

Submission on the Queensland Government's

Cape York Peninsula Bioregion Management Plan Scoping Paper

SEPTEMBER 2012



**THE
WILDERNESS
SOCIETY**

Sweetwater Lagoon, Cape York | photo Kerry Trapnell

Executive Summary

Cape York Peninsula is a vast intact landscape of extraordinary beauty, where natural and Indigenous cultural values are interwoven, diverse and abundant. Managed for tens of thousands of years by its Traditional Owners, Cape York Peninsula is one of the last great Aboriginal homelands on earth.

Its natural and cultural values require the greatest possible protection.

In terms of its natural values, the region is rich in biodiversity, including:

- Half of all of the bird species in Australia
- More than half of all the butterfly species in Australia
- One third of all the mammal species in Australia
- A quarter of all the frog and reptile species in Australia
- 3,000 separate plant species, 264 which are only found on Cape York Peninsula
- 40 animal species which are only found on Cape York Peninsula

Several new species have been found on Cape York Peninsula in the last two years alone, including most recently a new species of sea snake in the area affected by Rio Tinto's proposed expansion of bauxite mining South of Embley.

Virtually all of the Cape's natural environment has been identified as containing conservation values of national and international conservation significance. Cape York Peninsula represents a mosaic of many different landscape types and ecosystems, and contains some of the last remaining intact pristine wild rivers left on the planet, as well as more intact tropical rainforest than the Daintree, more intact old growth woodlands than Tasmania, more wetlands than Kakadu, greater river diversity than the Franklin, and more sand dune areas than Fraser Island.

It also has 1,800km of spectacular coastline, adjacent to the most pristine part of the Great Barrier Reef, plus the most biodiverse part of the world's largest intact tropical savannah.

Cape York Peninsula is also rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage. Indigenous cultural life remains rich, unique and strong – it is part of the oldest continuous human culture on earth. Cape York's traditional Indigenous cultures and languages reflect the incredible diversity of this environment – revealing a rich expression of human interactions with nature all the way back to ancient times.

A significant portion of Cape York Peninsula is not protected from a range of destructive and degrading threats. The mining pressures on the Cape are unprecedented (see Attachment 2). Until now, Cape York has mostly been spared the impacts of the rampant mining industry in Australia. But it is encroaching upon Cape York Peninsula with an ever-growing list of mine proposals, including related port facilities. Individually and collectively, these proposals threaten the Cape's natural and cultural values and the opportunities presented by both World Heritage listing and the development of a conservation-based economy.

With one of the greatest natural and cultural assets on Earth at stake, the protection of Cape York Peninsula's natural and cultural values should be the first principle and priority of all State-based Cape York Peninsula planning processes, including the Bioregional Management Plan (BRMP) and the Cape York Statutory Regional Plan (SRP).

In addition, a whole of landscape scale approach to conservation management needs to be incorporated into all State planning processes, including the BRMP and the SRP. Significant additional protected areas outside the existing National Reserve System estate are required to

effectively undertake conservation management, support ecological adaptability, and resilience to climate change.

This scientifically robust and contemporary off-reserve approach to land management and conservation underpins the Wild River declarations. The history and debates around the Wild Rivers legislation and the declaration of individual rivers are extensive. The Wilderness Society's position on much of the misinformation that was promulgated in those debates by opponents of the legislation is also clear¹. It is not the purpose of this submission to re-visit those debates in detail, but simply to make the following observation:

There is still no proposal from anyone about what would replace existing Wild River declarations and still deliver the same level of environmental protection and ecologically sustainable development opportunities.

Developing a World Heritage nomination provides an opportunity for the people of Cape York Peninsula, and the wider Australian community, to set a visionary direction for the social, environmental, economic and cultural future of the region. A successful nomination for Cape York Peninsula World Heritage listing could see the creation of the world's largest terrestrial World Heritage area – an enduring legacy for any government.

In addition, State and Commonwealth governments need to invest in the development of a conservation-based economy for the Cape. Cape York Peninsula maintains extraordinary ecological and cultural values, which could provide the region with a huge natural competitive advantage for future sustainable economic development. These include under-realised employment opportunities in areas, for example, such as tourism (a Queensland Government priority), land management and carbon initiatives.

Finally, if the Queensland Government is serious about taking a *“balanced and coordinated approach to the management, use and protection of land on Cape York to deliver ecological, economic, social and cultural outcomes”*² then it needs to immediately reconcile the confusion of multiple planning processes that are currently underway and run, instead, a transparent, methodical process that has conservation of natural and cultural values as a central tenet.

The failure to do so to date is a significant barrier to meaningful consultation and may well compromise the legitimacy of any future Cape York plan. In that context, the Wilderness Society believes the World Heritage nomination process should be given priority over other State-based planning processes, such as the BRMP and the SRP, and should inform those processes.

The Queensland Government has an opportunity to show strong leadership and prioritise the natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula in the development of a truly sustainable economy for the region. It can do so by retaining existing Wild River protections, maintaining and extending the protected area estate through established tenure resolution processes, supporting natural and cultural resource management across the pastoral and Aboriginal land estates, and working with the Commonwealth and Traditional Owners to deliver a large and comprehensive World Heritage listing with economic and employment benefits.

¹ See further *Protecting Rivers, Supporting Communities*, The Wilderness Society, February 2011

² *Cape York Peninsula Bioregion Management Plan Scoping paper*, DEHP, June 2012, Minster's foreword.

Key recommendations

Openness and Transparency

1. For the Queensland Government to take a “*balanced and coordinated approach to the management, use and protection of land on Cape York*” (as it claims it intends to in the BRMP Scoping Paper), it needs to run a transparent, methodical planning process. A Cape-wide landscape approach to conservation management needs to be incorporated into all State planning processes, including the Bioregional Management Plan (BRMP) and the Cape York Statutory Regional Plan (SRP).

Overarching Principles

2. There should be no reduction in existing levels of environmental protection, either in terms of the protected area estate and/or Wild River declarations.
3. The protection of Cape York Peninsula’s natural and cultural values should be the first principle and priority of all State-based Cape York planning processes, including the BRMP and the SRP.
4. The long term protection of the values of Cape York can only be achieved at the level of whole-of-landscape conservation, therefore the conservation of natural and cultural values must be a central tenet of the planning process and be reflected in the outcomes of any final Cape York plan.
5. Planning processes in relation to the Native Title of Indigenous Traditional Owners must respect their rights to Free Prior Informed Consent, in a manner they agree is appropriate to their traditional laws and customary tenure.

Wild Rivers

6. Existing Wild River declarations and protections should be retained. They provide a well-designed, ecologically-grounded and effective balance between environmental protection and sustainable development.
7. World Heritage nomination consultation processes must consider how the ongoing protection of existing Wild River areas will be approached.

World Heritage Protection

8. The World Heritage nomination process (including multiple nominations should they occur in 2013) should be given priority over other planning processes, such as the BRMP and the SRP, and should inform those processes.
9. To the extent that does not occur, the State needs to immediately clarify how it intends to reconcile any divergence and/or overlap between areas identified for mining and other projects through the SRP process and the World Heritage nomination process.
10. There needs to be continued State and Commonwealth support for Cape York Peninsula World Heritage engagement and Indigenous consent processes. To provide certainty to this process, the Queensland Government should commit to seeking an assurance from Federal Labor and the Coalition that they will see the World Heritage assessment and nomination process through to its completion.
11. State and Commonwealth governments need to clarify Traditional Owner groups’ preferred consent mechanisms to satisfy the requirement of Free Prior Informed Consent to a World Heritage nomination.

12. The State Government should work closely with the Commonwealth Government to meet the commitments for an initial World Heritage nomination in time to allow consideration by UNESCO in 2013.
13. To allow sufficient time for other Traditional Owner groups to determine their plans for Country and to reach agreement on including their lands in a World Heritage area, an initial nomination should also provide for further nomination stages, and include consideration of a 'Cape York Peninsula Biosphere Reserve'.

Conservation Economy

14. The State and Commonwealth governments should invest in the development of a conservation-based economy for Cape York Peninsula, including in the development of under-realised employment opportunities for Indigenous people in areas such as tourism, land management and the emerging carbon economy. This should include a comprehensive economic investment and employment package timed to accompany an initial World Heritage nomination.

Protected Area Estate

15. There should be no reduction in the scope of the protected area estate in Cape York Peninsula, either in terms of area or existing levels of environmental protection.
16. The State should work with Traditional Owners to ensure that all existing protected areas have management plans in place that will protect biodiversity and meet World Heritage assessment criteria. The State should also provide the necessary resources to ensure protected areas can be managed in a way that maintains and enhances the natural and cultural values of international conservation significance.

1. Openness and Transparency

Since the release of the Bioregion Management Plan (BRMP) Scoping Paper in June 2012, the Queensland Government announced, unexpectedly, the development of a Statutory Regional Plan (SRP) for Cape York Peninsula. While the relationship between the two plans has still to be formally clarified by Government, it can be assumed that the Government's intention is that the SRP will be the primary instrument to regulate development on the Cape, with any "bioregional management" plan acting as a subsidiary instrument.

The sudden announcement of an SRP has brought confusion to stakeholders and residents of Cape York Peninsula, and uncertainly as to what the Queensland Government's real intentions are for the Cape. The Queensland Government's failure to date to resolve the confusion between the Government's own planning documents and various internal processes has compromised our ability to provide anything other than generalised feedback. Presumably other stakeholders are in the same position.

We therefore suggest that, as an immediate priority, relevant Ministers clarify with stakeholders:

- the proposed relationship between the BRMP and the SRP, in particular the proposed scope of the BRMP and the extent to which it is intended to have any statutory effect; and
- how it intends to reconcile any divergence and/or overlap between areas identified for development through the SRP and /or BRMP process and the World Heritage nomination process.

For the Queensland Government to take a "*balanced and coordinated approach to the management, use and protection of land on Cape York*" (as Minister Powell claims it intends to in the BRMP Scoping Paper), it needs to run a transparent, methodical planning process. As protection of the values of Cape York can only be achieved at the level of whole-of-landscape conservation, then conservation of natural and cultural values must be a central tenet of the planning process and be reflected in the outcomes of any final Cape York plan.

2. Overarching Principles

Protected areas (approximately 12% of Cape York) are crucial for conserving biodiversity and supporting ecological processes beneficial to human well-being, and they provide long term employment and sustainable economic development options as well.

However, to the extent that the Queensland Government is genuine about appropriately balancing land management and use on the Cape with conservation outcomes, simply relying on highly protected areas like National Parks as the central conservation tool is not enough. As outlined by a recent CSIRO report³ on the national reserve system:

"...protected natural areas such as national parks and indigenous protected areas will continue to play a key role in biodiversity conservation. But, given the increased level of threat and the need to allow movement of species in response to pressures from climate change, additional areas of habitat, outside the protected area system, will be increasingly important. These areas will provide additional and alternate habitats for species, and support ecological processes across whole landscapes.

³ *Climate change, biodiversity conservation and the national reserve system*, CSIRO, September 2012

It will be increasingly important to manage ecological change at very large landscape scales.”

Governments have a responsibility to underpin core protected areas with other conservation strategies across the entire landscape and across all land tenures. This approach presupposes that sound ecological principles should guide regional planning, and set a baseline ‘duty of care’ for landholders through necessary regulation and collaborative management.

As such, any state based planning processes that ostensibly seek to balance “*the management, use and protection of land on Cape York to deliver ecological, economic, social and cultural outcomes*” need to maintain existing levels of environmental protection, and proceed on the basis that the protection of Cape York Peninsula’s natural and cultural values should be the guiding principle in determining future land use and development opportunities.

3. Maintaining Wild Rivers Protection

Freshwater ecosystems are under increasing ecological threat at both global and national scales. Many of Australia’s (and indeed the world’s) river systems are seriously degraded due to over-extraction, pollution, catchment modification and river regulation. The science is also clear that we can only properly understand the functioning of rivers, and deal with their protection, at the catchment/basin level.

In that context – and in full acknowledgement of the fact that Queensland retains some of Australia’s last remaining free flowing rivers – the *Wild Rivers Act* was passed in 2005 with support from the state Labor and the Liberal Parties, and subsequently resulted in 13 Wild River declarations, including four on the Cape (the Archer, Stewart, Lockhart and Wenlock Rivers).

The history and debates around the Wild Rivers legislation and the declaration of individual rivers are extensive. The Wilderness Society’s position on much of the misinformation that was promulgated in those debates by opponents of the legislation is also clear⁴. It’s not the purpose of this submission to re-visit those debates in any detail, but simply to make the following observation:

There is still no proposal from anyone about what would replace existing Wild River declarations and still deliver the same level of environmental protection and ecologically sustainable development opportunities.

It’s also worth remembering that the declarations and the legislative framework are – and continue to be – supported by many Indigenous Traditional Owners and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

A diagram of how Wild Rivers actually works is Attachment 1 to this submission; in summary Wild River declarations support sustainable economic development opportunities (such as grazing, fishing and building infrastructure for tourism). They also protect traditional activities and cultural practices, and allocate specific Indigenous water reserves for community economic purposes (a first in Australia).

Existing mining entitlements are not affected. The declarations only regulate a limited set of future activities (strip mining, intensive irrigation and dams); and only within a comparatively small high preservation zone around the most important rivers, lakes, wetlands and springs. Pastoralism,

⁴ See further *Protecting Rivers, Supporting Communities*, The Wilderness Society, February 2011

fishing, private infrastructure development and other low impact activities can still occur in this high preservation zone.

It's worth reiterating that the impact of Wild River declarations on economic development has been wildly overstated. While there are undoubtedly challenges to economic development on the Cape, Wild Rivers is not one of them. There have been no examples of an Indigenous-owned business that has been stopped or seriously stifled by a Wild River declaration.

The State Government has a crucial responsibility to protect all of Queensland's wild river systems for the benefit of all Australians. As such – and in the absence of any workable alternative mechanism that can deliver the same balance between environmental protection and development, and that has been subject to the same rigorous scientific and community scrutiny - existing Wild River declarations throughout Queensland should be retained.

Any future discussion of changes to existing Cape York declarations – including the potential extension of protection to other wild river catchments – should be deferred until resolution of the World Heritage nomination process. Unlike the SRP process, the World Heritage process is the only mechanism to ensure formalised and considered Traditional Owner involvement in determining what sort of development they want to occur on country and the level of holistic protection they want to see for river systems.

As a final point, it's worth noting that Wild Rivers is not exclusively focused on Cape York Peninsula or on Indigenous communities; it operates State-wide. As such, it is of significant concern that the State has targeted the Cape York Wild River declarations for repeal by one Minister, while leaving another Minister responsible for determining the fate of the other nine Queensland Wild River declarations.

As a matter of public policy and national interest, it would be both extraordinary and outrageous for an entire and sound legislative framework to be overturned without a coherent public policy to replace it. However, if it proceeds on its current trajectory, that would seem to be the approach to environmental protection being adopted by the Queensland Government.

4. Giving Priority to World Heritage Protection

Developing a World Heritage nomination provides an opportunity for the people of Cape York Peninsula, and the wider Australian community, to set a visionary direction for the social, environmental, economic and cultural future of the region. A successful nomination for Cape York Peninsula World Heritage listing should see the creation of the world's largest terrestrial World Heritage area.

World Heritage protection for Cape York Peninsula is a long-standing commitment of both the Queensland and Commonwealth governments. Importantly, the consultation process for World Heritage nomination is currently the only planning process underway that ensures formalised and considered Traditional Owner involvement in determining what sort of development and environmental protection they want to occur on country. We urge the State Government to continue to support that process and extend it to any Traditional Owner groups who express their preference to engage in the World Heritage process.

With one of the greatest natural and cultural assets on Earth at stake, World Heritage assessment should be given priority over other State-based planning processes, rather than having those processes come over the top of it, which currently appears to be the case.

In that context, there needs to be continued bipartisan government support for Cape York Peninsula World Heritage consultation and engagement with Indigenous Traditional Owners and non-Indigenous stakeholders, with a view to ensuring that at least an initial World Heritage nomination is completed in time to allow UNESCO consideration in 2013. Any initial nomination should also provide for further stages (for example, by including an indicative list of additional areas likely to form part of a second stage nomination, subject to securing Traditional Owner consent).

State and Commonwealth governments need to clarify Traditional Owner groups' preferred consent mechanisms to satisfy the requirement of Free Prior Informed Consent to a World Heritage nomination, and ensure reasonable timeframes in which government can be sure it has the informed agreement of the Traditional Owners.

The quintessential values of Cape York Peninsula are its rich biological and ecosystem diversity, its enduring Aboriginal Stories and cultural landscapes, and its large scale and exceptional integrity at a global scale.

To acknowledge, protect and manage these universally significant values, based on the World Heritage criteria, a nomination would likely encompass a significant proportion of the region, which would be made up of a mosaic of tenures and land uses, each contributing to the protection and enhancement of Cape York Peninsula's World Heritage values.

The Wilderness Society would support a mixed World Heritage nomination of natural and cultural values, with a strong focus on cultural landscapes, if it had the consent of the relevant Traditional Owners. One large, encompassing, area is optimal for protection and management across the natural values and ecological systems of the region.

However, we recognise that respecting the role of Traditional Owner consent to a nomination, and voluntary inclusion of areas of international conservation significance by other landholders, may deliver a series of World Heritage areas. In this case management options to ensure landscape connectivity will be needed.

A World Heritage nomination would be strengthened and supported by a 'Biosphere Reserve' approach to the whole region, ensuring compatible off reserve management and buffer zones, and laying a basis for land management, sustainable enterprises and economic development. In the event of a serial nomination, a 'Cape York Peninsula Biosphere Reserve' would create management strategies and landscape connections between World Heritage areas.

A 'Biosphere Reserve' for the region could provide a framework for implementing a conservation and development package for the region (see *Investing in a Conservation Economy*) and is consistent with the approach supported and adopted through negotiations on the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act.

5. Investing in a Conservation Economy

Despite the heavy rhetoric around the importance of mining on the Cape for Indigenous economic development, very few Indigenous people are employed in Cape York Peninsula mining. The role of

mining in providing for the region's future employment and prosperity is extremely limited when compared with the opportunities that could be derived from eco-tourism, land management and other conservation-compatible economic activities. At times of high resource prices it is too easy to forget this reality, when governments and stakeholders should be looking to a sustainable and reliable long term economic growth trajectory not beholden to these fluctuations and boom and bust cycles.

Similarly, with agriculture, there are major natural constraints (soil, climate, etc) on any significant expansion to the agricultural sector on the Cape in terms of either Indigenous or non-Indigenous employment opportunities.

However, tourism, land management and the emerging carbon economy show huge potential to deliver real Indigenous jobs with improved livelihoods, with one Government report⁵ suggesting tourism alone would out-scale all other forms of employment combined. As a comparative indication of prospective jobs growth, the report found that tourism could generate up to 1000 jobs, compared with only 300 in the mining sector.

The bottom line is that Cape York Peninsula maintains extraordinary ecological and cultural values. Showcasing them would provide the region with a huge natural competitive advantage for future sustainable economic development. These include under-realised employment opportunities in areas such as tourism (a Queensland Government priority), land management and carbon initiatives (particularly savanna burning and invasive species management).

In that context, State and Commonwealth governments need to put in place a substantial economic investment package to integrate development needs with land management, to ensure economic opportunities for land holders and Indigenous communities from World Heritage can be realised, and to underpin the sustainability of a declaration and the good management of World Heritage areas.

Elements of that package would obviously need to be informed by stakeholder consultations and aspirations, but could include:

- World Heritage Infrastructure and Institutions, including a World Heritage Centre, a tourism hub and, potentially, a science hub;
- Incentives to pastoralists to take advantage of World Heritage listing. This could include changing lease conditions to allow greater flexibility in land use and the opportunity for pastoralists to diversify into, for example, eco-tourism activities;
- Continuation of the Cape York Peninsula tenure resolution process;
- Development of a Dreaming Track, which could deliver employment opportunities in construction, maintenance, marketing and management;
- Biomedical, bio-prospecting and pharmaceutical opportunities, which could, potentially, be linked to any new science hub.

Simply in relation to conservation and land management activities, there are employment opportunities that could be supported and developed by governments in the following key areas:

- Protected area management (including jointly managed National Parks, nature refuges and Indigenous Protected Areas);
- Weed and feral animal control;

⁵ *Cape York Indigenous Employment Strategy*, Keinhart-FGI and Business Mapping Solutions, 2005

- Water quality management;
- Fisheries management;
- Scientific research and Indigenous ecological knowledge;
- Carbon economy opportunities, including funding through the Commonwealth's \$946M Biodiversity Fund (to help land managers store carbon, enhance biodiversity and build greater environmental resilience), as well as specific funding available through the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund (\$17.1M to help Indigenous communities establish or participate in carbon farming projects).

A successful example of this type of conservation and land management employment opportunity being realised on Cape York Peninsula is the Indigenous Wild Ranger program. To date the program has been a huge success, offering real employment opportunities and building nodes of skilled resource management workers across the region. The program is based on a community development model meaning that, not only are these rangers performing a vital environmental service for all Australians, but the program is performing an important social role in local Cape communities.

With a World Heritage listing for Cape York Peninsula on the cards, these programs could be seriously boosted in the coming years. How governments can better support and develop these types of employment opportunities over the longer-term is an area for urgent attention and investment for both levels of government and one likely to be overlooked and marginalised if the State's SRP process continues on its current trajectory.

6. Maintaining Existing Protected Areas

Approximately 12% of Cape York Peninsula is currently in formal protected areas, and these remain crucial for conserving biodiversity and supporting ecological processes beneficial to human well-being. As a separate, but related proposition, evidence of the effective management of those areas will likely be central to securing natural World Heritage listing.

Given both the intrinsic value of protected areas, and their role in lending weight to a World Heritage nomination, it's critical that there is no reduction in the scope of the protected area estate in Cape York Peninsula, either in terms of area or existing levels of environmental protection. It's also crucial that the State work with traditional owners to ensure that all existing protected areas have management plans in place that will both (a) protect biodiversity, and (b) meet World Heritage assessment criteria.

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How does Wild Rivers work? - The Wenlock River example

Mining Exclusion:
This is the 'Coolibah Springs' area on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, where Cape Alumina wants to strip mine for bauxite. The 500m buffer zone here has excluded mining from this sensitive area.

Native Title:
Native Title rights are formally protected under the Wild Rivers Act. A Wild River declaration does not affect land tenure.

Land Management:
There are 6 Indigenous Wild River Rangers working within the Wenlock River catchment, addressing problems of invasive weeds, feral animals and fire management. In total there are 40 Indigenous rangers as part of this program, with another 60 promised by the Bligh Government.

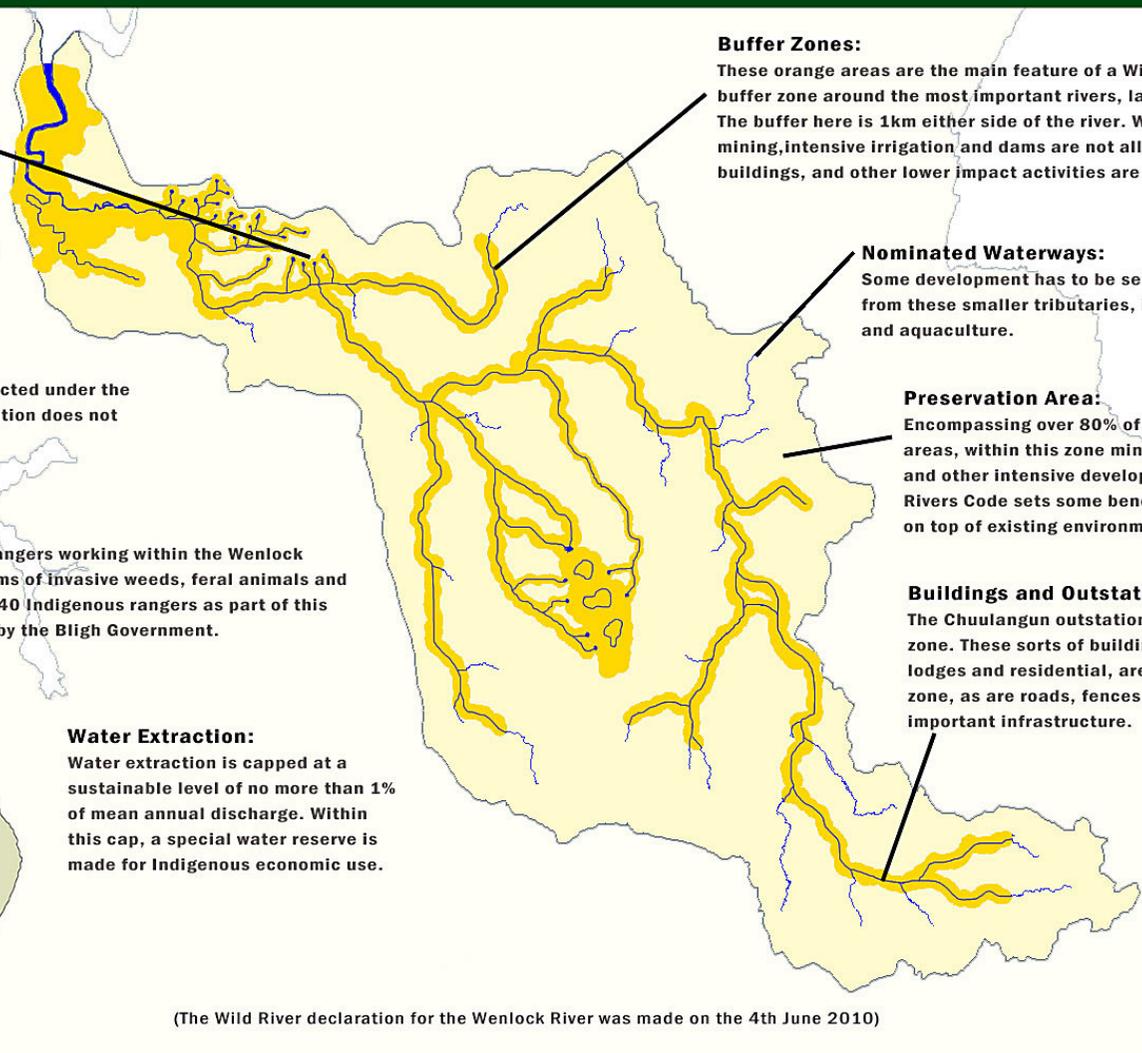
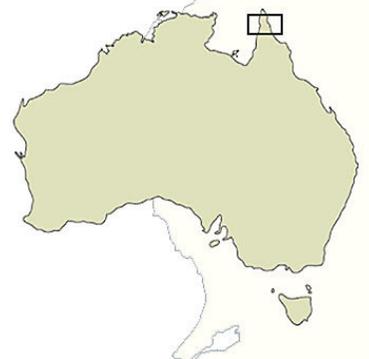
Water Extraction:
Water extraction is capped at a sustainable level of no more than 1% of mean annual discharge. Within this cap, a special water reserve is made for Indigenous economic use.

Buffer Zones:
These orange areas are the main feature of a Wild River declaration - the buffer zone around the most important rivers, lakes, wetlands and springs. The buffer here is 1km either side of the river. Within these areas, strip mining, intensive irrigation and dams are not allowed. Pastoralism, fishing, buildings, and other lower impact activities are still allowed in this zone.

Nominated Waterways:
Some development has to be setback a reasonable distance from these smaller tributaries, including clearing for mines, and aquaculture.

Preservation Area:
Encompassing over 80% of most declared Wild River areas, within this zone mining, agriculture, aquaculture, and other intensive development is allowed. The Wild Rivers Code sets some benchmarks for these activities, on top of existing environmental regulations.

Buildings and Outstations:
The Chuulangun outstation is here within the buffer zone. These sorts of buildings, including tourism lodges and residential, are allowed within the buffer zone, as are roads, fences, firebreaks and other important infrastructure.



(The Wild River declaration for the Wenlock River was made on the 4th June 2010)



THE MINING SURGE

eight new mines planned

Bauxite Hills Bauxite Mine

Cape Alumina plans to construct a large bauxite mine in the remote Skardon River area. Impacts include at least 4 000 hectares of land cleared, and river mouth dredging.

Urquhart Point Sand Mine

At the mouth of the Embley River, Oresome plans to construct a sand mine and port - involving up to 600 hectares of dunes and turtle nesting habitat cleared.

South of Embley Bauxite Mine

Rio Tinto plans to build a huge bauxite mine and port in this tall eucalyptus forest and red cliff country. Impacts include about 30,000 hectares of land cleared, a dam on Norman Creek and extensive seabed dredging.

Kendall River Kaolin Mine

Gulf Minerals Limited plans to build a Kaolin mine, with thousands of hectares of land likely to be cleared.

Skardon River Bauxite/ Kaolin Mine

Gulf Alumina plans to transform an old failed kaolin mine into a major bauxite and kaolin mine. Impacts include an initial 3 500 hectares of land cleared, and river mouth dredging.

Pisolite Hills Bauxite Mine

Right on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and Wenlock River, Cape Alumina plans to build a large bauxite mine and port. Impacts include about 6 500 hectares of land cleared, threat to rare rainforest springs, and river mouth dredging.

Aurukun Bauxite Mine

The Queensland Government has announced they are putting the formal Chalco bauxite mining lease up for tender. This would see the construction of a huge bauxite mine, involving thousands of hectares of land clearing, dams, and another port.

Wongai Coal Mine

In the stunning Bathurst Bay and the most pristine part of the Great Barrier Reef, Aust-Pac Capital and the Balkanu Development Corporation plan to build a coal mine and port.

- Existing Mine 
- Proposed Mine 
- Proposed Port 
- Wild Rivers 
- Great Barrier Reef 

