

WATER (Wetlands in Agriculture: Training Extension and Resources)

This project is increasing the capacity of producers and practitioners to manage agricultural land to improve the function and values of wetlands in Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchments.

Background

Wetlands and adjoining riparian communities are an essential part of catchments and are important in maintaining the health of the GBR. They are recognised as having a vital role in water quality improvement, as well as providing a range of other unique ecosystem services.

In recognition of the importance of wetlands in the GBR catchments, the Queensland and Australian governments, through the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013, have set a target: 'there is no net loss of the extent, and an improvement in the ecological processes and environmental values, of natural wetlands'.

The range of activities underway by government and non-government partners to achieve this target cover the whole management spectrum from policy and planning, through on-ground support to monitoring, communication and coordination.

This project is one of three projects funded by the Queensland Government's 'Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Investment Program', under the Queensland Wetlands Program (QWP):

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)—WATER (Wetlands in Agriculture: training, extension and resources)
- Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (DSITIA)—Monitoring change in wetland extent across the Great Barrier Reef Catchments
- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP)—Critical Reef Support.

Objectives

WATER aims to increase the knowledge and capacity of producers and practitioners in managing agricultural land to improve the ecological function and values of wetlands in Great Barrier Reef catchments.

WATER is providing this sector with the tools and products needed to help sustainably manage their land and wetland areas.

The project is building on the wetland management tools and resources available on [WetlandInfo](#) and previous training delivered as part of the Queensland Wetlands Program.

The project is ensuring:

- Growers and graziers have increased knowledge, skills and aspiration to implement land and wetland management practices that reduces pollutant runoff, improves wetland health and assimilates pollutants within the farm footprint.
- Natural resource management (NRM), government and industry practitioners have increased knowledge and skills to assist producers to manage wetlands and adjoining agricultural land uses for long-term wetland health and functionality.
- There is increased awareness of and use of practical and informative wetland management products and tools by the agricultural sector.
- Wetland management principles are integrated into industry Best Management Practice (BMP) programs.



QWP on-farm wetland training Burdekin 2013. Photo: DAFF

Project activities

Planned activities are:

- developing resources and tools on principles and practices for managing wetlands
- showcasing examples of good wetland management

- building capacity amongst practitioners through developing and delivering workshops, field walks and showcasing demonstration sites
- establishing and maintaining a network of wetland management practitioners
- providing technical advice and support leading to successful on-farm wetland management projects
- reporting on wetlands management activities and outcomes and delivery through [WetlandInfo](#) .

Project governance

The project is being undertaken by officers from DAFF, focusing on priority GBR regions of the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsundays and Fitzroy.

DAFF is establishing regional advisory groups involving key government, industry and natural resource management (NRM) staff to provide advice and guidance specific to each region.

All products will be approved through the Queensland Wetlands Program Governance Group prior to release.



Revegetation at De Moleyns wetland demonstration site, Mackay 2013. Photo: DAFF



Stakeholders visiting a newly constructed wetland on a dairy farm on the Atherton Tablelands 2013. Photo: DAFF

The Queensland Wetlands Program supports projects and activities that result in long-term benefits to the sustainable management, wise use and protection of wetlands in Queensland. The tools developed by the Program help wetlands landholders, managers and decision makers in government and industry. The Queensland Wetlands Program is currently funded by the Queensland Government.

Contact wetlands@ehp.qld.gov.au
or visit www.wetlandinfo.ehp.qld.gov.au

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