

Environmental Offsets and an Outcomes Based Approach to Natural Resource Management in South East Queensland

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An Environment under Pressure

- It is estimated that globally by 2050 another 200 million to 1 billion hectares of terrestrial remnant vegetation will be converted to human land use
- In South East Queensland rapid population growth and associated infrastructure development will impact on ecosystem functionality

The Economy and Environment Colliding

- * No one is destroying the environment out of the goodness of their heart
- * At the heart of conflicts are the forces of profit and competition resulting in winners and losers
- * Offsets offer a way to balance the outcomes – the trade off – dont they ?

Maximising the Benefits of the Trade Off

- * Energex Environmental Offsets Strategy
 - * Approximately 170 projects require offsets annually
 - * Rather than deliver 170 separate offsets projects advanced GIS analysis used to determine key landscape areas where greatest multiple benefit to be gained
 - * Smaller number of larger scale offsets projects delivered through an innovative partnership model with SEQ Catchments

Some Practitioner Observations

- * Limitations of the Current Approach
 - * Complexity
 - * Multiple Jurisdictions and Acts
 - * Cost
 - * Degree of on-ground delivery
 - * Strategic
 - * Link between environmental planning and offsets
 - * Timeliness
 - * Environmental loss is immediate – restoration outcome is uncertain and in the distant future

Towards A New Offsets Policy

5 Key Issues to
Consider

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- * 1 – What Types of Offsets should we allow?
 - * Any ?
 - * Averted loss (protection and enhancement)
 - * Restoration

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- * 2 – How do we incentivise early action?
 - * Offset ratios
 - * Conservation banking

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- * 3. What is the Role of the State ?
 - * Simple rules
 - * Designated Offset Areas
 - * Central fund ?
 - * Ultimate Owner ?

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* 4 – Is like for like possible ?

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- * Is biodiversity the right offset goal ?
- * Ecosystem services ?

Thankyou

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