

Identification of waterway values and uses (Environmental values) for the Fitzroy Basin



Background information

The Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) has been funded by the Queensland Government to assist with the identification of environmental values (EVs) and establishment of water quality objectives (WQOs) for the Fitzroy Basin. This process builds on water quality components of the [Central Queensland Strategy for Sustainability – 2004 and beyond](#) and extends objectives of FBA's [Water Quality Improvement Report](#) into freshwaters and estuarine reaches of the Fitzroy Basin.

Q: Why is this important to me?

A: This process will result in community-endorsed EVs and WQOs for your catchment being included in state legislation with the goal of better managing water quality in the region. These values and objectives will apply to urban, mining, industrial and agricultural enterprises that release water into the natural environment. In other words, the process will establish benchmarks to protect the community's values for the waters of the Fitzroy Basin and in doing so will improve decisions about matters that affect water quality within the basin.

This also relates to recommendations of the [Barry Hart report](#)¹, Coastal and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) management, Fitzroy Basin Water Resource Plan (currently undergoing a 10 year review), Integrated Planning Act instruments (e.g. regional plans and planning schemes), and catchment management programs.

Q: So why is FBA supporting the Queensland Government in this initiative?

A: We want to ensure all interested parties throughout the Fitzroy Basin have the opportunity to shape these water values into something realistic whilst meeting all users' needs.

Q: How are the values and uses of the waterways identified?

A: The process of setting environmental values draws together all parties with an interest in waterways to capture knowledge of the values and uses (including the environment) at a sub-catchment scale, as well as basin-wide. It is a three stage process as explained below. These EVs are combined with technical water quality guidelines to define the water quality objectives (targets) that are required to protect the EVs.

Q: How can I provide input?

A: A first stage (basin-wide) workshop was held on the 25th and 26th of November 2009 in Rockhampton with selected catchment representatives providing initial broad-level advice on the EVs and their ideas ready for a second round of workshops held in the 10 main sub-catchments of the Fitzroy Basin (Figure 1).

This will now be followed by these 10 catchment workshops hosted in each catchment from February to March 2010. These workshops are open to interested parties and are designed to capture the collective knowledge of all stakeholders for each sub-catchment. For parties interested in the basin-scale approach a basin-wide workshop will also be held. Your input is requested for the second stage workshop being held in your area. Workshops are aimed at providing further local knowledge on the environmental values of the freshwater and estuarine reaches of the Fitzroy Basin.

¹ Hart (2008). Report to the Queensland Premier. Review of the Fitzroy River Water Quality Issues. Professor Barry Hart. November 2008.

The low-down on EVs and WQOs: cutting through the jargon.

EVs

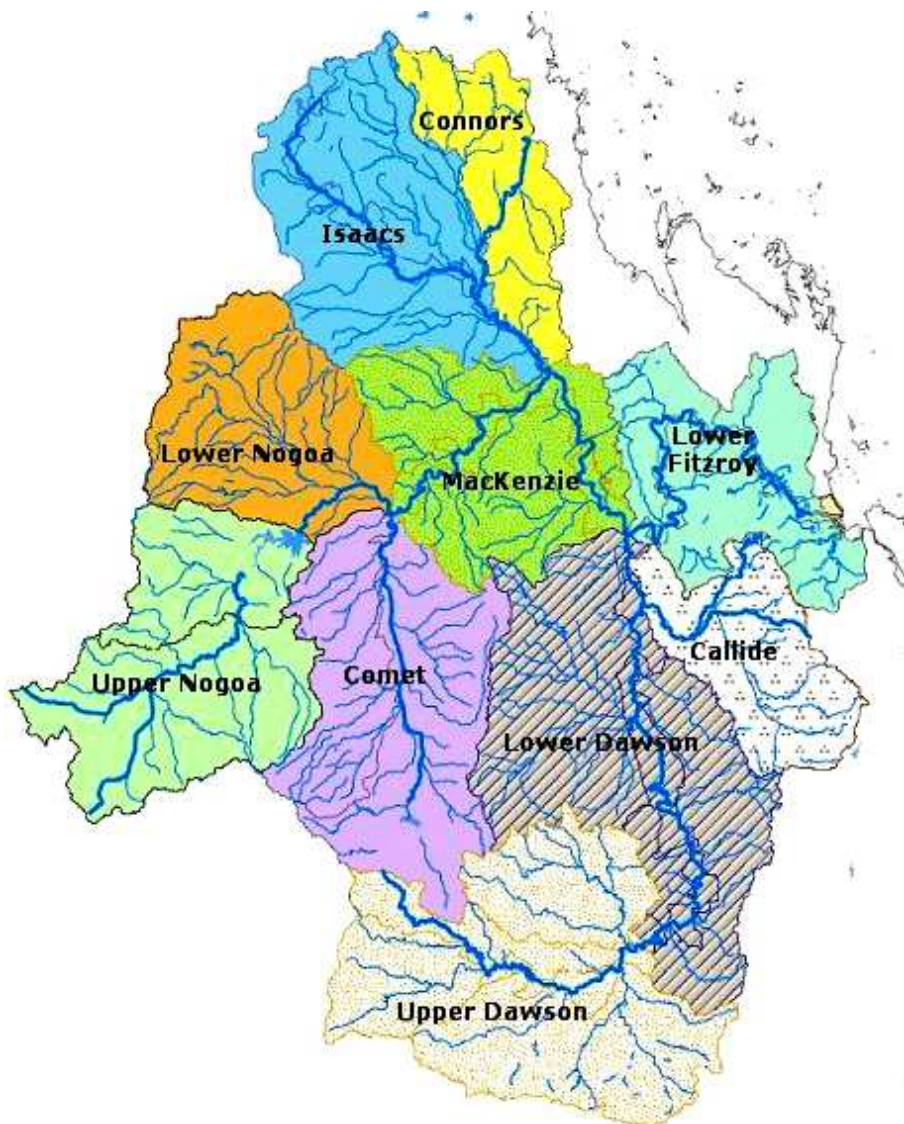
These are the uses of water and waterways. They include:

- water for farm use (stock, irrigating, etc.)
- for mining and industrial use
- for boating, fishing, and swimming
- for enjoyment and appreciation
- for drinking, and
- making sure there's healthy waterways for fish and other water creatures.

WQOs

These are targets for water quality, to make sure that the water is good enough for all of the users.

Figure 1: Consultation areas for the Fitzroy Basin EVs and WQOs project



Q: What happens after the catchment workshops?

A: With support from the FBA, the Queensland Government will include input from all interested parties and incorporate it into a final draft report.

There will then be a further opportunity for your input during the public review of this final draft Fitzroy EVs and WQOs report. The Queensland Government is then proposing to finalise the report and schedule EVs and WQOs in the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy (EPP Water).

Q: Has this happened elsewhere?

A: Yes. Examples include:

[Reef Water Quality Improvement Plans](#)

Including Mackay Whitsundays Region: [Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Inc](#)

South East Queensland Catchments: [SEQ Healthy Waterways Strategy](#)

For more information on the process, visit the Queensland Government's Environmental Management website:

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/water/environmental_values_environmental_protection_water_policy/index.html