code assessment is required, the development will be assessed against any relevant codes that have been prepared as part of a local government planning scheme. Where an impact assessment is required a development application will be assessed for compliance with the SPA provisions. A development application is considered to comply with a local government planning scheme if it is consistent with the *strategic framework*, which will be discussed in more detail in section 4.

## **3.2. Local Government Act 2009**

The *Local Government Act 2009* (LGA) regulates the way in which local government is constituted, and the nature and extent of its powers (LGA 2009, s 3A). The purpose of the Act also extends to providing for a system of local government in Queensland that is accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable (LGA 2009, s 3B). Although the Act has a much broader scope, this report will focus on only those elements to which the SEQ ES Framework has potential relevance, specifically: plans and reporting requirements, and local laws.

### **3.2.1. Plans and reporting requirements**

Recent amendments to the LGA provide specific long-term planning requirements for councils relating to financial management, asset and infrastructure management, and community planning. These planning documents must align with and reflect the SEQ Regional Plan and so are of specific relevance to this research. The long-term plans inform corporate plans, operational plans and budget preparation, and must be prepared and adopted by 1 December 2011 (*Draft Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation* [Draft Local Government Regulation] 2009, s 162).

#### **3.2.1.1. Community plan**

The LGA defines a community plan as ‘a document that outlines the local government's goals, strategies and policies for implementing the local government's vision for the future of the local government area, during the period covered by the plan’ (LGA 2009, s 104.4A). The community plan must cover a period of at least 10 years (LGA 2009, s 104.4B).

The LGA is committed to principles rather than prescription. Therefore, the method of community engagement and the content of the community plan will be decided by individual local governments (DIP 2009e). The relevant exception is that each local government must identify local and regional issues that affect or may affect the local area, including issues relating to economic development, environmental management, governance and social wellbeing (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 84.1B).

#### **3.2.1.2. Corporate plan**

The corporate plan states the strategic direction of the local government and the performance indicators for measuring progress in achieving the local government's *vision for the future* as stated in its community plan (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 94). It also states how

the community plan will be implemented (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 94). The corporate plan translates the council's vision into medium- and long-term priorities, outcomes and strategies for a minimum 5 year period. These actions then form the basis of the annual operational plan and budget. A corporate plan may contain the following components: vision, mission, assessment, goals and objectives, strategies, and performance measures (DIP 2009f).

### **3.2.1.3. Financial plan**

The financial plan must cover a minimum 10 year period. It outlines goals, strategies and policies for managing finances for activities identified in other plans, which must include the following (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 86 – 90):

- Investment policy
- Debt policy
- Procurement policy
- Revenue policy

### **3.2.1.4. Operational plan**

A local government operational plan sets out more specifically how the council will apply its resources to achieve the corporate plan strategies in a specific year (DIP 2009f). It states the proposed outputs and activities to be carried out (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 96).

### **3.2.1.5. Asset management plan**

The asset management plan must be integrated with the financial plan and, among other things, provide strategies for the sustainable management of assets and infrastructure and outline the capital expenditure for asset management (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 92). Asset management plans must cover a minimum period of 10 years (Draft Local Government Regulation 2009, s 91).

### 3.3. Interaction between state level legislation

The interaction between and hierarchy of the planning and reporting requirements of the SPA and the LGA are shown in Figure 3. It can be seen that the SEQ Regional Plan is the overarching document, which all other planning must align with and reflect. At the local government level the community plan is the preeminent document, whose content informs all other planning under both Acts. Figure 3 separates two main paths of planning, both of which lead to different outcomes. The first stream, ending with a planning scheme, affects the assessment of development under IDAS, whereas the second stream of planning has a much broader influence on the direction and activities of local government.

**Figure 3. Interaction between the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Local Government Act 2009**



(Source: adapted from DIP 2009e, p. 3)

## **4. Planning and policy in the context of the SEQ ES Framework**

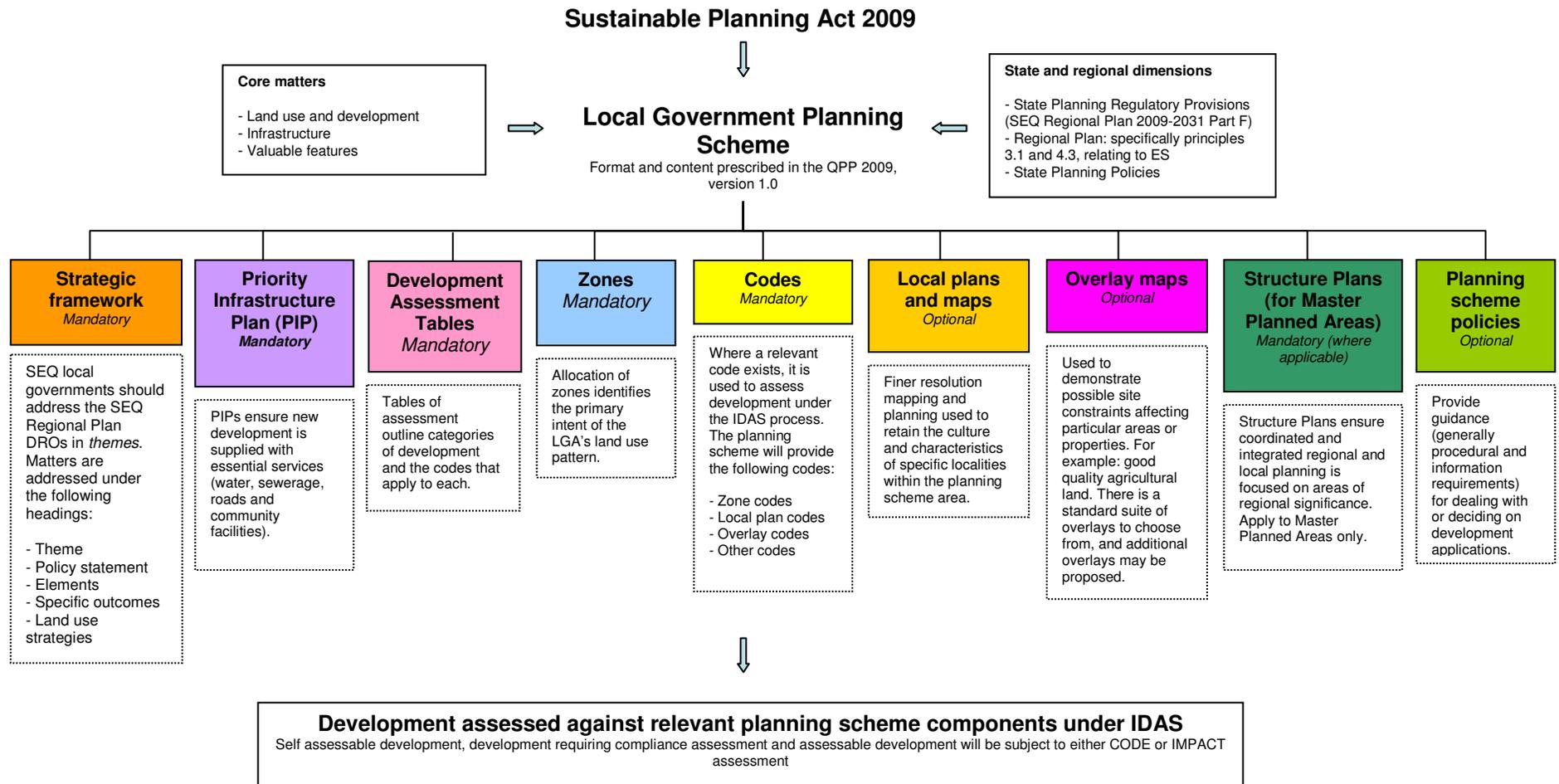
This section draws linkages between relevant components of the SEQ planning framework discussed in section 3, and the SEQ ES Framework. Specific planning elements that have the potential to incorporate an ecosystem services approach under both the SPA and the LGA are discussed in turn and those areas where alignment may occur are highlighted. This is followed by a brief overview of planning which is relevant to ES that occurs outside the boundaries of the Sustainable Planning and Local Government Acts, at state and regional levels in SEQ.

### **4.1. SPA Planning schemes**

The core components of a local planning scheme are illustrated in Figure 4, alongside a brief description of the function. In summary, planning schemes must have consideration for the core matters and the state and regional dimensions. The SEQ Regional Plan, which includes the SEQ ES Framework as a program, is a regional dimension and therefore must be reflected in the planning scheme. There are links between the core matters of planning schemes (defined previously in section 3.1.2.1) and the SEQ ES Framework. For example, the planning scheme must consider the location and relationship between land uses, the effects of development, mobility, accessibility and development constraints. The SEQ ES Framework can play a strategic role in this as a tool for identifying the ecosystem services that the community values.

The remainder of this section provides a discussion of each of the planning scheme components shown in Figure 4. This discussion is centered on the potential to integrate the SEQ ES Framework into each planning scheme component.

Figure 4. Local planning framework under the SPA 2009



(Source: Figure 3 has been constructed using the SPA 2009 and the QPP 2009)

#### **4.1.1. Strategic framework**

The strategic framework lies at the heart of a planning scheme, providing an overall strategic direction for the scheme. As per the QPP, where a regional plan covers the local government area, the DROs from the regional plan should form the themes of the strategic framework (as refined for the context specific to the local government area). ES can be incorporated under DROs 3 and 4 of the SEQ Regional Plan, as the SEQ ES Framework is a recommended program for achieving elements of these two DROs.

Each theme is divided into four parts that must be addressed –

1. *Policy statement*: the policy statement is prescribed in the QPP 2009, version 1.0.
2. *Elements*: local governments decide on local elements of the theme.
3. *Specific outcomes*: represent the desired outcomes sought. These are broadly equivalent to Desired Environmental Outcomes (DEOs) under the previous *Integrated Planning Act 1997 (Qld)*.
4. *Land use strategies*: outline how the specific outcomes will be achieved.

Ecosystem services would be best addressed as an *element* in the planning scheme strategic framework. This is because local governments are free to identify the aspects of each theme that have relevance for their local area (DIP 2009b). The SEQ ES Framework has potential relevance as an element under all DROs of the SEQ Regional Plan, particularly DRO 3 Regional Landscapes and DRO 4 Natural Resources. The QPP also explicitly lists ecosystem services as a suggested local theme (DIP 2009b, p. 46).

The inclusion of ES as an element of the planning scheme strategic framework may result in ES also being addressed in the specific outcomes and land use strategies sections, with ecosystem function (EF) mapping being used to support these strategies. Such an outcome would place ES at the core of a planning scheme, and may result in the integration of ES with other planning scheme components to support achievement of the strategic framework.

#### **4.1.2. Priority infrastructure plan (PIP)**

PIPs ensure new development is supplied with essential services such as water, sewerage, roads and community facilities such as parks. The priority afforded to these services over other development (or conservation / non-development) options currently constrains the scope to apply the SEQ ES Framework in this context. Whilst PIPs do not specifically allow for the

provision of green infrastructure<sup>\*</sup>, there nevertheless appears to be scope within a PIP to address the provision of ES in this manner. For example, the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) PIP has included the following elements related to ES and the provision of green infrastructure (GCCC 2010):

- Water sensitive urban design measures to address water cycle management outcomes;
- Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQIDs) (such as gross pollutant traps wetlands, bioretention systems, and urban stream rehabilitation) to address storm water quality;
- Wildlife movement solutions / wildlife mitigation measures at key locations on the transport network to ensure that the adverse impacts of road design at ecological corridor crossing points are minimised;
- An accessible network of publicly owned parks to provide recreational opportunities;
- Co-location of parks and other social infrastructure (e.g. schools, shops) and valued environmental and cultural assets to integrate land for recreation facilities with social services and physical and symbolic environmental and heritage values.

#### **4.1.3. Development assessment tables**

Development assessment tables prescribe the level of assessment and assessment criteria for development within the planning scheme area (DIP 2009b). This includes specifying which codes apply to each type of development. A local government will develop an assessment table for each zone, overlay and local plan included in their planning scheme. Precincts may be used to vary the provisions and/or level of assessment for specific areas within the zone or local plan (DIP 2009b).

In deciding the level of assessment, a local government selects from the following categories of development:

- Exempt development;
- Self assessable;
- Development requiring compliance assessment;
- Assessable development (requiring code or impact assessment); and
- Prohibited development.

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<sup>\*</sup> 'Green infrastructure refers to the interconnected green space network (including natural areas and features, public and private conservation lands, working lands with conservation values, and other protected open spaces) that is planned and managed for its natural resource values and for the associated benefits it confers to human populations.' (Benedict & McMahon 2006, p. 3).

ES could be addressed in development assessment tables by allowing for development that is consistent with positive ES outcomes to undergo self assessment or code assessment. Development that would undermine desired ES outcomes could be set as requiring impact assessment.

#### **4.1.4. Zones**

All land within the planning scheme area must be allocated to a zone, which identifies the specific land uses that are acceptable within the category (DIP 2009b). Only zones from within the *standard suite of zones* may be used (DIP 2009b, listed on pp. 57-58); however, local governments may choose a suite of zones that best reflects the local context. The QPP also provides a standard purpose statement and suggested overall outcomes for each zone within the standard suite (DIP 2009b). Zones are the primary organising layer in a planning scheme (DIP 2009b). Therefore, zones represent a primary opportunity to ensure that areas with the potential to provide ES are protected from inappropriate development. Ensuring this allocation of land to zones occurs in a manner consistent with the aim of protecting, maintaining or enhancing ES provides the opportunity to discourage inappropriate development proposals from being lodged in these areas.

#### **4.1.5. Codes**

Codes provide policy direction for particular planning areas (zones, local planning areas etc.) or specific issues (such as acid sulfate soils, stormwater management, wetlands and scenic amenity) and outline a standard set of criteria that development proposals must comply with.

The following codes may be included in a planning scheme (DIP 2009b):

- Zone codes: each zone must have a zone code;
- Local plan codes: required for each local plan;
- Overlay codes: may be provided for an overlay, however, these are not mandatory;
- Other codes: provide criteria for assessing development.

Where a relevant code exists, it is used to assess development that is –

- Self assessable development;
- Development requiring compliance assessment; and
- Assessable development.

Acceptable solutions are included in each code for the purpose of providing examples as to how a performance requirement listed in the code can be met. Application of the SEQ ES Framework may be possible through forming part of an acceptable solution for a performance requirement. This may involve necessitating the use of the SEQ ES Framework to identify areas of potential ES

provision, and requiring offsets where development impacts will negatively impact on the provision of ES.

Potential to develop a code that specifically deals with ES may exist, however, individual local governments will need to determine the feasibility of this for their area. Alternatively, the SEQ ES Framework may align with a range of existing codes allowing for it to be incorporated into the existing document. As an example of the opportunity for alignment which may exist, the purpose of the Brisbane City Council (BCC) *Biodiversity Code* (BCC 2003) is to 'ensure that the ecological features and processes that underpin the biological, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the City are protected and managed to ensure their long term viability.' (p. 22). This purpose is closely aligned with the concept of ecosystem services, particularly where the link between ecological processes and social and cultural wellbeing has been made.

#### **4.1.6. Local plans**

Local governments may choose to develop finer resolution planning and mapping for specific locations (e.g a suburb) within their local government area. Such planning and mapping seeks to retain the culture and characteristics of a location. Local plans involve more detailed mapping of an area, often for the purpose of allocating land for urban development and identifying land for conservation. There is potential for EF mapping to support this type of planning, by identifying areas within the local plan that have the potential to provide ES. This mapping could be developed by SEQ Catchments in collaboration with the local government.

#### **4.1.7. Overlays**

An overlay identifies areas that may be sensitive to the effects of development, constrain land or development, be subject to valuable resources, or present opportunities for development (DIP 2009b). Local governments may choose from a *standard suite of overlays*, which are contained in the QPP (DIP 2009b, pp. 93-95). Overlays are not a mandatory component of a planning scheme; rather, the use of an overlay is employed at the discretion of the local government.

A local government may propose additional overlays where necessary to reflect particular local circumstances. In this instance, however, the additional overlay must not conflict with or duplicate the overlays in the standard suite (DIP 2009b). The development of an EF overlay map for inclusion in a planning scheme would necessitate collaboration between the local government and SEQ Catchments to refine regional scale EF maps to the local scale.

Alternatively, a range of standard overlays could be used to identify where ES need to be protected or enhanced. These standard overlays may include (but are not limited to): acid sulfate soils, scenic amenity, biodiversity corridors, coastal management, vegetation management, wetlands, waterway corridors, good quality agricultural land, erosion management and water resource catchments. The relevant overlay code could then give guidance on satisfactory outcomes to be delivered and could include requirements for offsets where development impacts will diminish ES provision.

#### **4.1.8. Structure plans**

Structure plans are integrated land use plans that ensure coordinated and integrated regional and local planning. These apply to Master Planned Areas (MPAs) only (as declared under SPA 2009, s 132), and set out the broad environmental, land use, infrastructure and development intent for the purpose of guiding detailed planning for the area (SPA 2009, s 141(1)B). MPAs are areas where the state and local government agree to work together to achieve structured and coordinated planning for a specific area: these often take the form of large greenfield developments.\*

Given that MPAs and structure plans often apply in situations where development will occur on large greenfield sites, there is potential for the SEQ ES Framework to be applied in order to retain or create green infrastructure, by ensuring the provision of ES through a network of interconnected natural ecosystems. Where the strategic framework of a local government planning scheme has expressed an alignment with the SEQ ES Framework, there may be greater potential to take an ES approach to the creation of a structure plan. Due to flexibility regarding the content and form of structure plans, this ES approach could be articulated in a number of ways, perhaps including incorporation with the vision or key principles of the structure plan, or as an approach to the development of a greenspace network.

#### **4.1.9. Planning scheme policies (PSP)**

A PSP is an instrument made by the local government to support the local dimensions of the planning scheme (SPA 2009, s 108B). PSPs are used in conjunction with the planning scheme to provide guidance in deciding or dealing with development applications (SPA 2009, s 114). These generally deal with procedural and information requirements.

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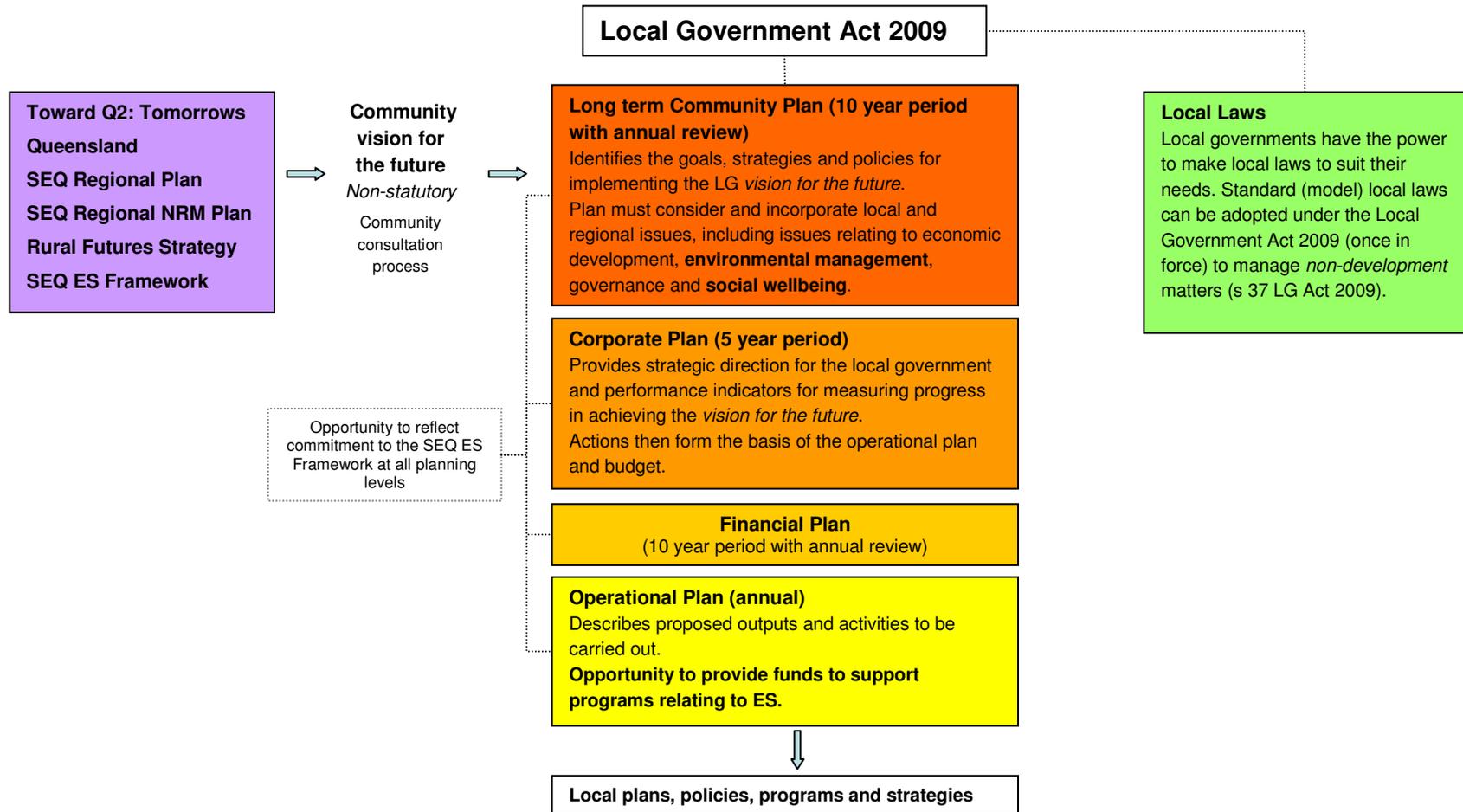
\* Master Planning has been defined by the Queensland Government (Department of Public Works 2004) as planning that 'facilitates the considered and controlled development of civic areas including town centres, local neighbourhoods and parks. Design elements planned in this process include buildings, open spaces, transport systems, transit corridors and green spaces like parklands, bush reserves and water courses.'

The scope for incorporating the SEQ ES Framework into PSPs appears somewhat limited. Because the role of a PSP is generally an administrative support tool, it is not practical to reflect a commitment to ES in a PSP unless it is first included in the strategic framework. However, once included in the strategic framework the SEQ ES Framework may be able to play a supporting role in an existing PSP. As an example, the GCCC PSP *Guidelines for Ecological Assessments* (GCCC 2003) outlines a process for conducting ecological site assessment, which includes identifying ecological functions and ecologically significant areas. The SEQ ES Framework has potential application as a mechanism for identifying the ecosystem functions and services provided in the local area and determining priorities based on community well-being that could be incorporated into a planning scheme policy such as this. There is further opportunity to develop planning scheme policy maps that provide additional support.

## 4.2. Local Government Act – Plans and Reporting

The structure of local government planning and reporting requirements under the LGA is shown in Figure 5. The community *vision for the future*, which is determined through a community consultation process, is the guiding force behind all subsequent local government planning. Although the community vision is non-statutory statement, it may have regard for overarching state and regional planning such as Toward Q2 and the SEQ Regional Plan. The potential for integration between the planning and reporting requirements illustrated in Figure 5 and the SEQ ES Framework is then discussed.

Figure 5. Local planning framework under the LGA 2009



#### **4.2.1. Community plan**

Community plans are the product of a community consultation process outlined in the Draft Local Government Regulation (2009, s 85). A community plan sets the strategic vision for what the community wants the area to be like in 10, 20 or more years (DIP 2009e). An ES approach could be taken to conducting the community consultation, whereby the community determines the value of ES according to their wellbeing derived. Further, the strategic vision for the future could be underpinned by the desired future state of ES (in terms of protection, maintenance or enhancement) as identified by the community. Such an approach puts ES at the heart of the community planning process, allowing for it to be reflected in subsequent planning and ultimately translated into on-ground action through other planning documents.

Given that the SEQ Regional Plan sits above the community plan in a hierarchical sense (see Figure 3), taking such an approach would clearly demonstrate alignment with the SEQ Regional Plan. Further, local governments would be contributing to the achievement of principles 3.1 and 4.3 of the Regional Plan, which relate to the SEQ ES Framework.

Ideally, a commitment to the SEQ ES Framework could be included in both the vision and the plan itself. This would necessitate the corporate plan and operational plan to address the measures and activities required to meet the vision, including the desired outcome for ES in the area, thereby improving the performance of the corporate and operational plans in addressing ES. The community plan is therefore an ideal location for commitment to the SEQ ES Framework to be acknowledged, due to the need for all subsequent local government planning to reflect its content.

#### **4.2.2. Corporate plan, financial plan and operational plan**

Ecosystems services will realistically only be addressed in the corporate, financial and operational plans if the community plan has incorporated such an approach. If the local government community plan aligns with the SEQ Regional Plan in that it contains a commitment to protect, maintain and enhance the capacity of ecosystems to supply ES, then this commitment must be reflected in subsequent planning documents. Together these plans can mobilise the SEQ ES Framework by stating how it will be utilised and allocating funds to ensure this occurs. However, it should be acknowledged that local governments will face different budgetary pressures and constraints, and that inclusion of the SEQ ES Framework in the higher level strategic documents may not necessarily translate into funding being allocated.

### **4.3. Local laws**

The LGA grants broad power to local governments to make local laws that are suitable to their particular needs (DIP 2009h). Local governments can enact laws from a suite of model laws or they can create their own. Local laws may have a role to play in integrating the SEQ ES Framework; however, this link is largely unknown at this stage and will depend on the nature of each specific local law within each jurisdiction.

## 4.4. Other state plans

### 4.4.1. Toward Q2: Tomorrows Queensland

*Toward Q2* is highly strategic in nature, setting targets across the broad areas of Strong, Green, Smart and Healthy. *Toward Q2* sits outside the boundaries of planning and local government legislation, however, as a planning document of the Queensland Government, it should be reflected in local government activities and planning. The “Green” section of *Toward Q2* does not mention ecosystem services or discuss the link between ecosystem and human health. However, the focus on retention of greenspace is particularly relevant to ES. There is also some mention of the recreation benefits that will be gained by meeting the conservation target (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2008, p. 25). Other aspects covered in the plan are retention of biodiversity and managing the risks of climate change. There are 2 “Green” targets to be achieved by 2020:

#### 1. Reduce Carbon Footprint

**Target:** Cut by one-third Queenslanders’ carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use.

**Measure:** Emissions from electricity use, fuel consumption and waste to landfill per household in Queensland. Source: Environmental Protection Agency (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2008, p. 22).

#### 2. Increase Land for Conservation and Recreation

**Target:** Protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation.

**Measure:** National Park estate. Source: Environmental Protection Agency Estate Register. Land for public recreation. Register to be developed (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2008, p. 24).

The implementation of *Toward Q2* is reliant on a wide range of stakeholders across Queensland. *Toward Q2* calls for support from local governments who have the ability to prioritise the establishment of parks, nature reserves and other public recreation spaces as development processes occur (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2008, p. 25). Part of the Queensland Government’s commitment to this plan has been expressed through the SEQ Regional Plan, which contributes to the *Toward Q2* vision by protecting greenspace and supporting a sustainable environment (DIP 2009a). The application of the SEQ ES Framework is broadly aligned with the content of the *Toward Q2* plan, with particular relevance to the second green target outlined above.

#### **4.4.2. State Coastal Management Plan**

The *State Coastal Management Plan* (Queensland Government 2002) has the effect of a SPP under the SPA, and needs to be considered in making and amending local planning schemes. The State Coastal Management Plan is a statutory document that outlines coastal management outcomes, principles and policies. It makes no mention of ecosystem services: however, it does deal with issues such as cultural heritage, Indigenous Traditional Owner resources, water quality, physical coastal processes and conserving nature – all of which have relevance for ES because they are comprised of ecosystem functions or services. A new state coastal plan – Draft Queensland Coastal Plan 2009 (DERM 2009a) – is currently being developed.

## **4.5. Other regional plans**

### **4.5.1. SEQ Regional NRM Plan 2009-2031**

The *SEQ Regional NRM Plan* is the preeminent non-statutory natural resource management plan for the SEQ region. As a guiding principle rather than a regional target, ES is at the core of the SEQ Regional NRM Plan. The term 'guiding principle' suggests that ecosystem services underpin many of the regional targets, and therefore the targets should be aligned so as to maintain ecosystem functions and ecosystem services across the SEQ region.

The SEQ Regional Plan gives weight to the SEQ Regional NRM Plan by identifying it as the program to achieve several DROs. The SPA does not explicitly state that the SEQ Regional NRM Plan needs to be considered in the making of a local government planning scheme. However, its inclusion in the SEQ Regional Plan may provide some obligation for planning schemes to implement the SEQ Regional NRM Plan where possible.

### **4.5.2. Rural Futures Strategy 2009**

The *Rural Futures Strategy for South East Queensland 2009* (Rural Futures Strategy) occupies a similar position in the SEQ Regional Plan as the SEQ Regional NRM Plan. The non-statutory Rural Futures Strategy has been prepared as part of the SEQ Regional Plan, where it has been included as a highlighted program to achieve certain DROs. Together, the SEQ Regional Plan and the Rural Futures Strategy detail land use planning principles and actions to improve the delivery of services and infrastructure to rural and urban communities in SEQ (DIP 2009g, p. 2). The Rural Futures Strategy sets a target for a '[f]ifty percent increase in the number of landholders delivering ecosystem services and/or part of a land stewardship program by 2014' (DIP 2009g, p. 26). The SEQ ES Project is highlighted as contributing to both the target and strategic action 8, which relates to maintaining and improving the delivery of ecosystem services through improved documentation, management and monitoring (DIP 2009g).

### **4.5.3. SEQ Regional Coastal Management Plan**

As with the State Coastal Management Plan, discussed in section 4.4.2, the *SEQ Regional Coastal Management Plan* (SEQ Coastal Plan) (EPA 2006) has statutory weight as an SPP under the SPA, and needs to be considered in making and amending local planning schemes.

The SEQ Coastal Plan outlines criteria that a proponent must meet in order to obtain approval to dispose of dredge material. One criterion is the consideration of alternative waste disposal solutions, giving consideration to the environmental, social and economic impacts. A footnote

in the plan explains that the use of the term *economic* ‘...incorporates natural capital whereby the economic benefits and importance of the environment, through ecosystem services (i.e., goods and services provided by the environment) are recognised and valued’ (EPA 2006, p. 26).

The Queensland Government has proposed the removal of existing regional coastal management plans if the new state coastal management plan - the Draft Queensland Coastal Plan - is adopted as an SPP (DERM 2009b).

## 5. Integrating ES into planning and policy

The previous section discussed the opportunities for integrating the SEQ ES Framework into local government planning and policy. This section builds on this by providing a discussion of the current capability of local government to implement the SEQ ES Framework into planning and policy. Table 1 provides a summary of the opportunities for integration that were discussed in section 4. A priority of low, medium or high has been assigned to each opportunity as a guide to the areas where incorporating ES would be best focused, with the rationale for each rating included.

A first step which local governments may take is to clearly define what ES exist in their area, where these ES are, what the development threats are and what the desired outcomes for ES are. Both the vision of the SEQ Regional Plan and the community vision for the future can be utilised to inform this. Once the desired outcomes have been articulated, determining how the planning framework can achieve this may become a clearer task. The result may be that, in some areas, ES are covered by existing policies or implementation tools (such as scenic amenity, rural futures, stormwater management, biodiversity, coastal management or others). Overlaying these existing policies and maps with ES areas will be required, in order to identify the gaps that exist and determine where new or amended policies are required.

It is recognised that no single planning instrument will be able to achieve the desired outcomes for ES. Further, the various planning components may affect or conflict with each other. This is a matter that needs to be resolved by local government planners, who are best placed to assess the true affect of planning in their local government area.

**Table 1. SEQ ES Framework: summary of opportunities for integration with local government planning and policy**

Relevant planning framework	Opportunity for ES integration	Priority for implementation	Rationale for rating	Resources required
<b>Planning scheme components</b>				
Strategic framework	Inclusion as an <i>element</i> under the SEQ Regional Plan DROs as relevant to the local government area. ES has particular relevance to DROs 3 and 4, and potential relevance to all 12 DROs in the SEQ Regional Plan.	High	The strategic framework forms the basis of the strategic intent of the planning scheme; it is reasonable to expect that inclusion here may ultimately lead to ES being incorporated in other planning scheme components.	Community workshop; commitment from strategic planners
Priority infrastructure plans	Limited scope for application due to the preference for hard infrastructure. Some opportunity to include water sensitive urban design measures and wildlife movement solutions.	Low	Opportunities may emerge in the future, however, these plans appear to be focused on the provision of hard infrastructure to new developments.	Further lobbying of the State Government to include green infrastructure as a relevant class of infrastructure

<b>Relevant planning framework</b>	<b>Opportunity for ES integration</b>	<b>Priority for implementation</b>	<b>Rationale for rating</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
Development assessment tables	Development consistent with desired ES outcomes could be set as self assessment or code assessment, and development that would undermine desired ES outcomes could be set as requiring impact assessment.	Medium	Inclusion in many development assessment tables will be a large task; however, local governments will need to decide the level of assessment of each use in each zone, overlay and local plan in preparing a new planning scheme under the SPA.	Commitment from statutory planners
Zones	Allocation of zones provides high-level guidance on the land use pattern for the local government area, including areas where protection or restoration of ES is desired.	High	All SEQ local governments will need to translate their existing areas or zones using the standard suite of QPP zones when preparing their new planning scheme.	Commitment from environmental and statutory planners
Codes	Potential to integrate use of SEQ ES Framework with a range of existing codes, particularly as part of acceptable solutions. Creation of a stand alone ES code could be discussed with individual local governments.	Medium / High	Individual local governments will have differing capacity to develop a code for Ecosystem Services.	Dialogue with local government

<b>Relevant planning framework</b>	<b>Opportunity for ES integration</b>	<b>Priority for implementation</b>	<b>Rationale for rating</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
Local plans and maps	Development of local scale EF mapping to support local area planning.	Medium	Local governments could engage SEQ Catchments to develop local scale EF mapping for use in planning.	Community workshop; development of local scale EF mapping; Dialogue with local government
Overlays	Development of an EF overlay map or use of a range of standard overlays to identify where ES need to be protected, maintained or enhanced.	Medium / High	Development of an EF overlay map may not be appropriate for all local governments.	Dialogue with local government; development of mapping
Structure plans	Incorporation of the SEQ ES Framework to gain better outcomes for the provision of green infrastructure.	Medium / High	Opportunities for integration into structure plans may be improved if a commitment to the SEQ ES Framework is expressed in the strategic framework .	Development of local scale EF mapping
Planning scheme policies	Limited unless ES included in strategic framework. Then opportunity only exists if ES is directly relevant to deciding on development applications.	Low	PSPs play a support role in a planning scheme.	
<b>Local Government Act</b>				

<b>Relevant planning framework</b>	<b>Opportunity for ES integration</b>	<b>Priority for implementation</b>	<b>Rationale for rating</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
Community plan	Opportunity to incorporate the SEQ ES Framework into the community consultation phase. Opportunity to express commitment to ES through inclusion in both the community vision for the future and community plan content.	High	The community plan sits above all other local planning documents, and provides the greatest opportunity to reflect the value that the local community places on ES.	Community workshop to inform development of the community plan
Corporate plan	Opportunity to incorporate ES into the performance indicators, and to restate commitment to the principles of the SEQ ES Framework.	Medium / Low	Limited opportunity unless ES is addressed in the community plan.	
Operational plan	Opportunity to allocate resources to achieving desired ES outcomes stated in the community plan.	Medium / Low	Limited opportunity unless ES is addressed in the community plan.	
Local laws	Many local governments already use a Natural Assets Local Law or Vegetation Management Local Law to regulate vegetation clearing where no development is proposed. There may be further opportunities for individual local governments.	Medium	Many local governments already use this tool. Wider scope for application as local laws apply in non-development situations, unlike planning schemes under the SPA.	Dialogue with local governments

The results of this report indicate that the priority areas for implementing the SEQ ES Framework into local government planning are through:

- The local government community plan;
- The planning scheme strategic framework; and
- Zones.

These areas are strategic in nature when compared with other planning instruments. Whilst it might be argued that incorporation of the SEQ ES Framework in these planning instruments may not necessarily lead to on-ground outcomes for ES, it is the intention of this report to discuss the methods for integrating ES into local government planning and policy rather than implementing on-ground activities. The areas highlighted above provide both a relatively straightforward method of incorporating ES into local government planning and a strategic and long-term commitment to ES.

In particular, the community plan and strategic framework hold great potential for embedding a commitment to ES in local government planning. The results of a local government workshop held in February 2010, which discussed the draft version of this report, indicated that gaining a commitment to the SEQ ES Framework in these planning documents is a logical step and should be a relatively straightforward process. Incorporating a commitment to utilising the SEQ ES Framework in both these documents will assist local governments to demonstrate that they are reflecting the SEQ Regional Plan, and in particular, that they are contributing to the achievement of principles 3.1 and 4.3 of the SEQ Regional Plan, which relate to ES. The contents of the community plan, corporate plan and operational plan, which must align with each other and also reflect, among other things, the SEQ Regional Plan, will inform all non-statutory planning, policy, programs and strategies at the local government level.

Incorporating ES into these areas is a logical first step, however, it will not be enough to implement ES into these areas in isolation of other planning elements, strategies and on-ground tools. Incorporating ES into the remaining elements of Table 1 will depend on the capacity possessed by and the circumstances of individual local governments. Those elements identified as a medium-high priority for implementation are:

- Codes;
- Overlays; and
- Structure plans.

Once incorporated into the high priority local government planning documents, local government planners should consider using these planning mechanisms where appropriate.

The integration of ES is required throughout a range of local government planning documents. No single recipe will apply to each local government, it is the role of planners with the support of appropriate agencies to determine the most appropriate mechanisms to achieve the outcomes that are sought in their local government area. The State Government have indicated that they are keen to work with local government in the development stages of a new planning scheme to enhance the process of approving the scheme.

It is also crucial that an effective monitoring and evaluation framework is used to track success in the provision of ecosystem services over time.

In addition to the opportunities highlighted above, local governments already manage a number of programs and activities that could utilise the SEQ ES Framework as a prioritisation tool. An in depth analysis of these implementation tools is beyond the scope of this report; however, the following section will briefly discuss these on-ground activities and tools.

## 6. Implementation Tools

Many plans and on-ground implementation tools currently utilised by local governments have the ability to incorporate the SEQ ES Framework. Incorporating the SEQ ES Framework into the existing activities of local governments is one method by which local planning documents can lead to meeting obligations under regional and state policies and plans with little change to current activities; and improve ecosystem service provision at all scales.

Table 2 provides a list of current local government implementation tools that could incorporate the SEQ ES Framework. The current capacity to deliver the mechanisms highlighted in Table 2 is varied across local government areas, and so will not apply universally in each case. Further, the list and details are not exhaustive: however, it provides a starting point for further consideration. As in all cases, the aims of these programs should be considered in the application of the SEQ ES Framework. The application of the SEQ ES Framework will enhance the ability of flora and fauna to provide benefits to people, which may or may not achieve the primary aims of the overall program.

**Table 2. On-ground implementation tools currently utilised by local governments and how the SEQ ES Framework can be applied**

Example	How the SEQ ES Framework can be applied
Land for Wildlife, Voluntary Conservation Agreements and Nature Refuges	Ecosystem function maps and scores indicating the relationship to ecosystem services can be applied to identify priority areas for Land for Wildlife. As the aim of the Land for Wildlife program is to support private landholders to protect and enhance native flora and fauna on their property for biodiversity's own sake (and ecosystem services is aimed at protecting and enhancing native flora and fauna for people's sake), the SEQ ES Framework should be used in conjunction with current biodiversity prioritisation tools. This will allow properties providing multiple benefits to people and nature to be identified.
Stewardship payments	The SEQ ES Framework can assist with identifying private and public benefits (ecosystem services) derived from private properties. Ecosystem function maps and scores indicating the relationship to ecosystem services can be applied to identify areas of land for program inclusion.

Parkland and conservation acquisition and management	Ecosystem function maps and scores indicating the relationship to ecosystem services can be applied to identify priority areas for acquisition by Local Governments to maintain or improve specific or all ecosystem services (including those most valued by the community).
Development offsets	Ecosystem function maps and scores indicating the relationship to ecosystem services can be applied to identify potential impacts of development on the community and priority areas for offsets.

In addition to the mechanisms highlighted in Table 2, there are numerous examples of implementation tools being used both in Australia and globally, which local governments may wish to consider adopting to support the provision of ES in their area. These include:

- Transfer of development rights (TDR);
- Purchase of conservation or agricultural easements;
- Community supported agriculture (CSA);
- Community gardens and city farms;
- Landscape corridors framework (work in this area is currently being conducted by DIP's Regional Landscape Unit).

## 7. Conclusion

This report has highlighted areas where there is potential to apply the SEQ ES Framework in the context of local government planning and policy. In many cases, the mechanisms required for implementation already exist. For example, the capability to conduct community workshops which identify the values that the community places on ecosystem services in their local area has been established, with a pilot workshop conducted in Redland City Council in 2009 and a further workshop scheduled for Moreton Bay Regional Council in 2010. Similarly, SEQ Catchments possesses the capability to develop local scale mapping of ecosystem functions. The gaps that exist in these cases, therefore are not technical, but are present due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of both the SEQ ES Framework itself, and the obligation that rests on stakeholders to utilise it. A critical step is therefore facilitating communication between SEQ Catchments and local governments in the SEQ region.

Local governments, too, are already carrying out on-ground activities that can benefit from use of the SEQ ES Framework without the need for the creation of a new program. Voluntary conservation agreements, stewardship payment schemes and development offset policy are examples of such local government activities that are already taking place in many areas.

The link between the SEQ Regional Plan and local government planning scheme is clear, however, the weight that will be given to each of the policies of the SEQ Regional Plan is less clear. Overall, planning schemes and community plans must reflect and align with the SEQ Regional Plan, however, the specific criteria for deeming whether or not this has been achieved is yet to be made available by the State Government. The question of the extent to which local governments should be applying the SEQ ES Framework therefore remains largely unanswered. However, this report has investigated options for integrating the SEQ ES Framework into local government planning under both the SPA and the LGA and highlighted priority areas for integration. Whether or not taking the actions suggested in this report will be deemed as having had appropriate regard for the contents of the SEQ Regional Plan in relation to policies 3.1.1 and 4.3.1 is yet to be confirmed, however, this report provides a basis for discussion on this issue between local governments and other stakeholders.

SEQ Catchments is working towards the development of a local government guide for implementing the SEQ ES Framework, which will be based on this report and the documentation of a number of case studies with selected local governments. The case studies will be based on a series of planning scenarios illustrated through mapping that will be conducted shortly. This report and guidelines will also be forwarded to RLOSAC and the SEQ RCG for their consideration for achieving relevant policies in the SEQ Regional Plan.

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**Appendix 1.** Components for assessment under the Framework (Ecosystem Reporting Categories, Ecosystem Functions, Ecosystem Services, and Constituents of Well-being) and their constituent parts (Source: Maynard et al 2010)

Ecosystem Reporting Categories	Ecosystem Functions	Ecosystem Services	Constituents of Well-being
Deep Ocean (Marine) Open Water - Pelagic (Coastal) Open Water – Benthic (Coastal) Coral Reefs (Coastal) Seagrass (Coastal) Rocky Shores (Coastal) Beaches (Coastal) Dunes (Coastal) Coastal Zone Wetlands (Coastal) Palustrine Wetlands (I. Water) Lacustrine Wetlands (I. Water) Riverine Wetlands (I. Water) Rainforests (Forest) Schlerophyll Forests (Forest) Native Plantations (Forest) Exotic Plantations (Forest) Regrowth (Forest) Grasslands (Dryland) Shrublands/ Woodlands (Dryland) Moreton Island Bribie Island North Stradbroke Island South Stradbroke and other Bay Islands Montane (Mountain) Sugar Cane (Cultivated) Horticulture - small crops (Cultivated) Horticulture - tree crops (Cultivated) Other Irrigated Crops (Cultivated) Dams (Urban) Hard Surfaces (Urban) Parks and Gardens (Urban) Residential Gardens (Urban)	Gas Regulation Climate Regulation Disturbance Regulation Water Regulation Soil Retention Nutrient Regulation Waste Treatment and Assimilation Pollination Biological Control Barrier Effect of Vegetation Soil Formation Supporting Habitats Food Raw Materials Water Supply Genetic Resources Provision of Shade and Shelter Pharmacological Resources Landscape Opportunity	Food Water for Consumption Building and Fibre Fuel Genetic Resources Biochemicals, medicines and pharmaceuticals Ornamental Resources Transport Infrastructure Air Quality Habitable Climate Water Quality Arable Land Buffering Against Extremes Pollination Reduce Pests and Diseases Productive Soils Noise Abatement Iconic Species Cultural Diversity Spiritual and Religious Values Knowledge Systems Inspiration Aesthetic Values Affect on Social Interactions Sense of Place Iconic Landscapes Recreational Opportunities Therapeutic Landscapes	Breathing Drinking Nutrition Shelter Physical Health Mental Health Secure and Continuous Supply of Services Security of Person Security of Health Secure Access to Services Security of Property Family Cohesion Community and Social Cohesion Social and Economic Freedom Self – Actualisation