

Let's get together to talk about Public Participation and the use of Mapping Information in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Coast



James Cook University's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences with the support of BBIFMAC realized an interactive workshop to discuss issues about **public participation in natural resources management and the use of spatial**

(mapping) information and geographic information systems.

The meeting happened on the 14th of September at the Haller Summit Conference Room, 15 Queen Street Ayr, from 12.30 - 2.30pm, immediately after the the BBIFMAC Inc (Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee Inc.).

The main purpose of the workshop was to:

- identify the drivers and barriers of people's participation in natural resources management (i.e. water quality monitoring, on-farm nutrient management), and
- understand the current needs

and constraints of spatial data and geographical information tools in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Coast.

A total of 18 participants including Farmers, Graziers, non-government organisations (e.g. BDTNRM, Greening Australia, BBIFMAC, Canegrowers) and government organizations (e.g) DPI, and independent consultants, made the workshop an enjoyable and productive time.

Some results of the workshop are presented below.

What is public participation?

In the first activity of the workshop participants were provided with different examples of public participation activities and they placed the examples describing practical examples according to the following framework:



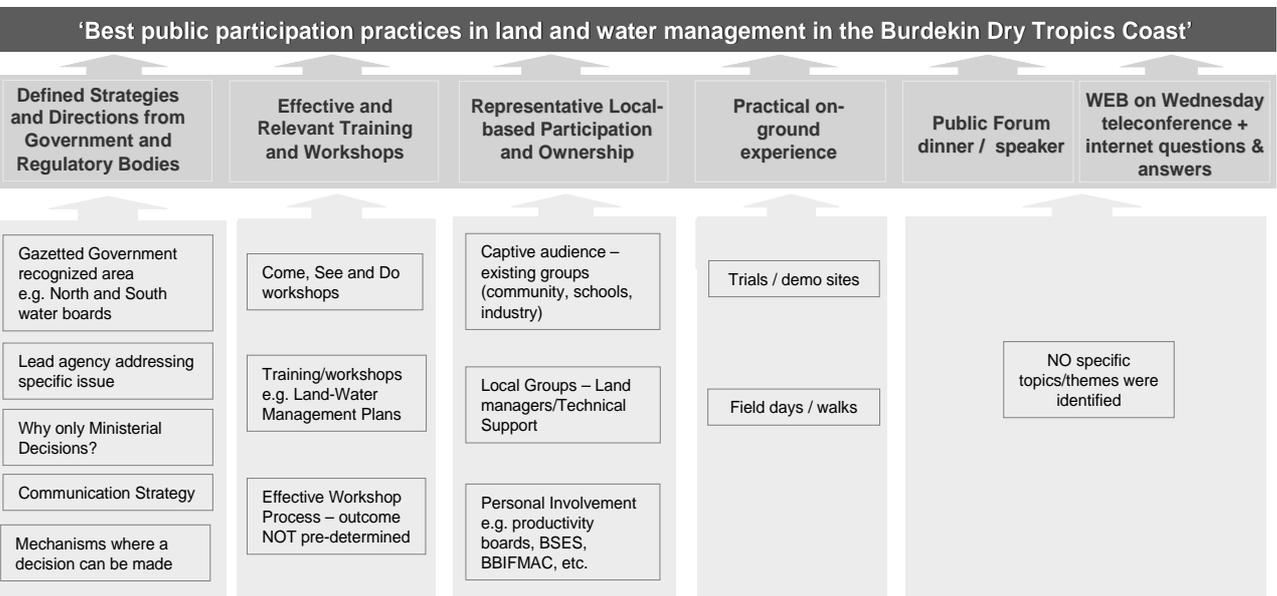
ing a list of strengths and weaknesses of public participation practices in land and water management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics Coast.

Participants worked individually and in groups to list 5-7 key ideas that answer the focus question including the list of potential action points underneath.

Topics and themes identified by the participants as examples of best and/or potential public participation practices are summarized below:



Workshop participants exploring participation levels and tools. (From left to right: Graeme Porter, Sarah Connor, Ray Menkens and Bob Osborne).



Spatial (mapping) data and geographical information tools

This section of the workshop was opened by a short presentation of Raymond De Lai (the Centre Manager of the Herbert Resource Information Centre (HRIC), Ingham).



and people's trust were explored. As Raymond mentioned: *"If you feel too small to make a difference, it is because you never have a night alone with a mosquito!"*

In this second part of the workshop, participants identified needs, priorities, sources, benefits and constraints of spatial (mapping) data and GIS tools.

"It is necessary to get an understand what is technical and what someone can do. There is lots of technical knowledge, but no practical experience.... not related to the circumstances to what we are doing technical things don't go on the ground."
(Workshop's participant)

Raymond shared with the participants some insights about the role of the HRIC as a collaborative initiative that enriched the Herbert River Community through collaboration and innovation.



Participants identifying needs, sources, benefits and constraints of spatial information. (From left to right: Graeme Porter, Reg Hugston, Maria Lange and Stuart McCubben).

Issues about the importance of collaboration, data sharing and privacy,



CDS of mapping and GIS open source softwares provided for the participants.

'Which and how much spatial data is needed':

Group	Needs	Priority	Sources	Benefits	Constraints
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> registered plan boundaries 1:2500 paddock boundaries 1:2500 water courses 1:2500 state owned roads/easements 1:2500 	High Medium Medium Low	BSC, CSR, CSIRO, JCU, DRW, DE, Geoscience Australia, DPI, EPA, North BWB, South BWB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a map to the harvester contractor/fertilizer contractor safety – showing powerlines, water courses, neighboring, crops, etc strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> costs don't know where to get them from
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> central access portal 	High	Council, BDTB, BSES, CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> easy access (single point) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fragmented sources
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cadastral hydrology (e.g. groundwater, levels, pH) soil types crop type soil carbon bores historic data development 	High High High High Medium	Council, EPA, CSIRO, BDTNRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> land capability improved agriculture reduced environmental impact aid to decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> layering info data ownership (privacy) mapping data at too course scale lack of accessibility data availability (not published)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tree density location of weeds working dot ecosystems soil mapping contours 	High High High High	EPA, DNW, BDTNRM, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> priority management plan applications for funding and clearance location of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> satellite imagery poor quality capacity of internet access skills of operator

Note: Priority Levels varied from high (75-100), medium (50-75), and low (<50).

What is next?

Feedback gathered from this meeting will be used as part of a PhD research project. It will also be used as the basis for the development of non-technical handbook/guidelines to be provided to natural resources management bodies.

Thanks

I would like to thank all the participants for their time and insightful information. I also want to thank Tom McShanne, Linda Kirk and Graeme Porter for all the logistic support for the organisation of the workshop.

PARTICIPATE!

Use the **online forum** of the Coastal-Zone.Net project to share your experiences of participation in natural resources management.

An **online survey** exploring issues of public participation and use of spatial information and GIS is also available at the CoastalZone.net. You can fill the survey anonymously, and you just have to provide your contact details if you want to receive a free CD copy with mapping and GIS open source softwares!


www.coastalzone.net

A PDF version of this bulletin can also be downloaded from

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