Southern Gulf NRM

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BUSINESS PLAN

2026 - 2027

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *of country*

Southern Gulf NRM acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and waters across the Southern Gulf region. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and recognise their enduring connection to Country.

FOREWORD

At Southern Gulf NRM, we are dedicated to fostering a sustainable and resilient environment for North West Queensland. Our work is built on strong partnerships with landholders, industry, government, and community groups, ensuring that natural resource management initiatives have lasting impact. This business plan reflects our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and stewardship of the region's unique landscapes and biodiversity.

As we navigate the challenges of climate variability, land degradation, and sustainable development, our strategic priorities remain focused on delivering practical solutions, strengthening community engagement, and securing long-term financial sustainability. This plan serves as a roadmap for our future, guiding our efforts to create thriving environments and communities for generations to come.

The Board would like to extend their gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and the broader community for their support in making our vision a reality. Together, we will continue to protect and enhance the natural resources that sustain our region.

Professor Iain Gordon,
Chairperson, Southern Gulf NRM

Our **VISION**

Resilient landscapes. Strong communities.

Our **PURPOSE**

To protect and enhance the Southern Gulf's natural environment by empowering communities to manage land, water and ecosystems for current and future generations.

Our **VALUES**

***Collaboration** – We work with landholders, Traditional Owners, communities, and each other.*

***Practical** – We focus on actions that deliver real, onground results.*

***Respect** – We respect Country, culture and people, and work alongside others to support their long-term health.*

***Knowledge** – We use science, experience, and local knowledge to guide our decisions.*

***Sustainability** – We make decisions that support long-term outcomes.*

***Integrity** – We act with honesty, fairness and accountability.*

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REGIONAL *Priorities*

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Protecting and restoring native ecosystems, ensuring survival of threatened species, and enhancing habitat connectivity to maintain ecological balance in the Southern Gulf region.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Strengthening community engagement by supporting education, capacity building, and citizen science initiatives to empower local stakeholders in natural resource management.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating with government agencies, research institutions, industry groups, and Traditional Owners to develop innovative and sustainable environmental solutions.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Promoting best management practices in grazing and farming to improve soil health, water efficiency, and carbon sequestration.

WEED AND PEST MANAGEMENT

Implementing proactive and coordinated strategies to control invasive species that threaten native biodiversity, agriculture, and regional ecosystems.

DISASTER RECOVERY

Supporting communities, industries, and landscapes to recover from natural disasters through coordinated planning, resilience-building and targeted recovery initiatives.

Our **PARTNERS**

Southern Gulf NRM collaborates with a diverse network of stakeholders to achieve its mission.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

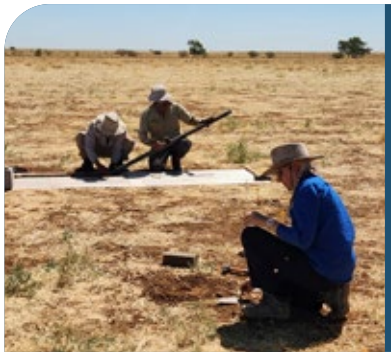
We work closely with landholders, Indigenous groups, researchers, and government agencies to protect and restore ecosystems across the Southern Gulf region. This includes collaborative projects focused on habitat restoration, threatened species protection, and sustainable land management. By leveraging our partners' expertise and resources, we enhance biodiversity outcomes and build resilience against environmental threats.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

We partner with councils, volunteer groups, and industry organisations to deliver education programs, workshops, and on-ground initiatives that empower individuals to care for their environment. Our partnerships help strengthen local capacity, ensuring that communities have the knowledge and tools to drive positive environmental change.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration is key to achieving long-term environmental and agricultural sustainability. We build strategic alliances with government agencies, research institutions, industry bodies, and community organisations to secure funding, share knowledge, and implement impactful programs. These partnerships enable us to align regional priorities with broader state and national strategies, maximising our collective impact. solutions.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

We support landholders in adopting best-practice agricultural methods through partnerships with industry experts, research organisations, and government programs. By working together, we promote soil health, water efficiency, and regenerative grazing practices that enhance productivity while protecting natural resources. Our collaborative approach ensures that primary producers have access to the latest research, training, and funding opportunities.

WEED AND PEST MANAGEMENT

Managing invasive species requires a coordinated effort. We collaborate with landholders, local governments, biosecurity groups, and Indigenous ranger teams to control and prevent the spread of weeds and feral animals. Through joint monitoring, integrated control programs, and education initiatives, we help protect native ecosystems, improve agricultural productivity, and reduce biosecurity risks across the region.

DISASTER RECOVERY

Recovering from natural disasters requires a coordinated and community-focused approach. We work with landholders, governments, and communities to support recovery efforts following events such as floods and droughts. Through on-ground assistance, capacity building, restoration activities, and resilience planning, we help strengthen communities, protect natural assets and support long-term recovery across the region..

Project ***MILESTONES***

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

CARPENTARIAN GRASSWREN OFFSET. *Funded by Queensland Government through the Queensland Government Environmental Offsets Fund.*

- Deliver on-ground actions outlined in the approved Management Plan.
- Provide an implementation report covering activities undertaken during the 2025/2026 reporting period.

PROTECTION OF THE GULF SNAPPING TURTLE. *Funded by Queensland Government's Natural Resource Management Expansion Program.*

- Aerial control with follow-up on-ground control on 8 sites on at least two properties.
- Undertake feral pig follow-up monitoring after control activities using monitoring cameras and thermal (heat-sensing) drones on 8 sites on at least two properties.
- Nest protection is removed before the wet season on 8 sites on at least 2 participating properties.
- Undertake baseline monitoring of turtle nesting sites on 8 sites on at least 2 properties using camera trapping. Processing of monitoring data collected for the 2026 nesting period.
- 1 LCAT completed at each of the 8 sites on at least 2 properties to assess suitability for turtle nesting.

GRAZING FOR HEALTHY RIVERS AND SAWFISH CONSERVATION. *Funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust.*

- Deliver on-ground works at the priority site, including approximately 18km of stock exclusion fencing and six off-stream watering points.
- Identify, assess and prioritise additional project sites for future implementation.
- Development and implementation of communication materials and signage near fishing locations.
- Continue Habitat Condition Assessment Survey at established baseline sites.
- Establish a baseline Habitat Condition Assessment Survey at newly selected project sites.
- Support ongoing freshwater sawfish monitoring in collaboration with CSIRO and other technical partners where opportunities arise.
- Maintain strong relationships with participating landholders to support project implementation and long-term management outcomes.
- Promote project outcomes and lessons learned to stakeholders and the broader community.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

IMPROVING LAND CONDITION TO INCREASE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE EXTREMES IN THE SOUTHERN GULF REGION. *Funded by the Queensland Government under the Natural Resources Recovery Program.*

- 5 land managers complete land management practice change and/or remediation treatment across agreed area of land.
- Support land managers to review their property management plan.
- Assess annual changes in ground cover on 15 properties, utilising the MyFORAGE tool.
- Assess annual changes in rainfall on 15 properties, utilising the MyFORAGE tool, SILO dataset and on-ground rain gauges.
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation anf analyse data, including: LCAT assessment, photo monitoring point, rainfall.
- LCATs undertaken according to SWIF guidelines subject to land type and size of the project area.

IMPROVING LAND CONDITION IN NORTHWEST QUEENSLAND TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND BIODIVERSITY. *Funded by the Australian Government under the Natural Heritage Trust - Climate-Smart Agriculture Program - Partnerships and Innovation Grants.*

- Contour Consulting, with Southern Gulf NRM and Gulf Savannah NRM, worked one-on-one with 18 land managers to develop Climate Smart Farm Management Plans.
- Developed a Farm Sustainability Indicator Framework.
- Land managers co-invested in on-ground works across 90,000 hectares, tailored to their farm plans.
- Collected and analysed indicator data.
- Training, field days, and extension materials will be delivered throughout the project to build capacity among land managers and NRM staff.

CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE IN SOUTHERN GULF: SUPPORTING LANDHOLDERS MANAGING CLIMATIC CHANGE. *Funded by the Australia Government under the National Heritage Trust - Climate Agriculture Program.*

- Target events and activities based on landholders level of knowledge and needs.
- Regular community and stakeholder events to build strong relationships with landholders.
- Communication materials developed assist landholders in understanding the importance of adapting practices that improve environmental sustainability while also addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FACILITATOR. *Funded by the Australian Government under The Natural Heritage Trust - Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.*

- Continue the engagement with landholders in the region to support ways to improve the uptake of climate-smart agricultural practices.

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND (TNQ) DROUGHT HUB DRONE PASTURE. *Funded by the Australian Government under the Future Drought Fund.*

- Landholders will be given the opportunity to learn the operation of a Drone to take photos and plan flight paths, to make pasture and land condition assessments.
- Identify suitable training provider, availability and location for training.
- Advertise Drone Workshop: Smarter Pasture Monitoring on August 2026.
- Facilitate Drone Workshop: Smarter Pasture Monitoring on October 2026.

GRAZING FUTURES PREPARE AND PROSPER. *Funded by the Australian Government and the State of Queensland under the Future Drought Fund.*

- Business planning: Accelerate practice changes by embedding a revised business planning process into our engagements, through introducing concise action plans, which will evolve into whole business plans.
- Follow up support: Accelerate producer progress through increased, targeted follow up contact to support the achievement of business improvement goals.
- Diverse delivery pathways: Adopt a refined facilitated learning approach that enables incremental, transitional, and transformational improvements tailored to producer needs.
- Adaptive delivery: Employ a flexible delivery approach to adapt to regional and individual producer needs.
- Network development: Strengthen stakeholder networks (producers and project partners) to enhance learning and build economic, environmental and social resilience.
- Priority groups: Engaging women, young people, First Nations, and remote producers
- Measuring impact: Flexibility to adapt delivery and implement a robust quantitative and qualitative monitoring, with regular reviews of lessons learned to refine project execution.

WEED AND PEST MANAGEMENT

SOUTH32 CANNINGTON. *Funded by the South32 Social Investment Program.*

- Engage landholders within the Cannington Mine-Yurbi rail loading facility corridor to participate in coordinated weed management.
- Conduct baseline assessments of infestations, land condition, and treatment suitability across participating properties.
- Deliver control of prickly acacia, mesquite and parkinsonia using basal bark spraying, liquid or pellet herbicide, and mechanical clearing where feasible.
- Promote project outcomes, landholder participation and regional benefits through targeted communications.
- Track changes in weed density and landscape condition.

INVASIVE BIOSECURITY OUTCOMES FOR THE SOUTHERN GULF REGION. *Funded by Queensland Government's Natural Resource Management Expansion Program.*

- 13 land managers have been contracted, treatment sites identified, and property management plans in place.
- Baseline LCAT's and baseline drone weed mapping are completed for each property.
- Weed treatment was completed across 12,000 ha.
- Feral pig monitoring and improving locations to target feral pigs for routine control.
- Follow up LCAT's for the first 7 properties undertaken according to SWIF guidelines, subject to land type and size of project area.
- Condition monitoring plan reviewed.

FERAL PIG REDUCTION FOR IMPROVED WETLAND HEALTH IN THE SOUTHERN GULF REGION. *Funded by Queensland Government's Natural Resource Management Expansion Program.*

- Undertake wetland health monitoring program for 10 sites over 50ha on 10 participating properties and a further 10 sites downstream, using on-site water logging equipment, spot water quality sampling, eDNA assessments of aquatic life, remote sensing, stream health rapid assessment, sediment heavy metal assessment, and other methods as required.
- Undertake baseline survey of feral pig numbers on first 5 sites using monitoring cameras.
- Undertake feral pig reduction on first 5 sites by aerial shooting.
- Sign agreements with remaining 5 properties.

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DISASTER RECOVERY

DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS (DRFA) 2022-2023 NORTH WEST QUEENSLAND FLOOD RECOVERY.
Funded under the Australian and Queensland Government.

Multi Weed Control in Burke Shire

- Project development: land manager discussions (EOI, emails and phone calls), identify weed type, extent and target areas. Site visit to identify treatment areas and development of maps and monitoring points for evaluation of on ground works. Landholder consultation (as required) and contractor liaison.
- Treatment Activities: procure contractors (if applicable), define evidence requirements that activities have been completed: purchase of herbicide/procure contractor services/identify stop points for inspections and receive final sign off for activities delivered against project plan.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: site visits post on ground works completion.

Burke Shire Feral Pig Control and Cloncurry Shire Feral Pig Control

- Project Design - Confirm feral pig activities, including landholder discussions, areas to be targeted, planned control activities, set up of photo monitoring sites, education material content for the on ground works. Site visits, landholder consultation and contractor liaison. Seek all relevant permits required to undertake the works (as required).
- Control Activities - Procure contractors, collect evidence from photo traps to confirm presence of feral pigs, develop feral pig plans and enter into agreements with landholders for delivery of control activities against project design.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Data collection during aerial activities, camera trap data analysed, follow up control activities monitored to ensure 70% humane destruction recognised as best practice in the National Feral Pig Action plan.

DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS (DRFA) 2022-2023 RIVERINE RECOVERY.
Funded under the Australian and Queensland Government.

- The Gregory River project aims to stabilise active gully erosion by constructing rock chutes and revegetating the area.
- The Dugald River project will provide stream bank and gully stabilisation works, including the construction of a pile field, a rock chute, and revegetation of the site.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION AND EVALUATION IN THE SOUTHERN GULF REGION. *Funded by the Queensland Government under the Natural Resources Recovery Program.*

- Southern Gulf NRM staff will improve their skills in using Land Condition Assessment Tool (LCAT) and Vegetation Condition Assessment Tool (VegCAT) through the State-wide Indicators Framework (SWIF) method.
- Facilitate a meeting of the Gulf Catchments Pest Task Force (GCPTF), attend a North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (NWQROC) meeting, maintain relationship with Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone (MITEZ), and provide NRM knowledge brokerage for NWQROC and MITEZ.
- Collate LCAT and VegCAT data from NRRP Regional Recovery Project and other sources of Land Condition information, and incorporate this data into Regional Report Card.
- Collect feedback from landholders and other stakeholders on the previous report card, review and improve as necessary.
- SGNRM staff undertake technical review of Report Card and identify any improvements.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

REGIONAL DELIVERY PARTNERS (RDP) REGIONAL CAPACITY SERVICES (CORE SERVICES). *Funded by the Australian Government under the Natural Heritage Trust.*

- Review and update the natural resource management (NRM) plans regularly.
- Engage the community in the planning and delivery of on-ground projects.
- Strengthen and maintain communication capacity to support project delivery and stakeholder engagement.
- Deliver and coordinate projects under the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework, including biodiversity monitoring.
- Foster and maintain a collaborative relationship with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW).
- Maintain a consistent and active presence within the region.
- Uphold strong governance practices and meet agreed performance standards.
- Ensure compliance with all Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations.

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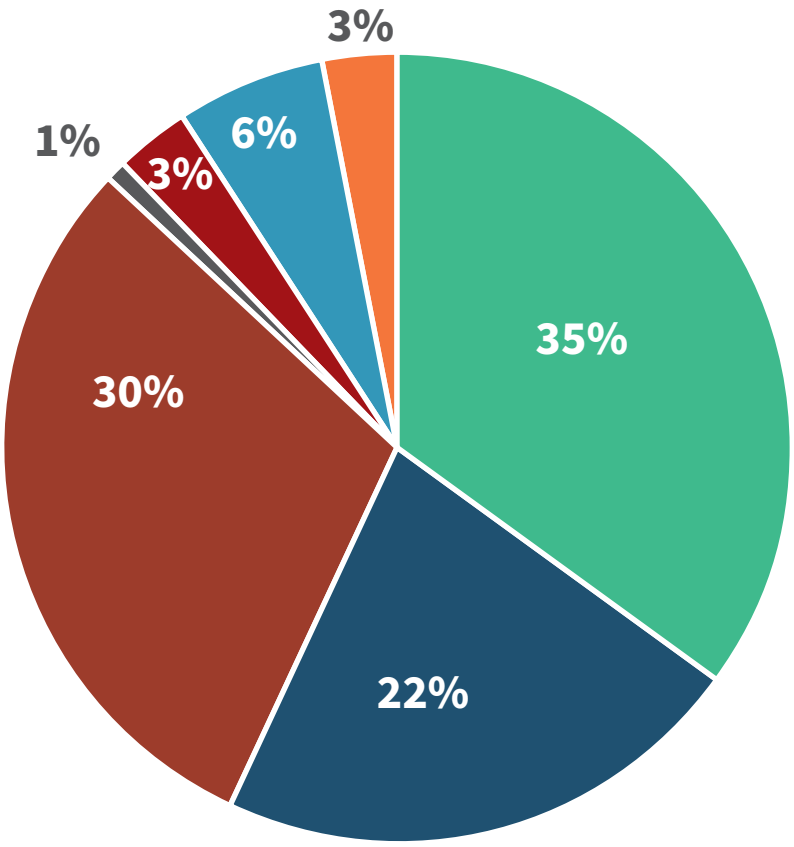
Project ***EXPENDITURE***

Our funding is strategically allocated to maximize impact across priority areas.



Biodiversity Conservation
Sustainable Agriculture
Weed and Pest Management
Strategic Partnerships
People and Community
Water
Disaster Recovery

GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES 2026 – $13,292,269.63

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SGNRM **BOARD** and **STAFF**

Southern Gulf NRM is governed by a Board of Directors under the provisions of the Corporations Act 2001 and the Constitution of Southern Gulf NRM Ltd. The Board consists of eight members with a range of skills and knowledge. Our team consists of 15 FTE's, who are committed to delivering innovative and practical solutions for the region's environmental challenges.

SGNRM **BOARD**

Prof. Iain Gordon
Chairperson

Jane McMillan
Director

Sarah Docherty
Director

Trent McIndoe
Director

Daniel Counsell
Director

Darren Schaeffer
Director

Helen Fisher
Director

Kallum Cotterell
Director

Margot Richardson
Company Secretary

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SGNRM **STAFF**

Damian Miley
Chief Executive Officer

Pru Wharton
General Manager

Lyndy Skea
Team Leader (Environment)

Robyn Young
Team Leader (Pest and Weeds)

Lucy Gardner
Project Officer
(Rangelands)

Clarissa Felderhof
Project Officer (Grazing)

Emily Turner
Sustainable Agriculture
Facilitator

Elena Balandina
Project Officer (Environment)

Alet van Deventer
Project Officer
(Pest and Weeds)

Anthony Hoyal
Project Officer
(Pest and Weeds)

Charlotte Woods
Project Officer
(Pest and Weeds)

Dario Cubillo
GIS and Information
Management Officer

Nicole Sarmiento
Communications Officer

Belinda Thomson
Senior Administration
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