

# CBRM - Structure

## INTRODUCTION

The following outlines the role and structure for the *Centre for Bioregional Resource Management* (CBRM). The following explains the need for, and benefits of the Centre as well as its Mission, Structure, and Governance.

## DEFINITIONS

The term **Bioregion** refers to an area of land and/or water whose limits are defined not by political boundaries, but by the geographical distribution of biophysical attributes, ecological systems and human communities. These are 'practical' domains for planning and management purposes. Bioregions need to be 'recognisable' environmentally and to the people that live there and identify with them.

**Bioregional planning** is defined as a planning framework which allows for the variously defined and tenured areas of land or sea within a bioregion to be managed in a complementary way to achieve long-term conservation, resource use and human lifestyle objectives. Conservation reserves are necessary but insufficient to protect biodiversity and maintain large scale ecological processes and services which support life, and provide human quality-of-life values. Future productivity from land (& sea) will depend on how the entire landscape is used and managed. In Essence, Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) across regional landscapes (& coastal-seascapes).

In order to pursue a sustainable future, human needs and activities must be reconciled and integrated with broader scale ecosystem management that maintains biodiversity and ecological services - towns, farms, forests, pastoral land and fisheries belong on the same planning grid as reserves, species conservation, water management and land restoration. The scale of such efforts should be tailored to both ecological processes and the needs and perceptions of local communities. This integrative approach to adaptive management is **Bioregional Management**.

## JUSTIFICATION

- *This land is the place where we know where to find all that it provides for us - food from hunting and fishing, and farms, building and tool materials, medicines. This land keeps us together within its mountains: we come to understand that we are not just a few people or separate villages, but one people belonging to a homeland.*

- Akawaio Indian Chief, Upper Mazaruni District, Guyana (Courrier 1992)

The maintenance and management of biodiversity is one strategy in working towards the primary goal of the protection and sustainable use of natural resource systems and the ecological health of the biosphere. People form the foundation for the sustainable use of biological and other resources.

- *. . . Only a commitment from people can protect the natural resource systems and maintain the ecological health of Australia. Government forces have less to govern and market forces have less to market if the forces of living systems are diminished . . .*

- (Dr Peter Bridgewater, address to IUCN General Assembly, Perth 1990)

Sustainability requires planning and management for biodiversity conservation across human dominated landscapes.

- *Protected areas should no longer be considered as islands of conservation within a sea of development but as an integral part of each region as a whole in terms of biodiversity conservation.*

- (BHP, 1992 in Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee, Biodiversity Inquiry)

Bioregional planning provides an extensive, integrative framework for objective assessment and management to integrate land use, ESD, conservation and socio-economic objectives.

Increasingly, we are beginning to understand that productive agricultural systems and Ecologically Sustainable Development must be planned and integrated at larger spatial scales (catchments and landscapes) in a way which will not undermine the capital base of natural resources and productivity for future generations. Recognition of the need for bioregional approaches has grown out of the multi-disciplinary areas such as ecosystem management and landscape ecology. The necessity for bioregional approaches is also developing out of other natural resource management areas (e.g., sustainable agriculture and pastoral systems), Ecologically Sustainable Development policies and programs, Ecotourism initiatives, and Indigenous cultural and natural resource management issues.

There is a concurrent need for integrated, coordinated research, teaching, and public communication and extension with a focus on regional landscapes and their interacting components to assess and deal with natural resource management for a sustainable future for society and nature. The University of New England is in a unique biogeographical and social setting, to make a real and significant contribution to these issues, and be recognised for it.

The Centre for Bioregional Resource Management (CBRM) will play a key role in contributing the applied research and application development requirements for the sustainable future of rural communities, land-uses and ecosystem function to maintain productive resource bases, and biodiversity. It will also play an increasing role in development of policies, applications, and transferable restoration techniques and monitoring packages for bioregional management strategies of interest to local communities and all levels of government.

While a principal focus for policy development, research applications and related teaching/supervision will be the New England Tablelands and other local and regional areas of Australia, the Centre will strive to be a world leader in its field. In particular it may contribute, internationally, through the MOST (Management of Social Transformations) and MAB (Man and the Biosphere) Programs of UNESCO, as well as sustainable development and biodiversity programs of UNEP, UNCED, IUCN, UNFAO and other international organisations.

The Centre for Bioregional Resource Management will play a key role in the University's research activities in the following ways.

- Extending current collaboration within the University in a focused way, encouraging concentration and productivity.
- More efficient use of research infrastructure.

- Development of new partnerships with government agencies, industry and others in the private sector, and with other research organisations (e.g., CSIRO), and Research and Development Corporations.
- Attract external funding.
- Contribute to the University maintaining a recognised position at the cutting edge of research and teaching in resource management.
- Provision of a high quality environment for the training of postgraduate research students.
- Contribute research outputs that are nationally significant
- Research and teaching in partnership with Aboriginal people in the area of traditional indigenous principles and practices for landscape and natural resource management.
- Build partnerships with key International organisations (e.g., UNESCO, UNEP, IUCN).
- Contribute to globally relevant, and internationally transferable, natural resource policy development and research applications.

With its home within the Department of Ecosystem Management, CBRM will provide a much needed focus and integrative role for trans-disciplinary synthesis in dealing with regional resource management issues. It will also enable more extensive interactions outside the University which will benefit integrated collaborative research and teaching. The Centre will provide a much better focal point for attracting significant outside resources and government consultancies. It will also provide an increased attraction for students to study at UNE.

# MISSION and OBJECTIVES

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Centre for Bioregional Resource Management will provide an integrative focus for high quality research and teaching that will contribute to sustainable resource use and management, sustainable efficient conservation planning and management, and sustainable human quality-of-life within and across bioregions.

## AIMS

In partnership with rural and urban communities, and public and private sector institutional partners, the Centre aims to improve Australia's ability to utilise natural resources sustainably, by experimentally determining the policies, principles and practical applications for establishing and developing bioregional planning and management units based on regional environmental attributes, human identity with and use of the region, and including landscape-wide sustainability for rural production, water quality and environmental restoration for the long-term maintenance of nature and society.

## OBJECTIVES

### Integration

- Provide a focus and integrative framework for high quality multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research on regional resource management issues.
- Bring together interested researchers from within and outside the University.
- Develop and promote partnerships in research and applications with local government, state and federal government agencies, research institutional partners, the private sector and local communities.
- Develop and promote partnerships and research and teaching projects with Aboriginal peoples in the area of traditional indigenous principles and practices for landscape and natural resource management.
- Contribute to the research, practical knowledge, tools, applications and technologies required for bioregional assessment, planning and management for sustainable resource use and agriculture, sustainable rural enterprise, sustainable conservation, ecologically sustainable development and ecologically restorative industries within and across regions.
- Contribute to the objectives of the University's Community Service Management Plan, Research Management Plan and Quality Assurance.

### Research and Applications

- Stimulate and foster programs of high quality, inter-disciplinary research into determinants of the occurrence of ecosystems and natural resources and the uses made of them by rural and/or regional communities.
- Provide a supportive environment for creative and innovative research or applications development in sustainable conservation, resource use and management on bioregional bases; especially those which assist transfer and community learning through active-adaptive projects involving local people or rural/regional communities.

- Provide computer-based archival and processing facilities for the integration of spatial data for a variety of strategic bioregional resource planning and management uses.
- Develop cross-jurisdictional and trans-institutional models, policies and theoretical administrative frameworks for bioregional planning and management of natural resources. Endeavor to test these with agency partners and local communities.
- Develop and test models for resource assessment, planning and management integrated with socio-economic and environmental monitoring.
- Develop and test innovative techniques and applications for sustainable resource management and planning with local / regional communities.
- Develop and test models for large-scale, multi-attribute ecosystem restoration.
- Attract Postgraduate research to this field.

### **Teaching, Communication and Extension**

- Provide quality spatial data and interpretation to local / regional land managers to assist decision making and adaptive management, and make regional natural resource information and knowledge widely available or accessible.
- Encourage Centre staff and Members to incorporate bioregional approaches in UNE teaching units as appropriate.
- Incorporate research, new techniques / applications and experience in bioregional approaches into curricula development for Professional Short Courses and/or University units for undergraduates and postgraduates; encourage research higher degrees to be undertaken in areas of interest to the aims of the Centre and supervised by Centre members.
- Develop and conduct short courses for staff of resource managing Agencies, Government Departments, Landcare Australia and local Landcare groups, Integrated Catchment Management groups, etc.
- Provide, as a community service, information transfer and communication, and guidance in regional to local scales of resource management planning to local, rural/ regional communities.
- Provide other information dissemination and extension services to the general public to foster social and Institutional transformations towards more sustainable land and resource use at regional scales.
- Increase recognition and understanding of the values and knowledge that indigenous peoples express in their (bioregional) land management to enrich our Institutional understanding, encourage broader community understanding, and incorporate in our research, teaching and communication.

# GOVERNANCE

## INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Centre for Bioregional Resource Management (CBRM) will build upon and complement existing strengths of the University of New England.

The CBRM has been officially recognised by UNESCO as one of its world wide network of Centres. The Centre does not however come under the administration of UNESCO.

The Centre will have its home and administrative support base imbedded within the Institute for Rural Futures. The Centre will maintain close links to other Departments and Centres across the University, and with resource planning and management Agencies, other research institutions, local government, the private sector and local communities outside of UNE.

## MANAGEMENT

The Centre will have a Director appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and responsible for the management of the Centre including supervision of research and support staff specifically appointed to the Centre.

The Centre may have full-time University staff or equivalent, although such staff need not be employed on a full-time basis in the Centre. In the case of staff appointed to the Centre, the Director will be their supervisor.

## ACCOMODATION

University staff members stay within their current department. The administrative centre for the Centre will be accommodated within the Institute for Rural Futures which will also provide space for visiting fellows as required. Students undertaking postgraduate research within the Centre would normally remain in the department from which they are being supervised. If there are collaborative or other reasons why a student needs to be close to the administrative centre of the Centre, accommodation may be sought through consultation with the Director and Head of the appropriate School.

## **CONSTITUTION of MEMBERSHIP**

In general, the members of the Centre shall be:

- The Director;
- University academic staff with appropriate expertise and interest who choose to be involved in the activities of the Centre and whose participation is approved by the Director;
- research and support staff who are appointed to a position in the Centre; and
- persons from outside the University with appropriate expertise who accept the invitation of the Director to become members.

Interested staff members from within a School, Faculty or elsewhere in the University may nominate to become a member of the Centre. Staff would be asked, where possible to consider research and student projects that would contribute to the Centre's aims and sustainable regional development. Staff with a particular trans-disciplinary contribution to make to the aims, functions or collaborative projects in bioregional planning and management may also be invited to become a member. UNE staff affiliated to the Centre would direct some of their research and supervision towards its aims. University staff that become members of the Centre remain attached to their School or administrative centre within their usual line of supervision. Heads of Schools will be consulted by the Director with respect to the participation of members in the Centre.

A distributed network of community organisations, individuals and other institutions will be developed for flexible and iterative capacity-building for particular projects and especially for facilitating the development of an experimental bioregional planning and management model in the New England Tablelands area. Eventually, it is envisaged that a system of staff development and training secondment or 'Fellowships' might be established so that partner agencies could fund their staff to become attached to the Centre for a particular project and/or postgraduate study/research. The Centre may therefore develop other categories (e.g., 'Ex-Officio Member', 'Sponsoring Member', or 'Fellow') of membership for organisations / agencies, partners, sponsors, or collaborative researchers from outside of the University.