

FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION

Just over 22 years ago, a group of passionate community members banded together to create what is now known as Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA). Since this time there have been innumerable changes to FBA's operating landscape. FBA's enduring commitment to those who call the region home has ensured

that FBA continues to reflect its local community in its work towards a sustainable region.

With a region more than twice the size of Tasmania, coordinating an integrated natural resource management operating approach that meets the demands of its community and environment is paramount. Integration and cooperation were celebrated in the last financial year with leveraged funds and a huge community

presence bringing significant projects to fruition, often also elevating project outcomes and community stewardship.

Three key FBA projects over the past year where co-investment has led to enriched outcomes include Australia's largest streambank restoration project occuring in Yaamba, Team Turtle CQ and FBA's first peer-to-peer model for agricultural extension in regenerative agriculture.

As the country's largest beef producing region operating in one of the most variable climates in the world, adaptation to secure a sustainable, productive and profitable future is more pertinent than ever.

Farming Innovations Field Day at Springsure – participants inspecting the Walk Over Weigh System. "It's been really, really successful. RegenAG's objective is aligned with FBA's, we want to see uptake"

Kym Kruse Director, RegenAG



RegenAG

FARMING THE WAY NATURE INTENDED

Opening up a profit margin by reducing your inputs. It goes against the grain – but Kym Kruse's philosophy is the substitution of chemical inputs with materials and resources which are already available, and often free, on your property.

The director of RegenAG, Kruse agrees that inputs are necessary – but – through his life's work, has proven that biological inputs, manufactured and applied by the landholder, have a greater impact on yield, production, nutrition and cost-efficiency than any product available for purchase.

Recognising the ingenuity of his principles – FBA, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, brought Kym to CQ to deliver two biofertilizer workshops in 2018.

The local demand for a natural solution was resounding, with both courses swiftly reaching capacity.

The demand was so high, FBA successfully secured follow-up funding from the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality program to commence a one-year mentor program led by Kruse.

Willing participants from the biofertilizer workshops were given a brief:

'Implement a trial site on your property with only biological inputs for 12 months. Compare the results of the trial site throughout the year against conventional methods.'

The success of this mentorship program, where Kym made himself available to the participants via teleconferencing, has not only surprised the mentor himself, but

"It's changed our lives and our property," says Judy Smith of Thangool. "It's exciting. It makes you want to go farming – it's fun and you can make money. You can do it with your children, there's no chemicals, there's no hazards. It's a no-brainer." Rory Watson from Blackwater affirms.



Wheat planted on a project trial site two days apart, with the benefits of biofertilisers and regenerative principles demonstrated on the right.



TEAM TURTLE CQ

CITIZEN SCIENCE IN ACTION

The volunteer-based network of beach observers across the Capricorn and Curtis Coasts are referred to as 'Team Turtle CQ'. These 54 volunteers (and growing!) are activated in October every year, walking their designated beach to identify and record turtle tracks, nests and hatchlings. The figures recorded are then entered into an FBA database, further populated every season. In time, verifiable trends and patterns in marine turtle nesting and emergence across our local coasts will be revealed.

FBA have also integrated instant, real-time monitoring of turtle tracks and nests, through the development of a BioCollect app which records GPS coordinates and images, which can then be accessed by the Team Turtle CQ network.

Additionally, FBA designed and created a Team Turtle CQ shirt, to unify the volunteers, provide sun-safe clothing and to throw the initiative into the spotlight of the communities where they are active.



Team Turtle CQ volunteers, expertly trained at Mon Repos Turtle Centre, are the endangered species biggest allies across the Curtis and Capricorn Coasts.

The shirts were received with such an overwhelming response, a ladies and a mens version were flown to be auctioned off at the International Sea Turtle Symposium in South Carolina, USA.

FBA this year secured funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation through the Australian Government to implement behaviour change strategies that will have a positive impact on marine turtle populations. This funding was then leveraged, with FBA successfully securing funding from the Oueensland Government's Department of **Environment and Science** to deliver fox predation control along the coastlines.





Supporting and empowering community members to maintain our natural assets is core to our driving mission. One of the many ways FBA achieves this is through community grants and bursaries. Each year, we seek out community groups across our region who have a passion and a vision to safeguard the natural assets they hold close to their heart.

The 2018-19 financial year saw the largest geographical spread of applications yet, along with many brilliant and innovative ideas.

FBA awarded \$92,425 through 14 Community Grants and 19 Community

Bursaries in the last financial year, resulting in many big wins for special species and places around the Fitzroy Basin. These community initiatives led to the removal of 41.251 tonnes of marine debris, revegetation of 9.67 hectares of priority land, the treatment of 13.72 hectares of weeds and more.

The 33 grant and bursary projects engaged a phenomenal 11,963 people through community events and volunteer opportunities.

Each of these community grants and bursaries materialise through the goodwill of extraordinary people, volunteers and community groups who share in FBA's mission from across the region.

Eight-year-old Teyahlee Fletcher is now a certified flying fox carer thanks to an FBA Community Grant given to the Wildlife Carers Network.

COMMUNITY GRANTS & BURSARIES

Community members with diverse backgrounds and abilities banding together under the Jolly Rogers Fishing Club flag to clean the Toonooba (Fitzroy) River. As a landholder and farmer of the Fitzroy region, I know how important it is to be connected and supported by a reliable team.

Fitzroy Basin Association and its' dedicated and specialised staff have over 280 years of combined experience in agricultural and environmental management.

As trusted delivery agents of 22 years, FBA work on ground in a landscape where industries converge. Production outcomes with environmental benefits are imperative for the Fitzroy - Queensland's highest commodity region - supplied by beef, coal and coal seam gas.

As an organisation, we work to navigate the natural balance across a diverse and highly productive region. Finding this balance between competing industries such as coal and gas, beef and cropping, fisheries and tourism, is a conversation FBA has been engaged in for a long time. We take pride in our role in prompting, guiding and encouraging these conversations.

The principles and impact of land management on the Fitzroy region is critical, as it is the largest catchment draining into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. FBA have a duty in ensuring our communities are aware of their connection and influence on the iconic World Heritage site.

At a local level, FBA have more feet on the ground, more skills and more resources available to our growers and graziers than ever before.

I'm proud to say, once again, FBA has eclipsed itself, achieving extraordinary goals in restoration, agriculture, education, extension, regional presence and delivery.

I'm excited to share with you this year's impact on the region, underpinned by innovation, passion and our drive for excellence.

Sean Conaghan Chair

The rapid evolution of the natural resource management sector over the last twelve months is creating new and exciting opportunities, and a change in the management of FBA.

Changes to FBA's service delivery model, adopted in mid-2018, has renewed our commitment to the people and natural assets of the region. Regional engagement is at an all-time high right across our extensive region with a greater return-on-investment. To help meet demand, new talent has joined the FBA team, taking up residence across the region expanding each of our five regional offices.

A step in a new direction saw FBA complete its first large-scale riverbank restoration project. While we are practised at healing the land, the magnitude of this project provided many valuable lessons and was not without twists and turns. I am pleased to announce that this project is currently the largest streambank stabilisation project ever undertaken in Australia. The positive ecological, economic and social outcomes of this venture is a testament to what can be achieved when we aim high and work with our partners for the greater good of the region.

While keeping a keen eye on the future, the close of Reef Trust I, 2 and 3 allowed us to look back and reflect on the huge achievements reached. All three of these programs exceeded expectation and made a lasting change to our local landscape. I would like to congratulate everyone who was a part of these programs over the last four years, especially the landholders who collectively delivered practice change over 195,514 hectares!

Looking ahead, there are many exciting opportunities on the horizon. New collaborations across the breadth of our region again promises to increase FBA's reach, accountability and impact. I am pleased to be leading such a passionate and innovative team through these new opportunities and look forward to the year ahead.

Buthle

Elyse Riethmuller
Chief Executive Officer





INNOVATION

EMPOWERING OUR REGION



TECHCONNECT

In partnership with Glencore, FBA has crafted a state-of-theart mobile display named the TechConnect Hub. Designed to strengthen environmental stewardship in regional communities across the Fitzroy NRM region, the TechConnect Hub is a huge three-metre-high inflatable tent filled with the latest range of interactive models, tools and technology, and is the first of its kind in Australia. Since launching the hub in January of this year, the tent has been sweeping the region from Springsure in the west, St Lawrence in the north and Theodore in the south.

REEF CHAMPIONS

Landholders, individuals and community groups who champion the improvement of the water quality and health of the Great Barrier Reef were celebrated at the 2018 Reef Champion Awards late last year. Held in Yeppoon and showcasing five finalists from central Queensland, the Fitzroy Basin region stole the show. The highlight of the evening was when 10-year-old, Sid Crawshaw, from Tannum Sands, was announced as the winner of the Reef Youth Champion Under 15 – a category designed just for him!

Left to right: The TechConnect Tent in action, young Cooper York immersed in a virtual reality experience, 10-year-old Sid Crawshaw with his trophy and the revamped FBA Flow centre in action.



After five years of servicing the community and welcoming more than 27,000 visitors through its doors, FBA's Flow Centre underwent a revitalisation in 2018. The extensive transformation took nine months to complete and required careful curation and consideration. In April of 2019, the Centre officially reopened with community members and stakeholders celebrating the occasion. Boasting state-of-theart technology, the renewed display and venue is attracting a wider breadth of community members and visitors than ever before.



THE LEGACY OF REEF TRUST

Practice change in agriculture is no small feat.

Approaching property management holistically, competing against conventional farming methods (often passed down through generations) and taking the risks needed to make profitable, productive and sustainable change is a courageous transformation for many landholders.

Across three long-term Australian Government Reef Trust programs each lasting four years, an astonishing 924,790 hectares of managed land in the Fitzroy region has been reached.

FBA has been a constant source of support for these landholders throughout their journey of practice change, and will continue to do so into the future.

Total practice change area = 195,514 hectares

As at June 2018, cattle numbers in the Fitzroy NRM region grew by 23% from the previous year, despite drought, to 3.2 million head.

Reef Trust 1



collaboration between FBA, NQDT and RCS* reaching

4.9 million hectares



975

attendees across
49 events



60km pipelines, 43 troughs and 16 water tanks on 353,710 hectares over 18 properties



practice change area

67,029 hectares

Reef Trust II



Fitzroy,
Mackenzie
Theresa,
Dawson
and Isaac
catchments



24 landholders
50%
new to FBA

1,002 tonnes of sediment saved



460 erosion control structures

*Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA), North Queensland Dry Tropics (NQDT) and Resource Consulting Services (RCS)

Reef Trust III



GRAZING

362,833 hectares



184.2 km streambank protected through land management practices



2,021 hours
total time on
landholder extension



GRAINS



208,247 hectares

1826.5 hours
total time on
landholder extension

128,485 hectares
of practice change

CREATING A RESILIENT FUTURE



The water passing through the mighty Fitzroy system - out to the ocean, amounts to 12 Sydney Harbours worth, or 5,900 gigalitres, every year.

This system is the largest draining into the Great Barrier Reef, and when functioning typically, deposits millions of tonnes of sediment into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon as part of its natural process.

When this mighty system is under pressure, as it was in 2017 following Severe Tropical Cyclone (STC) Debbie, it swells. The already large amount of sediment being transported via our waterway system is compounded. Following STC Debbie, 266,000 tonnes of sediment was washed

away from a single riverbank in Yaamba, approximately 20 kilometres north of Rockhampton.

Aerial surveying identified this riverbank as in need of urgent repair – to minimise future erosion, protect downstream communities and avoid further loss of agricultural land.

The landholder, Mr Scott Schneider, says the site has been in a retreating pattern for the entire time he has resided there.

"From the homestead, we could hear chunks of the riverbank falling away piece by piece," he said.

"It took us a few weeks to realise what the sound actually was."

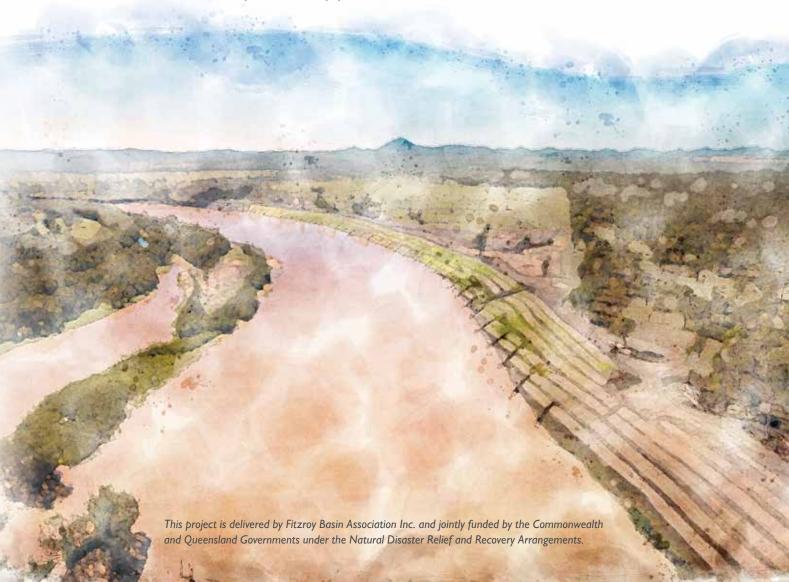
To restore this 1.2km stretch of Fitzroy riverbank, strong partnerships were forged.

Locally-sourced contractors were given access onto private property to allow civil ground works to occur - including excavation, bank creation, installation of pile fields and rock protection.

For the past 6 months, the co-funded \$1.8 million project has created 12 full-time jobs in the region. Following civil works, further collaboration has occurred with Rockhampton Regional Council and Livingstone Shire Council, supplying 75,000 native trees from both council nurseries, which will, after establishment, assist in long-term stabilisation of the riverbank.

In a system that is guaranteed to experience flooding events again, building the resilience of this riverbank has flow-on benefits for downstream communities, livelihoods, local economies and the environment.

Top: 1,742 log piles were driven vertically into the riverbank to redirect water flow to the centre of the waterway, stabilise the soil and promote long-term vegetation growth. 90,000 tonnes of sediment saved annually from washing into the Toonooba (Fitzroy) River



Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2019

CURRENT ASSETS	2019	2018
Cash on hand	\$7,358,171	\$12,251,431
Accounts receivable and other debtors	\$657,955	\$147,149
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$8,016,126	\$12,398,580
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	\$130,082	\$188,292
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$130,082	\$188,292
TOTAL ASSETS	\$8,146,208	\$12,586,872
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and other payables	\$2,871,042	\$8,267,479
Provisions	\$696,936	\$569,829
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 3,567,978	\$8,837,308
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		8 8 7 8
Accounts payable and other payables	\$0	\$0
Provisions	\$89,473	\$134,930
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$89,473	\$134,930
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$3,657,451	\$8,972,238
NET ASSETS	\$4,488,757	\$3,614,634
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	\$4,488,757	\$3,614,634
TOTAL EQUITY	\$4,488,757	\$3,614,634

Statement of Comprehensive Income for year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
REVENUE	\$19,109,482	\$14,102,831
EXPENDITURE		
Employee	\$3,856,635	\$3,253,396
Depreciation	\$93,770	\$73,203
Project	\$13,859,444	\$10,051,113
Sundry	\$425,510	\$435,491
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$18,235,359	\$13,813,203
NET CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS	\$874,123	\$289,628

This is an abridged version. A full copy of the Fitzroy Basin Association financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2019 is available by contacting: 07 4999 2800 | admin@fba.org.au

Aerial image over the Brigalow Belt, an endangered ecosystem in central Queensland.









@fitzroybasin



fitzroy-basin-association



admin@fba.org.au



@fitzroybasinassociation



/FitzroyBasin



www.fba.org.au

© Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated 2019. Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated's Annual Report 2018-19 has been prepared with due care and diligence using the best available information at the time of publication.

FBA holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions and decisions made by other parties based on this publication.

Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, representing the traditional Aboriginal land across the Fitzroy Basin.

Special thanks to those that have contributed photographs for this publication, and to those FBA members, staff, partners, project participants, stakeholders and Board members who have made our achievements possible.

FBA is the proud host of





