

## From the Chair

Slowly but surely, land managers are returning to business as usual post-flooding. Hundreds have undertaken significant work with Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated to improve the quality of water leaving their land and flowing to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

February 2012 saw the resignation of CEO Suzie Christensen, whose 12 year tenure was instrumental in the development of FBA. Our Chief Operating Officer was identified as having the business and people skills required for the position, therefore the Board decided to internally promote Paul Birch to the role of CEO. Since his appointment Paul's leadership, business acumen and negotiation skills have endorsed the Board's decision.

I congratulate staff and my fellow board members for the achievements FBA has made during 2011/12 outlined in this document and commend their professionalism and dedication to natural resource management.

With a team like ours the future is looking very bright.

The team will be tested as they deliver a record amount of money for on-ground work this coming year through Reef Rescue. A successful promotions campaign has generated many projects. In fact, we have a waiting list as demand exceeded availability. This highlights the importance of the work we are doing and the need for work to continue beyond June 2013.

*Charlie Wilson*





## From the CEO

It is with great pleasure I deliver my first annual report as CEO. In 2011-12 we have met or exceeded our operational targets, helped 226 land managers reduce their impact on the reef and invested more than \$10 million in the CQ region.

Our hardworking staff have fostered strong relationships with land managers and the wider community. The launch of FLOW Visitors Centre has allowed us to demonstrate the need for balance, the benefits of coexistence with nature, and how wise land management is contributing to a more vibrant and prosperous region. FLOW's interactive displays improve understanding of our region's natural beauty, land uses and management activities. Since opening in late March, more than 3000 people have visited.

There has been increasing interest in the new Grazing BMP which was piloted across the region, while Grain and Cotton BMPs continued to gain momentum.

We became host to the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, established in February 2012. The Partnership includes 26 organisations involved in monitoring, (including mining companies), who will combine their data to report on the health of Fitzroy Basin waterways.

These partnerships are driven by highly skilled staff, a strategic board, and a vibrant network of sub-regional groups, individual landholders and community groups. Many local success stories will be shared at the FBA Muster 2012, and I invite all of you to reflect on our achievements and be excited about the journey ahead.

*Paul Birch*





# FBA Overview



**Our vision:** A community that understands; values and uses its natural and cultural resources wisely to coexist in a vibrant and prosperous region.

**Our mission:** To achieve resilient, healthy catchments through strong, independent leadership of an engaged regional community.

**Our region:** We work across an area more than 156,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size extending from Nebo in the north to Injune in the south, and west to the Drummond Range. As well as the catchments of the Fitzroy River, we cover adjacent coastal waterways and the Boyne and Calliope Rivers.

**We have a plan:** FBA coordinates work to achieve natural resource management targets set out in the regional plan, the Central Queensland Strategy for Sustainability (CQSS), which was developed in consultation with the wider community.

**Natural resource management:** Natural resource management (NRM) is about finding the balance between protecting the environment and land use needs of the community, agriculture and industry. Primarily FBA strives to: protect natural assets like habitats and ecosystems, wetlands, plants and animals; improve land condition and land management practices; and ensure healthy waterways flowing to the reef.





Fun, free  
and interactive...  
An adventure for  
all ages!

### **Our unique region:**

Learn about our special habitats and unique critters, like the Snubfin dolphin. Discover the wide range of land uses and industries that drive local growth. Hear stories of what local communities and farmers are doing to keep our region great.

### **Informative & fun:**

All ages will enjoy FLOW:

- Engaging information panels
- Fantastic photos
- Map touchscreen
- 'Bob the Barra' board game
- Entertaining videos
- Bird watching binoculars
- 'Flow and Tell', record your own story

### **Get in touch:**

Please contact FLOW to arrange group tours or organise school excursions

E: [flow@fba.org.au](mailto:flow@fba.org.au)

P: (07) 4999 2800

### **Visit us:**

Monday to Saturday 10am - 4pm (closed public holidays)

Ground floor, Old Post Office Building, Cnr East & Denham Streets,  
Rockhampton

### **A leading voice:**

FLOW Visitors Centre is an initiative of Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated.



*Our country, Our future.*



# Our Partners

**Sub-regional Groups:** FBA makes on-ground change happen by devolving funds to five sub-regional groups: Three Rivers Sub Region; Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperative (CHRRUP); Boyne Calliope Sub Region; Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments (FRCC); Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association (DCCA).

**Australian Government:** Through the Caring for our Country funding program, including the Reef Rescue component, and various one-off grants.

**Queensland Government:** Through Regional NRM Investment Program funding and one-off grants.

**Local Government:** To provide feedback on planning, deliver projects and raise community awareness.

**Farmers and Graziers:** To develop, manage and monitor projects on agricultural land - land managers contribute at least 50% of the value of the project and in many cases provide much more in both cash and in-kind.

**Industry:** To share information that supports sustainable development including our integrated water quality monitoring partnership.

**Traditional Owners:** By supporting Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee to facilitate gatherings between Traditional Owners and encourage involvement in NRM activities.

**Community groups:** To complete grass roots natural resource management projects with wide public benefits and build capacity of dedicated volunteers.

**Source Fitzroy:** Our commercial arm, which provides NRM services to individuals and businesses.

**Fitzroy Partnership for River Health:** FBA is the host organisation for the partnership, formally established in February 2012 between 26 organisations.





# Our network of sub-regional groups



*Our country. Our future.*



## CONTACT YOUR LOCAL GROUP

### Three Rivers (Isaac & Mackenzie region):

P: 4985 7511, E: [admin.trsr@fba.org.au](mailto:admin.trsr@fba.org.au)

### CHRRUP (Central Highlands):

P: 4982 2996, E: [admin@chrrup.org](mailto:admin@chrrup.org)

### DCCA (Dawson region):

P: 4993 1004, E: [admin@dcca.net.au](mailto:admin@dcca.net.au)

### Boyne Calliope Sub Region (Gladstone region):

P: 4975 6555, E: [admin.bcsr@fba.org.au](mailto:admin.bcsr@fba.org.au)

### FRCC (Rockhampton & Coast region):

P: 4921 0573, E: [admin@frcc.org.au](mailto:admin@frcc.org.au)



## 2011-12 by the numbers

# \$10.8 million

Funds delivered by FBA on-ground to manage natural resources and improve water quality.

# \$9.2 million

Support for projects by land managers. Represents cash and the value of labour and project management.



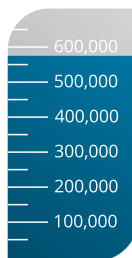
### 123 Watering Points

Installed to reduce cattle access to creek beds.



### Over 3,000 People

Have visited FLOW, FBA's Visitors' Centre.



### 576,766 Hectares

Area of land encompassed by FBA projects.

### Over 4,000 kilograms

Amount of weeds removed from coastal areas by volunteers.



### 408 Kilometres

Length of fencing funded to improve ground cover or protect waterways.



### 412 Kilometres

Length of streams and creeks protected.



### 202 Kilometres

Length of pipeline funded for watering systems that protect waterways.



# Regional NRM on the ground

**Fitzroy Basin Association** is one of 14 regional NRM groups across Queensland that work with communities in catchments to improve the use, management and protection of landscapes, waterways, plants and animals. In the four years to June 2011, Queensland's regional groups have supported landholders and the wider community to:



Protect, enhance, rehabilitate or re-vegetate 2,089,008 hectares of native vegetation.



Control pest plants and animals over 8,348,757 hectares.



Undertake 1,482 new or improved natural resource monitoring programs.



Facilitate 1,474 conservation agreements protecting 1,257,958 hectares.



Undertake 10,384 biophysical studies.



Develop 6,682 biodiversity, rehabilitation, pest control and landscape management plans.



Deliver 6,480 awareness raising events with 299,745 participants.



Deliver 5,402 training events for 860,759 participants.



Assist 16,939 community groups or projects.



Facilitate 6,754 collaborative arrangements.

FBA is very proud to have contributed to these impressive statewide figures through our on-ground work and projects.



# Statement of Comprehensive Income

For year ended 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Revenue	13,409,196	8,607,627
Employee expenses	3,318,995	2,494,869
Project expenses	9,979,628	6,174,055
Depreciation expenses	118,532	31,982
	13,417,155	8,700,906
<b>Profit (loss) for the year</b>	<b>(7,959)</b>	<b>(93,279)</b>



# Statement of Financial Position

For year ended 30 June 2012



*Our country, Our future.*

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	7,697,431	7,687,674
Trade and other receivables	411,754	450,239
Total Current Assets	8,109,185	8,137,913
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	679,400	148,998
Total Non-current Assets	679,400	148,998
TOTAL ASSETS	8,788,585	8,286,911

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	8,478,038	7,906,245
Non-current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	75,433	84,554
Total Liabilities	8,553,471	7,990,799
Net Assets	235,114	296,112
Equity		
Retained earnings	235,114	296,112
TOTAL EQUITY	235,114	296,112

This is an abridged version. A full copy of the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2012 is available by contacting:  
 Elyse Riethmuller | (07) 4999 2818 | [Elyse.Riethmuller@fba.org.au](mailto:Elyse.Riethmuller@fba.org.au).



# Caring for the Great Barrier Reef

## Grazing



Central Queensland is home to 16% of Queensland's beef herd with 80% of land used for grazing.

Graziers have invested heavily in infrastructure to reduce erosion along riverbanks caused by cattle, while others have incorporated mapping and business planning to run a more efficient and 'reef friendly' business.

Through the Australian Government's Reef Rescue Program, over the past year:

- More than 120 grazing businesses managing over 550,000 ha of land did projects designed to improve the quality of water that enters local creeks and rivers.
- Hundreds of graziers attended targeted training activities.
- Forty-one graziers learnt about ground cover monitoring by attending Stocktake training.
- Nine new properties developed a Voluntary Land Management Agreement (VLMA) and will incorporate a long term approach to restore degraded land, bringing the total number of VLMAs to 46.

FBA also continued to expand Grazing Best Management Practices (BMP) with our program partners, the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFFQ) and AgForce. Six modules will be developed to allow graziers to assess their business against industry-agreed best practice standards. This year the first three modules were rolled out across the region:

- Soil Health
- Grazing Land Management
- Property Design and Planning

Plans are in place to roll out Grazing BMP beyond our borders next year.



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# Case Study

## If you fence it, they will eat it

Making cattle eat the right grass in the right place is difficult.

This was the problem that faced Phil and Deborah Reid, the owners of Limestone, a grazing property near Emerald, with spectacular Open Downs and Mountain Coolibah Woodland country.

The result was unevenly grazed paddocks with bare areas leading to erosion and sediment entering the nearby Isaac River, while also providing the right conditions for Parthenium weed to take hold.

By working with FBA and local sub-region CHRRUP, they accessed funding through the Australian Government's Reef Rescue Program. The funds helped the Reids make simple changes to their farm infrastructure that allow them to better control cattle movement to achieve more even grazing pressure and reduce erosion.

### The work

2010 - Fenced waterway and improved the placement of water troughs attracting cattle to higher parts of the property

2011 - Constructed 15 km of land type fencing and 7 km of riparian fencing, separating Open Downs country from Mountain Coolibah

### The benefits

- Areas that were infested with Parthenium are now host to a diverse range of native species
- Ground cover has dramatically improved
- In the five years leading up to the project Phil spent the same amount of money spraying the Parthenium as he's spent on recent infrastructure improvements

The overall health of the catchment is the big winner, however thanks to the funding landholders like Phil are also value-adding to their properties.



*Field Officer and Property Manager inspecting the property*



*Positive results after resting the land*



# Caring for the Great Barrier Reef

## Growers



Growers collectively managing tens of thousands of hectares of land improved the quality of water leaving their farms through on-ground works supported by FBA through funding from the Australian Government's Reef Rescue Program. Growers concentrated on improving water, nutrient and pesticide application through more efficient machinery and land management practices. Various training workshops were well attended.

### Grains

Since Reef Rescue began in 2008, close to 60% of grain producers in the Fitzroy region have completed a Grains BMP assessment. Workshops held across the region in 2011-12 were well attended by grain growers new to the program and those re-assessing their practices. The focus this year was on moving to zero or minimum till operations and helping growers at class C move towards class B industry standard.

### Cotton

Successful projects involving cotton growers were supported this year by FBA through the integration of Reef Rescue and Flood Recovery initiatives. Almost 60% of projects leveraged funds from both programs with irrigators investing 90% of the total project costs.

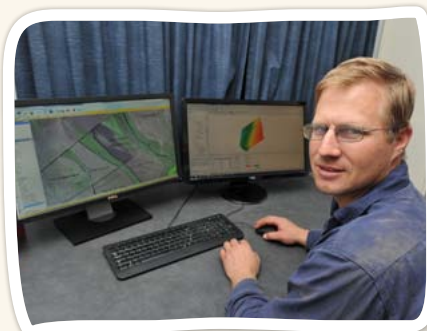
### Horticulture

In partnership with Growcom we worked with horticulturalists that collectively manage 1,627 ha. Projects were developed to improve efficiency of machinery and spray technology. Growers invested 79% of the total project costs for this period.



# Case Study

## Better cropping through innovation



Located on the banks of the Dawson River, 'Glendale' is a family-run farm primarily growing cotton. Grains like corn, wheat, chickpeas and mung beans are grown between seasons, and the business has been involved with Grains BMP since 2010.

Controlled traffic farming was introduced recently on Glendale after modifications were made to machinery and the family incorporated the use of mapping software funded by FBA.

One of the property managers Greg Hutchinson said a small planter was modified to increase its width to 12 metres, allowing it to run on the same tracks as the 24 metre boom spray on every second lap.

"With less wheel tracks there will be less run off. The wheel tracks had created furrows for water to run down, so less tracks will lead to less erosion in the paddocks," Greg said.

"We were aware of the issue for a long time, it was about finding the time to do something to modify practices, and the funding assisted us and prompted us along to do just that," he said.

Greg and the family were supported by local sub-region DCCA to develop a project funded by FBA through the Australian Government's Reef Rescue initiative. The project was to improve the design and layout of the farm and incorporate low drift nozzles into machinery, with very significant additional project funds contributed by the land managers.

The mapping software allows them to gather data so they can see trends in the paddocks and determine which areas need less spray, which will reduce over-saturation in some areas and reduce run off to the reef.

Grains Best Management Practices (BMP) helps cropping enterprises assess their business and make changes for the better.

Grains BMP is a partnership between Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA), AgForce and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.





## Grass - it's not all the same

Grass helps cattle reach a healthy size, prevents erosion and reduces the amount sediment that reaches the Great Barrier Reef, that's a big job for a small plant!

However, not all grass is the same.

Central Queensland is home to a number of threatened grasslands and Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) works to help local councils and landholders better manage these important remnants.

FBA also helps to protect native grasslands through biodiversity stewardships and has worked with the University of Queensland to undertake botanical surveys to locate and protect the Belyando Cobblers Peg and *Solanum orgadophilum*; two rare plants in Central Queensland.

Projects to control buffel grass in native grasslands, especially bluegrass communities, are an integral part of FBA's work in managing native grasslands as buffel grass has the potential to seriously threaten the biodiversity status of native grasses by out-competing them.

FBA ran native grassland plant identification field days to educate landholders, students studying agriculture and others who work in the field so that they are better equipped to identify native grasslands.

A grasslands ID booklet was developed by FBA and will be published in the coming year to assist land managers and people working in natural resource management in identifying grass species.





# It's a stinky business with big rewards!

## Dung beetles



The concept of working, resting and playing in cow dung is unappealing to us, but not to the diligent dung beetle.

Native grasses are getting a helping hand from dung beetles - recognised to act as ecosystem engineers returning carbon and nutrients locked up in cattle dung back into the soil.

FBA Biodiversity Coordinator, Graeme Armstrong said incorporating dung beetles on cattle properties together with sustainable grazing land management would improve the resilience of native grasslands.

"FBA followed up on an earlier dung beetle project run by Agforce and CSIRO. We involved 22 land managers on 30 properties in sampling and monitoring dung beetle populations in areas of bluegrass to determine if species released in 2002 had successfully established," Mr Armstrong said.

"Of the eight to ten species which could be found throughout the region, six species were collected, with most landholders having three or four of the six species on their properties.

"A second sampling event will take place in Spring/Summer and beetles will then be collected to redistribute to properties that are lacking particular species.

"The aim is to have as many species living on as many properties as possible because different species are active in different seasons - some are nocturnal and others bury dung differently," he said.

This project has been very popular with the participating landholders, who collectively manage in excess of 50,000 ha, and this work is helping ensure native bluegrass ecosystems under production regimes do not deteriorate due to grazing pressure.



*Our country. Our future.*



# Beach scrub - protecting the coast!

Beach scrub might sound unremarkable, but this seaside vegetation is vital for protecting our fragile coastal ecosystems!

Coastal Vine Thickets or Forests, more commonly known as beach scrub, help stabilise dunes, protect the land during storm events and provide habitat for many native species, including birds and butterflies.

Growing between dunes, they are an important part of fragile coastal ecosystems that face threats from coastal development, fire, weed invasion and unregulated vehicle and pedestrian beach access.

Fitzroy Basin Association supports community based volunteer groups and organisations to address critical threats and rehabilitate beach scrub communities.

This year local volunteers undertook planning, education and physical work in weeding, planting, erecting fences and signage.

If you would like to get involved with a local community group to help protect our coast please call (07) 4999 2822 or email [shannon.vannunen@fba.org.au](mailto:shannon.vannunen@fba.org.au)





# It was a dog's breakfast at Kinka Beach



Kinka Beach is one of the most important roost sites on the Capricorn Coast for migratory shorebirds which travel all the way from Siberia, Alaska and Japan each year to spend the summer months on our Australian shores.

Migratory shorebirds arrive in Australia from September and, having flown some 13,000 kms from their breeding grounds, are exhausted and need to rest and feed to restore their energy and fat reserves before making the return trip in March/April.

Kinka Beach is also a permanent home to various species of shorebirds, with some breeding and raising their chicks locally.

Fitzroy Basin Association, BirdLife Capricornia and Rockhampton Regional Council hosted a 'Dog's Breakfast' to educate locals on shorebirds that share their beach with funding through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.

Local dog owners learnt how to coexist with migratory shorebirds, particularly by keeping dogs on a leash when visiting Kinka Beach. Dogs chase birds. If the birds are constantly put to flight, they may not have the energy or enough weight for their long journey back to their breeding grounds.

Three shorebird interpretive signs were erected along Kinka Beach to provide valuable information for all beach users about the shorebirds and how we can all share the beach with them.



*Our country, Our future.*



# Partnership to deliver the complete picture on river health

Almost a million dollars has been invested to produce a report card on the health of waterways throughout the entire Fitzroy Basin in a deal struck between 26 organisations.

This cash investment is backed up with water quality monitoring data from current programs that cost participating organisations more than three million dollars collectively.

The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health launched in early 2012, is one of Australia's largest waterway monitoring alliances in terms of organisations involved and catchment size, with the Fitzroy Basin being the second largest seaward draining catchment in Australia and the largest flowing to the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

Fitzroy Basin Association initiated the establishment of the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health and now hosts the organisation's staff.

The partnership is a good outcome for the Fitzroy Basin, the industries that rely on its health and most of all - the community.

## Why has the partnership been established?

In recent years the Central Queensland community has expressed growing concern over the quality of water in local creeks and rivers. The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health aims to ensure the community is well informed on the health of our waterways by drawing on data collected across the basin from over 2,000 different locations to prepare a report card and communicate the results in a way people can understand.

## What is the focus for the report card?

All water quality monitoring data collected from rivers, estuaries and near-shore coastal and marine environments will be shared through the partnership which will deliver a report card in the middle of 2013.

## Where can I find out more?

For more information on the partnership and organisations involved visit:

[www.riverhealth.org.au](http://www.riverhealth.org.au)





# Good water quality

## Starts with good decision-making



Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) supports a range of activities designed to improve water quality, including:

### **Staff dedicated to waterway health:**

In the 2011-12 year, FBA created a new Water Manager role to provide strategic direction for staff whose day-to-day work involves supporting research and community engagement projects to improve local waterway health.

### **Advising the government:**

FBA is a key member of the Queensland Government's Fitzroy Water Quality Advisory Group, which emerged to address water quality concerns following flooding and subsequent discharge of water from mines in 2008.

### **Informing development that affects waterways:**

We continue to promote sustainable development by responding to Environmental Impact Statements for proposals in our region that are potential threats to waterways and the reef.

### **Community input into policy:**

FBA worked with the Queensland Government to consult community members on local uses and values placed on waterways, and set targets for water quality in our coastal catchments. This feedback will go into the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy and help inform better decision-making. This process has already been completed for the Fitzroy Basin.

### **Membership of the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health:**

FBA initiated this partnership. We are proud members, as well as the host for its staff.



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# Flood recovery continues



Landholders are still recovering more than a year since the devastating flooding rains of 2010/11 which submerged more than 10,000km<sup>2</sup> of the Fitzroy Basin, and destroyed crops, damaged fences and washed away topsoil.

Over one million dollars was invested locally by FBA to help land managers restore landscapes, through funding from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (\$700,000) and Australian Government Flood Recovery Grants (\$400,000).

Funding addressed three key areas:

- erosion control on cotton farms;
- pest plant mitigation;
- repairs to watering points and fences in riparian, wetland and floodplain areas

Partnerships with farmers were developed to:

- undertake extensive re-building on cotton farms to levies and supply channels designed to minimise future flood impacts
- eradicate weeds spread by the natural disaster over 3,000 ha of sensitive environmental areas such as riparian zones and flood plains
- replace 70 kilometres of fencing to restore stock control and reduce grazing pressure across 15,200 ha of riparian and flood prone zones
- replace fencing to exclude stock from over 7,700 ha of sensitive wetlands
- restore flood damaged watering points to re-establish control over stock movement and reduce the risk of erosion on stream banks

Many used recovery projects as an opportunity to improve the management of sensitive areas and reassess their property planning and design to build resilience against future flood events.



# Case Study

## Restoring vital fencing after the flood

The force of water running through the Eastern Boyne River after torrential rainfall during the 2011 wet season led to the loss of infrastructure on Velvet Waters, a dairy farm south of Gladstone owned by Dave and Leonie Paish.

Fences, pipes and troughs were washed away, leaving the riverbank and two lagoons adjacent to a lane way running into the dairy exposed to cattle traffic, resulting in bogging and erosion.

Sediment was entering the river and the lagoons which posed a risk to water quality, the health of the dairy cows, and the value of the lagoons as a wetland habitat.

Dave and Leonie had buffered these important riparian and wetland areas with fencing to meet best practices within the dairy industry.

By working with their local Boyne Calliope Sub Region, they obtained a recovery grant through Fitzroy Basin Association and were able to replace fences, pipes and troughs to ensure they could continue to control stock movement in these fragile areas.

In total 1.5 kilometres of riverbank fencing was reconstructed, one tank and two troughs were installed, and half a kilometre of fencing erected to control cattle access to the lagoons.

The Paishs completed additional work on their own including two additional troughs, poly pipe and a drain on the eastern side of the lagoons to minimise further erosion of the track.

They are also improving their whole-of-property management skills through an industry-led training program.

Disaster Recovery funding has helped the Paish's dairy business return to pre-flood conditions, and maintained the benefits of sustainable farm practices to reduce erosion entering local waterways.



*Velvet Waters inundated*



*Getting back to normal*



# We care about Landcare



Landcare groups work in locations across the Fitzroy Basin to promote sustainable land management and protect the biodiversity of our beautiful region.

These groups are made up of dedicated volunteers from all walks and stages of life who have collectively volunteered thousands of hours of their time over the past year.

Local Landcare groups in our region are actively involved in projects including:

- Protecting fragile coastal ecosystems and creeks through the removal of weeds and restoring native vegetation
- Facilitating training and field days to share land management knowledge
- Coordinating land managers to participate in wild dog removal programs
- Community engagement events to raise awareness of the importance of Landcare

FBA hosts the Regional Landcare Facilitator for our region, whose role involves supporting local Landcare and primary producer groups, fostering new members, and providing practical support for events and projects.

If you are interested in starting a Landcare group or joining an existing group please email [katrina.conway@fba.org.au](mailto:katrina.conway@fba.org.au) or call her on (07) 4999 2842 for more information.



Regional Landcare Facilitator



# Local Landcare group restores the balance!

Over the past year Baralaba Landcare Group members have maintained 11 kilometres of waterway on the Dawson River Anabranh near Baralaba to prevent the return of a Weed of National Significance - *Hymenachne amplexicaulis*.

*Hymenachne* was first introduced into Australia in the late 1980's as a ponded pasture grass, sadly it escaped its ponds and caused an environmental catastrophe.

When the Baralaba Landcare group came across the problem site a few years ago, *Hymenachne* totally clogged 11 kilometres of the waterway making it near impossible to take water for stock or irrigation.

Officers from Banana Shire, Central Highlands Regional and Rockhampton Regional Councils, the local landowners and Baralaba Landcare members began an extensive coordinated spraying campaign to rid the anabranh of the weed with an initial "Resource Sharing Day" organised by Capricorn Pest Management Group.

Funding was provided by FBA through Australian Government Caring for our Country to clear the waterway by reducing the weed to a manageable level and SunWater also came on board with a donation of \$10,000 to buy chemical to spray the weed.

Due to the width of the infestation in some parts spraying was undertaken by helicopter and fire proved to be the most effective method to remove the dead *hymenachne*.

Baralaba Landcare group was also successful in securing a Community Benefit Fund grant to purchase a 'Quickspray' spray unit for landholders and group members to use on an ongoing basis to control the weed.

The landowners and Baralaba Landcare group are committed to keeping this weed out of anabranh and will continue to maintain the area to ensure the waterway is clear and able to flow unhindered to the Great Barrier Reef.





# Engaging communities to protect the coast

Volunteers have donated more than 10,000 hours of their time over the past year to protect fragile coastal ecosystems in Central Queensland.

With over 1,000kms of coastline, stretching from St Lawrence in the north to Tannum Sands in the south and 125 islands located in the Fitzroy Basin Association region, engaging and encouraging the community to take action is essential to ensure the continued health of the coast.

FBA encourages new volunteers, and supports existing volunteers and community groups to achieve very significant on-ground outcomes to protect and restore coastal landscapes.

Through local volunteer efforts, in the past year more than:

- 6,000 community members attended events, broadening their knowledge of NRM.
- 1,000kg of marine debris was removed by volunteers from intertidal areas along the coast.
- 4,000kg of weeds were removed from priority sites. The areas were then re-vegetated or allowed to recover enabling native flora and fauna to flourish and build buffer areas around sensitive coastal habitats.

In partnership with community groups, FBA has run numerous events to raise awareness of coastal habitat protection. On-ground advice in weed management, removal and re-vegetation strategies is provided by FBA as well as support to attain media coverage, manage large-scale events and develop marketing materials.





# Our Internationally significant wetlands

## Shoalwater and Corio Bays



The Fitzroy Basin region is home to a variety of wetlands including rivers, creeks, estuaries, swamps and bays. Some wetlands are more valuable than others, such as Shoalwater and Corio Bays, which are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance – known as the Ramsar convention.

These Ramsar-listed wetlands play an important role in the environment providing:

- Nursery areas for aquatic species
- Breeding areas and shelter for many bird species
- Zones for sediment deposition and nutrient cycling
- Protection against coastal erosion and storm damage

Shoalwater and Corio Bays incorporate 300km of coastline including islands and wetlands, with a remarkably abundant wildlife of tropical and subtropical species.

Fitzroy Basin Association worked with Greening Australia and other community groups to manage this Ramsar wetland by reducing critical threats from marine debris thanks to Australian Government funding. In the past year the site was visited several times for clean-up activities within the targeted 46ha area.

Most of the debris collected was ropes, plastics and even a large ghost net. These can cause the death of wildlife as they may eat or get caught in the debris.

This project is ongoing and with constant maintenance the 1,000 plus species of marine and bird life that call this unique area home will be protected from the threats posed by marine debris.



*Our country. Our future.*



# Fingerlings continue their journey in Fitzroy



The Fitzroy River is renowned for its large Barramundi, but prize catches begin their lives as very small fingerlings living in small creeks away from the river.

Barramundi are one of the many species whose lives have been made easier after a fishway was added to Moores Creek in Rockhampton by Fitzroy Basin Association and Fisheries Queensland.

FBA's Operations Manager Piers Harper said "When the initial site inspection was completed in March at Moores Creek, thousands of Empire Gudgeons and other small fish species were stuck behind the pipes as the velocity of water coming through the pipes under a low lying bridge (the fish barrier) was too strong."

The fish ladder will allow passage to another 1.5km of upstream habitat for many species of fish including barramundi, sea mullet, mangrove jack, tarpon, empire gudgeons, long-finned eels and pacific blue eyes, just to name a few.

It was constructed using an excavator to place boulders, up to 4 tonne each, into place along a 30 metre bypass while checking levels and creating "V" channels to form eddy's and easy migration paths.

The ladder slows down the velocity of the water and allows the fish to leap through the flow of running water, and rest in the pools, until they've made their way to the other side of the barrier where few fish have been before.



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# Making way for fish in the Fitzroy – beyond the barriers

In the past four years, Fitzroy Basin Association and Fisheries Queensland have constructed 15 fishways - structures that allow fish, especially juvenile fish, to move safely past physical barriers in waterways.

Local fishways have opened up an additional 145.5 kilometres of streams within the Fitzroy Basin allowing more than 500,000 fish to migrate annually (in favourable conditions)! Migration is an important part of the life cycle of a fish.

Any structure placed across a waterway can restrict the movement of fish between fresh water habitat and between fresh and salt water, impacting on breeding cycles and reducing fish stocks.

Fishways constructed in CQ are usually a sloping channel with a series of ridges in either rock or roughened concrete that slow down the flow of water past barriers allowing fish to travel through the barrier at their leisure while utilising rest points.

FBA commissioned work to identify critical fish barriers across the Fitzroy Basin in 2008. With the support of Australian and Queensland Government funding, FBA and Fisheries Queensland are unlocking priority fish migration paths with the construction of fishways.

Where previously fish only had a couple of days of the year where they could cross the barrier during perfect tide and flow conditions, the new fishways extend this timeframe to months, helping improve the quantity and diversity of fish stocks in our regional waterways and making our fisheries more sustainable.

## Common fish barriers are:

- Dams
- Floodgates
- Weirs
- Causeways
- Roads
- Culverts
- Bridges

