



GEORGINA/DIAMANTINA CATCHMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN



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Natural Heritage Trust
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Down the River

*The season was late when we left with the stores,
Feed was scarce as we travelled the Barkly.
Round the permanent holes and the government bores,
The tableland stretched away starkly.
We struck early storms as we farewelled the downs,
And the northerlies warned of their coming,
Away in the Gulf from the cumulus crowns
The sound of thunder came drumming.*

*How we cursed at the rain when it pelted that night
And added confusion to worry;
How we cursed at the bullocks that bellowed in fright
And flung up the mud in their hurry.
But the morning star shone with a crystal clear light
Through a rift in the clouds ere dawning,
And the butcherbirds welcomed the sun with delight
And carolled their joy to the morning.*

*We are staging along down the Georgina now
And we water the mob while it's feeding,
By the banks of the holes it is grand to see how
The button grass clusters are seeding.
The scent of the herbage comes sweetly and strong
From the channels all matted with clover,
And the water birds circle from each billabong
In the lead of the travelling drover.*

*The mob rests at noon with the water hard by
The trees where the quarts pots are steaming.
Through sunlight and shade 'neath a water-washed sky
The river goes drifting and dreaming.
She winds on her way through the heart of the west
Turning and spreading and slowing,
This river the furthest out bushmen love best
Where the southerly blusters are blowing.*

*Those who drink her water pure as snow,
Be they bushmen or townsmen or rover,
Will some day return where the coolibahs grow
By the tracks of the travelling drover.
For she fashions a spell like a gossamer thread
Yet it hold a man fast and forever
To the creeks that run back through her vast watershed
And the length of the old winding river.*

Bruce Simpson
'Packhorse Drover'



Figure 1: Georgina/Diamantina Catchment





Contents

BACKGROUND	6
The Place	6
The Georgina/Diamantina Catchment	6
Climate	7
Country	9
Creatures	12
Current Land Use	13
The People	16
First Australians	16
Explorers	17
Settlers	19
Today	20
STRATEGIC PLAN	21
The Plan	21
Our Mission	22
Our Aim	22
The Key Issues	22
Our Vision	22
The Objectives	23
<i>Objective 1 - Getting Smarter</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Objective 2 - Spreading the Word</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Objective 3 - Bringing people together</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Objective 4 - Affecting change</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Objective 5 - Finding the Funds</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Objective 6 - Measuring Progress</i>	<i>32</i>
ABBREVIATIONS	34



THE PLACE - GEORGINA/DIAMANTINA CATCHMENT

The catchment area of the Georgina and Diamantina rivers covers approximately 361 305 km² or 1.5 times the size of the state of Victoria. The catchment covers parts of the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia.

Mighty Inland Rivers

The Georgina River rises in the north on the Barkly Tableland near the border of Queensland and the Northern Territory, and flows south and southeast to below Boulia where it joins the Hamilton to become Eyre Creek. Its course then takes it west of Birdsville along the edge of the Simpson Desert and on into South Australia where it joins the Diamantina at Goyder's Lagoon over 1000 km from its point of origin.

The Diamantina River rises in the Finucane Range in central Queensland and first flows northeast. It then swings in an arc to flow southwest to Birdsville, before turning south to meet Eyre Creek at Goyder's Lagoon, 800km from its point of origin.

These rivers journey over a very low gradient as they flow into the channel country in southwest Queensland where they disperse into multiple braided channels, floodplains, waterholes and wetlands. The water often takes many months to travel from the higher rainfall areas of the north to Goyder's Lagoon.

They become an extensive wetland area of over 1300km². In times of large flow they fill this expanse of wetland and run out as the Warburton Creek to continue on 250km to Lake Eyre.

The Georgina and Diamantina rivers are ephemeral with short periods of flow following rain and long periods of no flow.

*4 700 m³/s
is the highest
recorded peak
stream flow of
the Diamantina
at Birdsville,
February 1974*

THE PLACE – CLIMATE

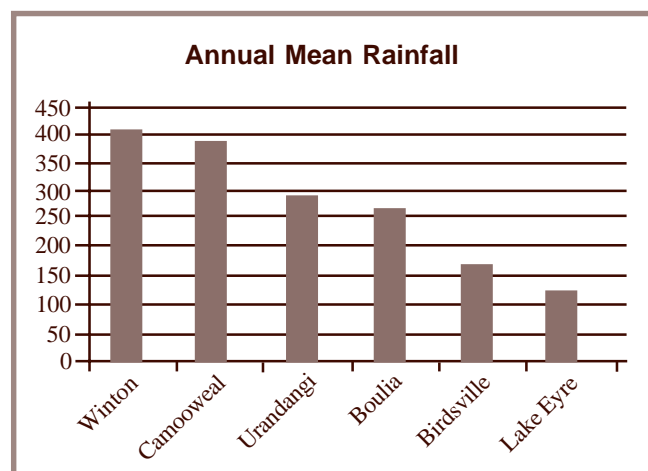


The catchment area of the Georgina and Diamantina can be classified as semi arid in the north and northeast, and arid in its southern and western portions.

Rainfall

Rainfall varies from around 400mm in the upper catchment to about 120mm at the lower end of the catchment (see figure 2.)

Figure 2: Annual Mean Rainfall



Rainfall patterns are highly erratic, particularly in the lower portion of the catchment, with long dry periods and droughts being common. Rainfall patterns are summer-dominant, with over 70% falling between October to March.

The northern areas have a more reliable rainfall, received from the edge of the summer monsoon system, and this can at times result in heavy falls in the upper catchment. This again, however, can be highly erratic in both reliability and duration.

The combination of high variability, incidence and total received rainfall results in river systems with extreme variation in discharge and flow duration.



Humidity

Humidity rises and falls throughout the year depending on seasonal temperatures and rainfall. It is however generally low, reflecting the dry climate of the region.

Annual Mean 9am relative humidity ranges from 47% in the Northeast of the catchment to 42% and 43% in the west and south of the catchment respectively. Mean 3pm relative humidity often falls to 20% or below across the catchment.

Evaporation

Evaporation rates are high with mean annual values ranging from 2920mm in Winton to 3358mm in Birdsville. Mean daily evaporation rates reach as high as 15.1mm at the height of summer and as low as 3.8mm in winter

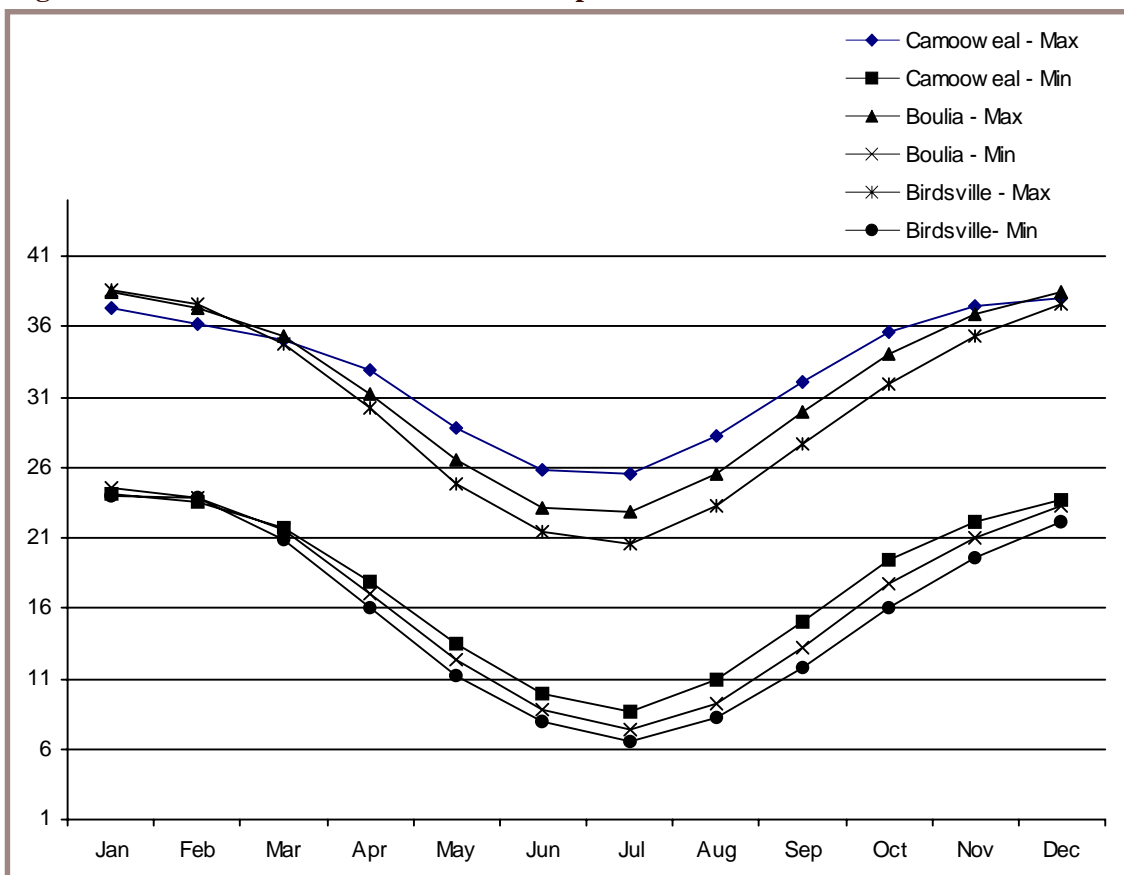
49.50°c
Highest recorded
maximum
temperature
at Birdsville

Temperature

Annual mean daily maximum temperatures range from 32.8°c in the north to 30.4°c in the south. Annual mean daily minimums vary between 17.6°c in the north to 15.7°c in the south.

(See figure 3.)

Figure 3: Annual Maximum/Minimum Temperatures



THE PLACE - COUNTRY



The catchment contains a wide variety of ecosystems and biogeographic regions (Figure 4). These include sandy and stony deserts, Mitchell grass downs, channel country, floodplains, ephemeral lakes and wetlands. All rely heavily on the variable drought and flood cycles of their arid and semi-arid environment.

Major Biogeographic Regions of the Georgina/Diamantina Catchments

TAN – Tanami Desert

Mainly red Quaternary sandplains overlying Permian and Proterozoic strata which are exposed locally as hills and ranges. The sandplains support mixed shrub steppes of *Hakea suberea*, desert bloodwoods, acacias and grevilleas over *Triodia pungens* hummock grasslands. Wattle scrub over *T. pungens* hummock grasses occur on the ranges. Alluvial and lacustrine calcareous deposits occur throughout. In the north they are associated with Sturt Creek drainage, and support *Chrysopogon* and *Iseilema* short-lived grasslands often as savannas with River Gum.

MII – Mount Isa Inlier

Rugged hills and outwash, primarily associated with Proterozoic rocks; skeletal soils; low open eucalypt woodlands dominated by *Eucalyptus leucophloia* and *E. pruinosa*, with a *Triodia pungens* understorey. Semi-Arid.

MGD – Mitchell Grass Downs

Undulating downs on shales and limestones; *Astrebla* grasslands and low Acacia woodlands. Grey and brown cracking clays.

CHC – Channel Country

Low hills on Cretaceous sediments; forbfields and Mitchell grass downs, and intervening braided river systems of coolibah. *E.coolabah* woodlands and lignum/saltbush *Muehlenbeckia*, *Chenopodium* shrublands
(Includes small areas of sand plains.)

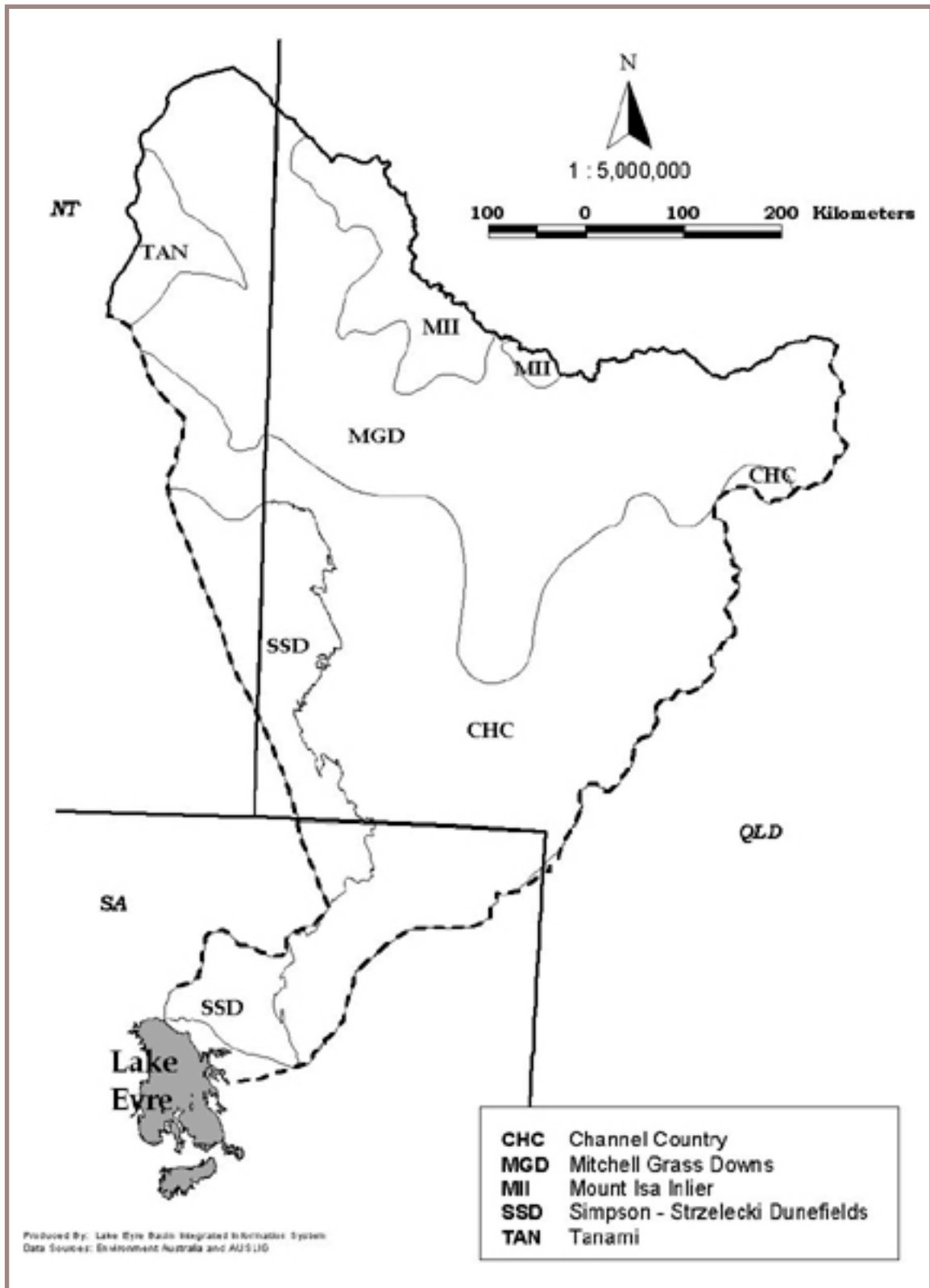
SSD – Simpson Strzelecki Dunefields

Arid dunefields and sandplains with sparse shrub land, spinifex hummock grassland, and cane grass on deep sands along dune crests.

It is estimated that the Channel Country Biogeographic region contains about 56 ecosystems



Figure 4. Biogeographic Regions of the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment





Wetlands

The catchment contains many major wetland areas. These areas include permanent waterholes, billabongs, ephemeral lakes, floodplains and lignum swamps.

The presence of permanent or temporary water in these sites has allowed the development of unique plant communities. These communities, and the water itself, provide living areas and food resources for a myriad of fauna species, which could not otherwise survive in the arid interior (G. Ford, R Moye, 1996).

Mound springs

The mound springs of Elizabeth Springs and Mulligan River group occur in the catchment. They are the result of a fault in the Great Artesian Basin that allows water to escape the aquifer. Mounds up to 2m high are formed from soil and carbonate precipitates. Mound springs are a rare wetland community type containing species of high endemism and rarity. The Elizabeth Springs group contains the rare and endangered Elizabeth Springs Goby fish and small aquatic snails that are exclusive to this small and restricted Ecosystem.

Table 1. Important Wetlands in the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment
(ANCA 1996).

Diamantina River Wetland System	SA	Channel Country
Lake Eyre	SA	Simpson- Strzelecki Dunefields
Austral Limestone Aggregation	QLD	Mitchell Grass Downs
Durrie Waterholes Aggregation	QLD	Channel Country
Diamantina Lakes Area	QLD	Channel Country
Diamantina Overflow Swamps – Durrie Station	QLD	Channel Country
Georgina River – King Creek Floodout	QLD	Channel Country
Lake Constance	QLD	Channel Country
Lake Mipia Area	QLD	Channel Country
Lake Phillipi	QLD	Channel Country
Lake Torquinie	QLD	Channel Country
Moonda Lake – Shallow Lake Aggregation	QLD	Channel Country
Mulligan River – Wheeler Creek Junction	QLD	Channel Country
Muncoonie Lakes Area	QLD	Channel Country
Toko Gorge and Waterholes	QLD	Channel Country
Elizabeth Springs	QLD	Mitchell Grass Downs



THE PLACE – CREATURES

The fauna of the catchment is highly adapted to the environment.

The biogeographic regions support a myriad of specialized and unique animals. The wetlands in good seasons provide feeding grounds for thousands of birds.

While the Lake Eyre Basin has a rich and unique variety of animals and plants, there have also been alarming numbers of species extinctions. Species are locally extinct from some areas and now only occur in a small part of their former range.

The Elizabeth Springs Goby can tolerate water temperatures of 41.5°C and salinity rates of 60%

The Lake Eyre Basin is estimated to have 66 rare and threatened vertebrate fauna and has 18 species listed as endangered (S Walbank, G Ford, M Harris, B Cohen). Many of these are contained within the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment. There are also species endemic to the region such as the Grey Grasswren and the Elizabeth Springs Goby.

Some of the Rare and Threatened Fauna

Kultar	Grey Grasswren	Grey Falcon
Kowari	Thick-billed Grasswren	Stone Curlew
Collared Whip Snake	Mulgara	Australian Bustard
Elizabeth Springs Goby	Ampurta	Eliza-
Flock Bronzewing	Ghost Bat	Southern Grass Owl
Forrest's Mouse	Pied Honeyeater	Plains Rat
Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby	Red Goshawk	Freckled Duck
Bilby	Brolga	Long Haired Rat
Square Tailed Kite	Desert Mouse	Sandy Inland Mouse
Black breasted Buzzard	Partridge Pigeon	Painted Snipe
Dusky Hopping Mouse	Black Footed Rock Wallaby	Night Parrot

THE PLACE – CURRENT LAND USE



Aboriginal

There are significant Aboriginal communities in the towns of Camooweal, Urandangi, Boulia, Dajarra, Duchess, Bedourie, Birdsville and Winton. A number of large areas of the southwest of Queensland and north east of South Australia are subject to native title claims.

There are also significant Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory portion of the catchment with land holdings at Gulangulu, Udoongul, Alpurrurulam, Anatyie, Uralampe and a portion of the Wakaya Alyawarra Land Trust.

Pastoral

Grazing of sheep and cattle began in the Lake Eyre Basin in the 1860s and remains by far the most extensive land use within the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment. There are an estimated 330 pastoral holdings.

Cattle are grazed in the South Australia portion of the catchment, the mulga woodlands and Mitchell grasslands of the Northern Territory, and the channel country of Queensland. Sheep are grazed in conjunction with cattle in the Mitchell Grass Downs areas of Winton and to a lesser extent around Boulia.

Continuous grazing with periodic spelling depending on seasonal conditions is the most common grazing system employed. Improvements in water supply systems, stock handling, road transport and mustering have markedly improved the ability to manage and adjust stock numbers within pastoral leases. This has led to increased productivity and improved soil stability.

Mining

Mineral and energy resources within the Basin include:

- A number of base and precious metals around Mt Isa district
- Opals at Winton and Opalton, southwest of Winton
- Phosphate at Dajarra
- Silver/lead/zinc at Cannington, 200km southeast of Mt Isa

Cannington Mine is the largest silver mine in the world, producing in excess of 1 000 000 ounces of silver, 148 000 tonnes of lead and 44 000 tonnes of zinc per annum.

Opals are mined extensively within the Catchment. The Winton and Opalton districts account for approximately 20% of the world's precious opal.

*Some
properties
are over
10 000km²
in area*



Petroleum

A portion of the lower catchment overlies the Cooper/Eromanga oil and gas basin. This Basin contains the most significant onshore petroleum reserves in Australia. Production from this basin estimated at 10 gegalitres of crude oil, seven gegalitres of gas and 12 gegalitres of liquid petroleum gas per annum in 1994, represents about 5% of the total Australian oil and gas resources (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997). The projected estimate for production from the South Australian portion of the Cooper/Eromanga basin for 1995-2010 is around \$8.8 billion in 1995 dollars (ABARE 1996).

Tourism

Visitor numbers to the catchment area are increasing every year. Popular attractions include the Waltzing Matilda Centre and Lark Quarry at Winton, Boulia's Min Min centre and Desert Sands Camel Races, Birdsville and the Birdsville races and the national parks of the catchment. People also come to enjoy the beauty and diversity of the outback. The Bureau of Tourism Research (1995) reported 171 000 visitors to the far north of South Australia in 1993/94 for a total of 756 000 visitor nights. For Lake Eyre and environs it has been estimated that tourism in 1990-91 attracted 19 000 visitors and brought \$8 million into the local economy (ABARE et al, 1996). In Queensland approximately 209 000 tourists visit the channel country and central west each year, staying on average 4.2 nights, with a further 300 000 visitors on business etc. This accounts for about \$82 million (Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation 1996). It is estimated that 40 000-50 000 tourists pass through Birdsville each year. Access to the region is generally by road due to limited access by air or train.

Conservation

Currently, there are 12 parks and reserves within or partly within the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment (see Table 2). Some of these reserves are jointly managed as multi-use reserves, for example the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve (Cohen 1992). The area of parks that are fully contained within the catchment area is approximately 839 500 hectares.

Table 2: Parks and reserves within or* partly within the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment

Queensland	South Australia
Diamantina Lakes National Park	*Lake Eyre National Park
Astrebal Downs National Park	*Innamincka Regional Reserve
*Simpson Desert National Park	*Simpson Desert Regional Reserve
Bladensberg National Park	*Simpson Desert Conservation Reserve
Camooweal Caves National Park	
Lark Quarry Conservation Park	
Goneaway Conservation Park	
Combo Waterhole Conservation Park	



Town Commons

Most western Queensland towns have town commons. These were originally intended for the common use of the people to provide pasture for their horses and livestock. The main supply of fresh meat and milk in the early day was from goats grazed on these town commons. Today the commons are being recognised for their role in maintaining biodiversity, their cultural heritage values and providing opportunities for recreation.

Stock Routes

During the early days of settlement an extensive network of stock routes developed. These routes followed rivers and natural waters and were vital for the movement of stock to and from markets.

Stock routes are now identified as a network of corridors that benefit local, regional and national biodiversity. They are also being recognised for their historical value in regard to the European settlement of Australia.

Stock routes are also important as a drought reserve. In the drought of 1995 it is estimated that 120 000 cattle and 500 000 sheep were utilising the stockroute network in Queensland.



THE PEOPLE - FIRST AUSTRALIANS

Aboriginal people have lived in the inland of Australia for over 20 000 years. It is estimated that over 25 major tribal groups lived in the Georgina and Diamantina catchment area. These people were closely attuned to the environment, its seasons, cycles and variability.

*Birdsville
was a major
meeting place
for ceremonies
and trade*

In times of good seasons the land would transform into a rich garden of wild foods, the waterholes and wetlands supporting a myriad of birds and fish in abundance. Times of plenty allowed the clans and tribes to come together into large groups sustained by the rich harvest of wild foods. Good seasons were times of meeting old friends, socialising with other groups, conducting ceremonies and trading in goods.

The great north-south trade route also opened with the good seasons. There were seashells from the gulf and bales of pituri (native tobacco) from the Mulligan and Georgina rivers. Ochre was brought north from the southern mines and stone for implements came from the east and west. The traders exchanged news of other tribes, new ideas, stories and songs. It was a vast and complex trade and information exchange network.

As the cycle of seasons turned to dry, the clans and tribes dispersed into smaller groups that could most effectively utilise the sparse and widely dispersed food supplies of the dry seasons. These groups often had to travel vast distances to new hunting and gathering grounds. Water was obtained from native wells, soaks and mound springs, and often carried in skin bags. Survival in these times required an intimate knowledge of the land.

THE PEOPLE – EXPLORERS



The first European explorer in the Georgina/Diamantina catchment was Captain Charles Sturt. While operating from a base near Miliparinka in South Australia in the year 1845-46, he explored as far north as Birdsville.

The ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition of the north south traverse of the continent in 1860-62 did much to open up the Georgina/Diamantina catchment area. Although the expedition traveled through the heart of the catchment, Burke in his haste to reach the Gulf and back recorded very few observations of the area. It was the subsequent efforts mounted by the South Australian and Queensland governments to search for Burke and Wills that did so much to open up the inland of Australia.

The South Australian government dispatched a team led by John McKinlay. The search team of nine men, twenty-four horses, twelve bullocks and four camels left Adelaide on the 16th of August 1861. Even after learning the fate of the Burke and Wills expedition at Blanchewater in South Australia, he decided to push on and explore the vast inland.

By April 1862 the party was caught by rain on the Diamantina River. McKinlay named this river the Mueller (later changed to the Diamantina). With supplies low and realising he was behind schedule for his planned rendezvous with a relief party on the Albert River he decided he had no other option but to push on. The party headed north to cross the Middleton Creek, the McKinlay Ranges and on to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The party finally reached the nearest outpost of civilization (Bowen) on the 15th August 1862

While McKinlay was pushing north, the Queensland rescue party led by William Landsborough was disembarking from the brig *Firefly* on the Albert River in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Landsborough's small party of eight men and twenty-three horses started south on the 18th November 1861. The party headed across the edge of the Barkly tablelands (named after the Governor of Victoria) and then on to discover a south flowing river that Landsborough named the Herbert, after the premier of Queensland (later changed to the Georgina). Landsborough followed the course of the Georgina naming Lake Mary and Lake Frances.

The party was finally halted on the 29th of December 1861 by at least one hundred Wakaya warriors. Landsborough wisely avoided confrontation and returned to the depot now established on the Albert River by the crew of the *Firefly*.

Landsborough set out once again from the depot in February 1862, this time with a party of only five men and twelve packhorses. The small party embarked on a courageous and successful exploration across to the Flinder's river south to the Thomson, the Barcoo and on to the Warrego River. The explorers finally found the fringe of white civilization near the present day town of Cunnamulla.

The journey took 103 days and covered 1,920 kilometres.

The
Diamantina
River was
named after
Countess
Theamintana
Roma, wife of
the QLD
Governor
Bowen.

Diamantina is
English for
Theamintana,
which means
little diamond



Another early explorer of the region was Nat Buchanan. Buchanan and William Landsborough explored the upper reaches of the Thomson River in 1860.

They then pioneered 'Bowen Downs' the first pastoral property in the district.

It was from here that Nat with Edward Cornish of the Scottish Australian Company set out on a private expedition in 1861 to explore the potential of the country to the west. They headed west to the Darr and Vergemont creeks and on to the Diamantina River. It was here that, to their great surprise, they found the tracks of camels and white men. It was of course none other than the Burke and Wills expedition. Buchanan and Cornish followed the tracks north but running short of supplies had to abandon their chase. The men headed east past where Winton now stands and back to 'Bowen Downs'.

Buchanan blazed the first track from Port Denison (now Bowen) to the western downs country. He then guided the first mob of cattle to the Thomson River. Later, he helped establish 'Rocklands' on the Barkly Tablelands and opened up the Barkly and Gulf stock routes.

Buchanan went on to help establish many other stations in the north of Australia. He blazed the famous Murranji stock route, took the first cattle to the east Kimberly and 20 000 cattle to the Top End of the Northern Territory, to list but a few of his achievements.

Clashes between the Aboriginal owners of the land and the whites were inevitable, yet there were some like Nat, who respected their native bushcraft and often relied upon their goodwill

Bobbie Buchanan on Nat Buchanan 'In the Tracks of Old Bluey'



THE PEOPLE- SETTLERS

All of the explorers who ventured into the Georgina and Diamantina catchment areas reported finding rich grazing land. This resulted in a rush to take up country in the west. This rush for country is vividly described by Clem Lack in *The Rifle and the Spear*

Out past the frontiers of settlement went the great dusty cavalcades of men, horses, drays, cattle, sheep and dogs. They disappeared from the view of the loungers in the bush shanties with a farewell crack of the stockwhips as the bullocks leaned forward in the yokes and the high drays lurched slowly on and on into the unknown.

Some of the settlers followed right on the heels of the explorers. ‘Rocklands’, ‘Avon Downs’ and ‘Stony Plains’ in the Camooweal district, were settled only two years after the exploration of the area by McKinlay.

These properties were originally stocked with sheep, but failed due to low prices and the tyranny of distance to markets. Nat Buchanan helping to reestablish ‘Rocklands’ in the 1870s with cattle.

During the 1870s there was great movement of settlers to the catchment. In the early 1870s John Costello and his brother-in-law Patsy Durack began registering claims to pastoral leases in the channel country. They claimed a vast area stretching from the South Australian border along the West Bank of the Diamantina, north to the Mayne River, east to the Cooper and southeast almost to the Bulloo.

Leases in the south Australia were also being taken with ‘Cowarie’ and ‘Cordillo Downs’ in 1875.

The lease on ‘Vindex’ in the Winton district was granted in 1873. This district settled rapidly with almost all available land taken up as far south as the Costello and Durack properties by 1875.

In the wake of the pastoral settlers, small towns sprang up: Winton in 1879, Boulia 1879, Camooweal 1884 and Birdsville in 1885.



THE PEOPLE - TODAY

Population

There are estimated to be fewer than 4500 permanent residents in the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment area.

The largest centre is Winton with an estimated shire population of 1760. This is followed by Alpururulam on the Queensland - Northern Territory border with approximately 600 residents, Boulia shire with 550 and the Diamantina shire with 350 people. Other centres are Dajarra and surrounds with an estimated population of 250 and Camooweal with approximately 300 people.

There are also a significant number (>500) of fly in/fly out mining workers at Phosphate Hill near Dajarra and Cannington mine southwest of Kynuna.

Lifestyle

The Outback offers both challenges and rewards to its residents.

Roads are often in poor condition, impassable in the wet seasons. Distances are vast. Telecommunications networks are unreliable and mail services infrequent.

Education is a challenge and the School of the Air plays an important role for the kids of the outback. Many from the properties and towns also attend boarding schools in distant cities.

Medical services are limited with the Royal Flying Doctor Service the only lifeline to remote towns and many properties.

However ...

The Outback also offers many rewards. Outback residents all define it differently: the freedom, the openness and honesty of the people, the mateship, open spaces, the stars at night, a sense of self reliance or a clean environment. Most agree that they love the bush and the lifestyle it offers them with a passion.

Liz Debney from Glenormiston Station on the Georgina River describes her life in the outback.

You have to work hard, but there is a sense of pride and achievement, and then, as a bonus, there are the wide open spaces, the beautiful sunsets, and a feeling of belonging in a world that only a few people really understand and appreciate.

Extract from – *The Flying Nun and Women of the West*, (1998) Sister Anne Maree Jensen & Ryckmans.

Participants in a recent Georgina Diamantina Catchment Committee meeting travelled a combined total of over 25 000 kilometres by air and road.



Strategic Plan

This plan sets out a broad framework of strategies to address the key issues of concern for the communities and stakeholders of the Georgina and Diamantina Catchments.

It is a working document and will continue to evolve and grow over time as new issues arise, as actions are accomplished or as priorities change. This plan should never be considered finalised, but as constantly growing and responding to change.



OUR VISION

The Georgina/Diamantina catchment is a community that cares for and is proud of our unique and vast inland river systems, which are healthy and diverse through the efforts of responsible people.

We are aware and willing to involve and educate others, working together in a growing, vibrant and sustainable economy.

OUR MISSION

With involvement from all communities within the catchment, and regardless of state boundaries, we will achieve this by developing a catchment management strategy, encouraging participation and implementing projects through enriching partnerships.

OUR AIM

To work for ecological, economic and social sustainability.

The Key Issues

The following key issues have been identified by the community and other stakeholders with an interest in the sustainable management of the Georgina/Diamantina catchment.

- Managing surface and ground water for both ecological and production outcomes
- Improving pasture management practices, particularly during drought
- Avoiding further pollution or degradation of land and water resources
- Seeking alternative or multiple land use opportunities
- Controlling feral animals and weeds
- Protecting aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
- Preserving the rich and unique diversity of plants and animals
- Safeguarding economic viability and local employment opportunities.



The Objectives

To address the Key Issues, the following objectives have been identified.

Objective 1 - Getting smarter

Increase knowledge of catchment issues and impacts to identify 'real' risks to support sound decision-making.

Objective 2 - Spreading the word

Educate and inform the community, both within and outside the catchment, to encourage greater awareness, understanding, commitment and involvement.

Objective 3 - Bringing people together

Liaise with all relevant stakeholders and governments to facilitate improved communication and cooperation on catchment issues.

Objective 4 - Affecting change

Implement agreed actions and encourage actions from community and governments to address catchment issues.

Objective 5 - Finding the funds

Secure resources required to implement agreed actions.

Objective 6 - Measuring progress

Measure and evaluate progress and modify actions as required.



Objective 1 - Getting smarter

There is frequently inadequate information available to be able to make sound and informed decisions on some issues affecting the Georgina/Diamantina catchment. When information is available it is often widely dispersed and difficult to obtain.

The following strategies and actions have been developed to:

- Locate and compile information that is currently available
- Identify and address information gaps.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Identify gaps in knowledge, information and communication.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Link to Data Base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • LEBIIS • Coordinator
2. In collaboration with the LEBCG and CCCC compile and maintain a comprehensive database and library of all relevant information on ecological and social issues affecting the catchments.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Data base started Dec 99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • Coordinator • LEBIIS • CCCC • LEBCG
3. Collect and compile information on best practice water management and conservation techniques.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Link to Data Base • Link to Surface Water Discussion paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC Coordinator • DNR • DPI • CSIRO • DEH • PIRSA
4. Gather information on best practice grazing and drought management techniques.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Link to Data Base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • Coordinator • DPI • DNR • PIRSA • CSIRO
5. Establish Wildlife Subcommittee/working group to investigate and inform the GDCC on threatened species management in the catchment.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved April 99 • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • Wildlife Subcommittee • Subcommittee team leader
6. Ensure comprehensive mapping of the catchment is carried out with priority on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weeds • Feral Animals • Flora and Fauna Distribution • Water • Threatened Species • Wetlands 	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASAP • Ongoing • Link to Data Base • Some weed mapping through cross catchment weed project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEBIIS • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC

Objective 1 - Getting smarter (cont.)



Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
<p>7. Educate and inform the Georgina/Diamantina committee and the community about issues affecting or with the potential to affect the Catchment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past • Present • Future 	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Speakers at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • Coordinator • DPI • DNR • PIRSA
<p>8. Inform governments and research agencies of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge gaps • Research priorities • Information gaps 	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Through Gov. reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC
<p>9. Encourage further research in the Catchment on all relevant water related issues</p>	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority • Ongoing • Link to Ob. 1 strategy 1. • Identify through surface water issues paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • DNR • DPI • EPA • Coordinator
<p>10. Support relevant research by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing linkages with community and other projects • Providing input • Accessing local knowledge 	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Achieved reference groups for ARIDFLO and Floodplain grazing project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC committee • Sub committees • Coordinator • CCCC • LEBCG • DEH • PIRSA • DPI • DNR • QPWS
<p>11. In coordination with LEBCG and CCCC develop and implement consultation protocols with research agencies so that the relevant Catchment Committee/Sub Committees review natural resource research project proposals.</p>	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Work with government and research agency committee representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC • Coordinator • NHT Coordinator



Objective 2 - Spreading the word

There is a wide variation in the level of awareness amongst the Catchment communities about the ecological, economic and social issues facing the Lake Eyre Basin and what can be done to address them.

There is also a need to educate communities outside the Basin, particularly in urban areas, to increase awareness and understanding of the challenges facing Basin communities and their efforts to address these.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Form a communications committee	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved October 98 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC
2. Develop a communication strategy that is targeted and user friendly.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With LEBCG communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Committee LEB Communications Officer Coordinator
3. Produce a Georgina/Diamantina Catchment Committee newsletter.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved - Link with LEB newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator Communications Committee
4. With the LEBCG and the CCCC develop information brochures for the Basin and the catchments.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved Oct 99 Update yearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC CCCC Communications Committee LEB Communications Officer Coordinator LEBIIS
5. Develop speaker's kits for Committee and Coordinator for presentations at schools, Councils, relevant agencies/organisations, conferences and other relevant events.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved Jan 2000 Link with LEB kit Upgraded as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEBCG Coordinator LEB Communications Officer Communications Committee LEBIIS
6. Ensure that the committee has profile building presence at relevant conferences, local shows and events.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ensure displays are kept up to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Committee LEB Communications Officer Coordinator Local committee members
7. With the LEBCG and CCCC, produce promotional, educational and awareness videos of the Catchment, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catchment information Issues facing the catchment Committee activities Strategies	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End 2000 Seek funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG LEB Communications Officer Coordinator
8. In coordination with the LEBCG and CCCC, develop and erect catchment information signage to inform and educate the public about the Catchment, the issues and how they can help protect the area.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Committee LEB Communications Officer LEBIIS CCCC LEBCG Coordinator

Objective 2 - Spreading the word (cont.)



Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
9. In conjunction with the LEBCG and CCCC, produce catchment information and education packages for schools.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with communications officer to develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEB Communications Officer Coordinator CCCC LEBCG
10. Encourage the inclusion of sustainable natural resource management training into primary, secondary, tertiary and pastoral college curriculums.	No Direct Action or Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Work through LEBCG to take issue to Education Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education rep on LEBCG GDCC CCCC LEBCG
11. Through the LEBCG, and in cooperation with the CCCC identify, recognise and promote individuals and groups 'Winners' that are achieving in the Lake Eyre basin, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Eyre Basin Achiever Awards Newsletters General extension duties 	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Yearly award ceremony Attract newspaper and magazine articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEBCG CCCC LEB Communications Officer Coordinator
12. Work with the CCCC and LEBCG to develop links with tourism organisations, encourage new tourism initiatives and promotion of the Georgina/Diamantina Catchment and the Lake Eyre Basin.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Work with tourism reps, GDCC, CCCC, LEBCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator Communications Committee LEBCG LEB Communications Officer
13. Promote the role, identity and achievements of the GDCC through the media and on the LEB Website.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Website achieved Nov 99 Ensure site regularly updated Communications Officer to Coordinate Attract Magazine and TV articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator GDCC LEB Communications Officer
14. Develop electronic communication networks both internally across the basin and externally with relevant sites, organisations and industries	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Link with LEB communications Data base Link web page to relevant sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC CCCC LEBCG Coordinator LEB Communications Officer
15. Work with the LEBCG, CCCC and community to develop links with Aboriginal Organisations and encourage participation of Aboriginal people in catchment management activities.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Develop network of Aboriginal people to advise committee on issues within their traditional areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG CCCC Coordinator Community



Objective 3 - Bringing people together

The Georgina Diamantina Catchment Committee will encourage input from all interest groups, stakeholders and governments involved with the management of the catchment. It will also encourage and facilitate improved communication and understanding amongst these groups, and a shared problem-solving approach to address catchment management issues.

Another important role of the Georgina Diamantina Catchment Committee is to provide links between various initiatives happening in the catchment, and encourage linkages between these initiatives, stakeholders and interest groups concerned.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Endeavor to have all relevant interest groups represented on the GDCC	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Review GDCC membership yearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC
2. Seek consensus decision making between all interest groups on the GDCC	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC
3. Provide and encourage linkages between research projects and initiatives that involve the catchment.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Coordinator to ensure list of relevant research projects maintained Work with Departmental reps to ensure research projects take into account whole catchment Achieved links to SA monitoring sites with Floodplain Grazing Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC CCCC LEBCG DPI PIRSA DEH DNR
4. Facilitate conflict resolution between interest groups.	Direct Action – GDCC Influence – External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Provide conflict resolution training to committee as funds enable Conflict resolution training for Coordinator – June 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG Coordinator
5. Through the LEBCG lobby governments to improve the transport infrastructure in the Lake Eyre Basin.	No Direct Action or Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ensure that problems are highlighted at political and media opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG
6. With and through the LEBCG, encourage, work with and lobby governments and relevant organisations to improve communication networks and infrastructure in the Lake Eyre Basin.	No direct Action or Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ensure that problems are highlighted at political and media opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG
7. Provide capacity and team building, training for community and stakeholders involved in the process.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Yearly workshop for committee Promote suitable programs e.g. Rural Leaders to the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG CCCC

Objective 4 - Affecting change



The committee will facilitate and support community on ground actions and activities to address localised and catchment wide issues.

It will recognise the current commitment of the community to sustainable natural resource management and encourage a greater investment in it.

It will also inform and advise government and policy makers on issues that affect the catchment and its communities.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Promote the use of best practice natural resource management through the LEB awards (objective 3 Action 11), field days and other appropriate events and forums.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC Government agencies Industry groups Landcare groups LEBCC CCCC
2. In cooperation with relevant government departments and community develop a water management plan for the Georgina and Diamantina catchments.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Action Plan Develop community discussion paper, commenced March 00 Act in a community reference panel role to formal QLD Government WMP process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC Community Landcare Groups DNR PIRSA DEH Industry and Conservation groups Local Authorities
3. In cooperation with the CCCC develop a project or process to work towards effective weed control and abatement measures in the Georgina, Diamantina and Cooper's Creek catchments	Direct Action Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved cross catchment weeds project commenced Dec 99 Develop Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC CCCC Community Landcare Groups DNR DPI PIRSA DEH Industry and Conservation groups Local Authorities
4. Encourage training in best practice natural resource management techniques.	No Direct Action or Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Promote suitable training programs and events through the LEB newsletter and other relevant means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC DPI DNR PIRSA DEH Industry DWR AACWMB
5. Support on-ground projects that fit within the vision and aims of the GDCC.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Letters of support as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC Landcare Groups



Objective 4 - Affecting change (cont.)

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
5. Develop action plans to address individual Catchment issues	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • As required • Plans reviewed quarterly as per action planning cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC
6. With the LEBCG and CCCC, Inform and advise government on issues that impact on the catchment	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Through LEB Ministerial Forum • Through Gov. committee reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC
7. Through the LEBCG, lobby government and other relevant organisations to take action on priority issues.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG
8. Ensure that consultation procedures are in place between Councils, Main Roads, telecommunications carriers and other organisations involved in infrastructure development in the catchment, and the Catchment Committees.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Coordinator to develop network with relevant departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC
9. Encourage the development of voluntary conservation agreements for areas of high conservation value within the catchment.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Promote the value of such agreements with the catchment community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoralists • GDCC • LEBCG • CCCC • DEH • DOE • EPA

Objective 5 - Finding the funds



It is vital that adequate resources and funds are secured to support both the work of the Georgina Diamantina Catchment Committee and on-ground initiatives.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Appoint a Catchment Coordinator to support the work of the GDCC	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved March 99 Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEBCG GDCC Basin Coordinator
2. Identify potential funding sources and partnerships.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Coordinator to maintain list of potential sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator LEBCG Basin Coordinator
3. Develop project proposals that are well written, researched and concise. Ensure these are targeted at the appropriate funding agency.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator
4. Attain appropriate sponsorship from government and business to support the activities of the GDCC, research projects and community development projects.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Approach major vehicle manufacturers Explore Philanthropic sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG Coordinator Basin Coordinator
5. Through the LEBCG, lobby government to attain secure recurrent funding to support catchment management in the Lake Eyre Basin.	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASAP Lobby for support funds from Lake Eyre Basin Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG Basin Coordinator
6. Encourage commitment by government to the funding of identified priority projects	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Lobby through LEBCG Deputations to ministers as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC LEBCG Basin Coordinator



Objective 6 - Measuring progress

The Georgina Diamantina Catchment Committee will regularly monitor, evaluate and measure its effectiveness and progress.

The monitoring and evaluation process will ensure the committee remains focused on the objectives and key issues agreed by the community and continues to move forward on these.

The monitoring and evaluation process will also help the committee to improve its effectiveness and performance.

Strategies	Category	Timing/Further Action	Responsibility
1. Conduct committee reviews to ensure even and active participation	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC
2. Carry out surveys to gauge increased awareness of Catchment issues in the Community.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As possible Also gauge through feedback to coordinator and geographic reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC Committee members locally Coordinator through mail outs
3. Complete and implement the Catchment Management Strategy.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved draft for consultation by Dec 99 Achieved working document September 2000 Ongoing working document Review strategies and actions yearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC Coordinator
4. Conduct catchment forums/public meetings to ensure the committee is in touch with the Community and the issues.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly, each geographical catchment area Smaller population centres may have to be one to one contact to gain feedback Yearly all sub-catchment areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee members locally Coordinator
5. Review progress achieved on issues and objectives identified in the Catchment Management Strategy.	Direct Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly at annual planning meeting Six month review on action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC
6. Review strategies and objectives within the Catchment Management Strategy for their effectiveness in dealing with the issues.	Direct Action		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDCC

Committee and Community that participated in the development of this strategy



Ada Miller – Camooweal Landcare; Mike Keane – 'Headingly', Australian Agricultural Company; Don Rowlands – Traditional Owner, Birdsville; Ray Jansen – 'Lake Nash', Stanbroke Pastoral Company; Rhondda Alexander – 'Marion Downs', North Australian Pastoral Company; Ron McGlinchy – 'Macsland', Boulia and Mayor, Boulia Shire; Bob Young – 'Brighton Downs', Australian Agricultural Company; Gavin Miller – 'Davenport', Stanbroke Pastoral Company; Bill Petrie – Camooweal; Charlie Phillott – 'Carisbrooke', Winton; Alex Whitehead – Diamantina National Park; Don Blesing – Independent Chair, LEBCG; Natalie Ewes – Diamantina National Park; Sharon Oldfield – 'Cowarie' Stn; David Brook – Brook Pastoral Company and Mayor, Diamantina Shire; Jim Tyler – BHP, Cannington; Tom Arnold – 'Rocklands', Stanbroke; Trevor Whitelaw – Santos; Joslin Eates – Traditional Owner, Winton; Andrew White – DPI (QLD); Steve McAlpin – Arid Lands Environment Centre; Alun Hoggett – LEBIIS; John Paynter – 'Wando', Winton; Lorna Frecklton – Camooweal; Vanessa Humphery – DNR (QLD); Winton Shire Council Stock Routes Committee; Jo Frecklton – Camooweal; Colleen O'Malley – Threatened Species Network; Greg Campbell – S Kidman and Co.; David Akers – QPWS (QLD); Rick Barratt - DEHAA (SA); Steve Malone – BHP, Cannington; Kristy Clark – DPI (QLD); Chris Mitchell – QPWS (QLD); Tony Raynor – DPI (QLD); Merri Tohill – PIRSA

Strategy formation workshops were held at:

Camooweal QLD

Birdsville QLD

'Cowarie' SA

'Carisbrooke' Winton QLD

Informal consultations were also held in most centres across the catchment.

Thanks to all the other community members, government agency members and others that attended workshops, provided advice or feedback



Abbreviations

AACWMB	Arid Areas Catchment Water Management Board
CCCC	Cooper's Creek Catchment Committee
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage, South Australia
DNR	Department of Natural Resources, Queensland
DPI	Department of Primary Industries, Queensland
DOE	Department of Environment, Queensland
DWR	Department for Water Resources, South Australia
EPA	Environment Protection Agency, Queensland
GDCC	Georgina/Diamantina Catchment Committee
LEB	Lake Eyre Basin
LEBCG	Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group
LEBIIS	Lake Eyre Basin Integrated Information System
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Resources South Australia
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service