

Planning and Local Government

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Further information – Great Sandy Strait and Clarence Estuary Projects

Local government, in many cases, is one of the key stakeholders responsible for managing threats (eg. development and human disturbance) to important shorebird habitat across Australia.

Discussions with local government, planning staff in particular, have identified the need for a planning tool to enable the integration of shorebird conservation needs into local government activities.

A Planning Tool - what planners want?

Planning staff within three local governments in Queensland were consulted on what information would be useful to inform planning and identified the following:

- Information that demonstrates that roosts (that have been located) are a fair representation of roosts in the area.
- Habitat mapped - marked as polygons by GPS. An accurate map at a scale of at least 1:5000 of wader roosts. Each roost marked as a polygon using a GPS, ideally a differential GPS, on cadastral maps. The map converted for inclusion as a layer into Council GIS systems.
- Roost characterised by collating existing information - to identify for each roost its importance in the area, significance for shorebirds and temporal use - including:
 - species list (migratory and resident)
 - species diversity
 - species of international importance
 - species of national importance
 - population estimates for seasons – breeding, non-breeding, northern migration, southern migration; and breeding resident shorebirds.
 - importance in the Great Sandy Strait
 - identify tenure and regulations relevant to each roost
- Rules to guide development assessments, to help minimise impacts including:
 - buffer distances
 - human activity (eg. access and infrastructure)
 - domestic animals
 - discharges
 - noise

Note: existing codes in planning schemes could be used as guides.
- Justification document (to justify mapping and rules)
 - justification for international significance

- justification for national significance
 - justification for state significance
 - justification for regional significance
 - justification for local significance
 - rationale for roost protection
 - effects of disturbance on shorebirds directly connected to rules developed (sourced from published quantitative information)
 - guidelines for procedures to help minimise impacts (eg. fences to deter to dogs)
- A system to update the maps in order to be able to track changes to roost sites.
 - A tool to predict where wader roosts might occur so that a map could incorporate not only present roosts but also all potential roosts. It is unlikely that a predictive tool with such sufficient precision to be useful could be produced.

For further information on what's involved in undertaking some of these activities, download the [Planning and Local Government Brief](#)

A Planning tool – things to consider

To develop a tool that meets the needs of planners (as outlined above), it is important to consider the following:

- How adequate is the information on roosts (eg. is there sufficient detail on data collection methods)
- Who owns the roosts (eg. land tenure)
- How is planning organised (eg. legislation, plans, policies and procedures)
- The status of the various relevant plans
- The problems in using planning schemes
- The issue of controlling activity vs controlling development

Local Government Planning Schemes – mechanisms for conserving shorebird roosts

The following points outline mechanisms to incorporate consideration of shorebird roosts in assessing development proposals (based on information provided by local government planners in QLD):

- Local Government areas are divided into planning areas each with a strategic planning intent
- Each planning area could be divided into zones/precincts and the types of development that could occur or that would require assessment would be specified for each zone/precinct
- In addition to zones/precincts there are overlays that specify particular outcomes (eg. environmental overlays or heritage overlays)
- Tables specify how particular kinds of developments are to be dealt with for each planning area and each overlay. For any particular use these tables specify how the use is to be assessed. In increasing order of importance, a development could be:
 - Exempt from assessment
 - Self assessed

- Code assessed – ie. judged against criteria written into the plan
- Impact assessed – ie. requiring environmental impact assessment
- Code and impact assessable developments have to be referred to other agencies
- The criteria for assessment usually refers to codes (rules) that cover planning areas, zones/precincts, overlays and particular types of development. These codes specify required outcomes and actual or possible solutions.
- Planning schemes may specifically refer to State and Commonwealth legislation relevant to conservation

Examples of tools for controlling human activity near roosts

Human activity may be controllable under some of the mass of regulations, legislation, policies and plans. For example:

- Local government bylaws
- Local area plans e.g. Coastal Management Plans and Foreshore Plans
- Boating regulations
- National Park regulations
- Fisheries regulations
- Regulations for State Forests
- Department of Defence plans for use of Military Reserves
- Recreation Areas Management Plans

Further information

[Clarence Shorebird Habitat Mapping Project and Local Govt. Factsheet](#)

[Great Sandy Strait Roost Mapping Project and Local Govt. Factsheet](#)