



JULY 2009

E-brief

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\$14M To Support Local Landscapes

FITZROY Basin Association (FBA) has secured funding of more than \$14M to continue working with local land managers.

Acting CEO Paul Birch said FBA had obtained the funding through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Business Plan for 2009-10 announced in July.

"FBA has secured base level funding of more than \$4.6 million over the next two years to continue our coordination role – it recognises FBA as the region's peak natural resource management group," Mr Birch said.

"In addition, funding we received under the Reef Rescue component of Caring for our Country will allow FBA to invest just over \$10 million in CQ over the next three years in collaboration with industry partners," he said.

"This money will mostly be spent on-ground, working with landholders at the frontline of natural resource management to adopt world-leading farming practices that will reduce erosion and run-off to the reef."

Mr Birch said that FBA was one of just five regional groups out of 14 in Queensland to successfully obtain funding under the competitive grants process of Caring for our Country and management was extremely proud of the achievement.

"Together with Greening Australia and other partners, FBA will manage a project worth \$600,000 to address weed and feral animal impacts on Ramsar listed wetlands in the Shoalwater and Corio Bay areas," Mr Birch said.

"Shoalwater and Corio Bay are the largest Ramsar listed wetlands on the east coast of Australia and are currently threatened by invasive water plants such as hymenachne, and feral animals including pigs.

"The project will enable integrated and strategic pest management work to occur to help restore and protect these international significant wetland ecosystems."

Mr Birch said the Caring for our Country business



Corio wetland

plan funding would ensure FBA could continue to make a real difference in the condition of natural resources in the region.

"Money is already being invested in projects to enable landholders to make practical changes to the way their land is managed and give them the support to adopt sustainable agricultural practices," he said.

"In fact, more than 100 landholders are signed on to work with us over the next year alone to undertake projects including protecting riverbanks with fencing and off-stream watering points, reducing stock numbers, protecting remnant vegetation and installing improved water-use efficiency infrastructure."

More than 1300 organisations submitted proposals for funding in response to the 2009-10 Caring for our Country business plan.

The Australian Government has approved more than \$403 million in Caring for our Country funding to organisations to undertake environmental and sustainable farming projects. It will be the single biggest investment over the next four years under the landmark \$2 billion program.

[Click here for more information on successful projects funded under the Caring for our Country Business Plan 09-10.](#)

[Click here for more information on Ramsar listed wetlands.](#)

Trial shows bacteria benefits crop

A RECENT trial that applied bacterial inoculum to a winter wheat crop resulted in higher yield, more protein, and significant cost savings compared to applying traditional levels of fertiliser.

During the 2008 winter wheat crop a bacterial inoculum called Twin N was used in a replicated trial design incorporating a control, conventional fertiliser treatment, and several biological treatments of approximately 1ha in size.

The wheat treated with Twin N produced slightly higher yields and protein content following harvest, and was also \$54/ha cheaper to apply than traditional fertilisers.

The Biological Farming Project trial was conducted with Lex and Lester Webb of 'Belvedere', a 6200 acre mixed cropping and cattle property 15km south east of Baralaba in Central Queensland.

"Last year, fertiliser prices including urea were at record high prices, which meant that farmers had to review their fertility management options in light of potential yields," Lex Webb said.

"Many farmers looked at alternative products that could still deliver the desired outcome but were cheaper than conventional fertiliser, this is why we decided to trial Twin N," he said.

The project is funded under the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc Innovation Fund to explore the sustainable land management benefits of biological farming practices on a 21ha replicated trial plot at 'Belvedere'.

"Farmers are also aware of the changing face of government and public attitudes towards the environment and are consistently striving to limit any off-farm movement of applied fertilisers," Mr Webb said.

"No fertiliser was applied to the control treatment (seed only) with the conventional treatment receiving a pre-plant application of



Belvedere trial site

110kg/ha of Urea and 30kg/ha of Starter Z," he said.

"Of the two biological treatments, the 'Twin N' treatment received identical biological inoculums and food sources at planting with one treatment planted with Starter Z at the same rate as the conventional treatment."

Twin N is a freeze dried microbial product developed to sequester nitrogen from the atmosphere for use in improving crop productivity and reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer.

Lex Webb said that analysis after harvesting showed that the Twin N with starter treatment yielded similar to the conventional treatment, but protein levels and screenings were higher.

Mr Webb said that while the trial results were encouraging, the project is looking to replicate the trials again this winter with a focus on using liquid injection systems as the preferred application method.

"For broadacre farmers to use biological products such as Twin N, it is necessary for the products to perform consistently in a dryland cropping operation," he said.

"We are aware of farmers using Twin N successfully, however we want to show that biological products can be used successfully in our conditions, delivering the results that count, yield and quality of end product."

A ROUND-UP OF EVENTS ACROSS CQ

Event	When?	Where?	Contact
“What makes the news and news photography” Webinar with Lisa Yorkston from QMDC	Tuesday 7 July 11:30am to 12:30pm	Online meeting (Internet connection required)	to register contact jody.mcdonald@fba.org.au
Lantana Field Day The Caves	Wednesday 8 July 9am to 1pm	436 Milman Road (from the Caves, continue along Bruce Hwy, veer right onto Milman Road)	Contact Lisa Sutton to RSVP for catering: P: 4921 0573 E: lsutton@frcc.org.au
Lantana & Badhara Bush Field Day Cawarral	Thursday 9 July 9am to 1pm	Veterans Bush Camp 124 Camms Road Cawarral	Contact Caroline Sandral to RSVP for catering: P: 4967 0607 E: caroline.sandral@deedi.qld.gov.au
Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee Display at NAIDOC Week Rally	Friday 10 July From 10:00am	Rockhampton Cricket Grounds	FBEC: P: 4921 3955
Emu Park Community Bushcare Group Weed workshop & Planting Day	Sunday 19 July From 9am and BBQ lunch to follow	Meet at Kemp Beach foreshore, Emu Park	Contact Leise Childs P: 4939 9965 E: leise.childs@rrc.qld.gov.au
QREX Rockhampton	20-24 July	Rockhampton Showgrounds	Full programme available at www.qrex.com.au
“Federal Environment Laws and how they affect you” Webinar with Ross Rowe from Australian Farmers Federation	Tuesday 21 July 11:30am to 12:30am	Online meeting (Internet connection required)	To register contact jody.mcdonald@fba.org.au
Santos Gladstone Liquefied Natural Gas Project Info session	Wednesday 22 July 5:30pm to 7:30pm	Biloela Civic Centre Foyer	P: 1800 761 113 E: info@glng.com.au
Santos Gladstone Liquefied Natural Gas Project Info session	Friday 24 July 11am to 12:30pm & 3pm to 4:30pm	Santos GLNG Office, 114 Goondoon St	P: 1800 761 113 E: info@glng.com.au
Santos Gladstone Liquefied Natural Gas Project Info session	Saturday 25 July 11:30am to 2pm	Curtis Island	P: 1800 761 113 E: info@glng.com.au
Grazing BestPrac Grazing Management Workshop	13 & 14 August	TBA	P: 49383919 E: noela@grazingbestprac.com.au
Queensland Landcare Conference 2009	15-17 October 09	Longreach Cultural and Civic Centre	Register to attend online here.

SUCCESSFUL FORUM COVERS ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

AROUND 80 people attended a free community forum in Calliope in June to learn more about natural resource management issues and opportunities.

People from Boyne Calliope and Fitzroy joined the forum on June 18 organised by Fitzroy Basin Association Inc (FBA) to consider topics including regrowth clearing and water quality.

FBA Acting CEO Paul Birch said the forum helped people to become better informed and learn about opportunities to enhance natural resource management in their local area.

“We organised the forum as an information sharing opportunity and were delighted that so many attended to hear from our excellent guest speakers who gave freely of their time to participate,” Mr Birch said.

“Dr Leonie Andersen from the Port Curtis Integrated Monitoring Program spoke about the results of a recent report card on the health of coastal waters,” he said.



“We were also lucky to have a senior representative of the Department of Environment and Resource Management on hand to discuss the regrowth moratorium.”

He said FBA would continue to reach out to interested community members through events like the Calliope Community Forum.

Study: Is it worth restoring degraded land?

INJECTING capital into restoring the long term economic viability of degraded grazing land is an attractive investment option for brigalow-blackbutt landholders but it represents an economic challenge for those on narrow-leaf ironbark woodlands.

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries agricultural economist Megan Star has just completed an analysis of these two Central Queensland land types exploring the benefits and costs of land regeneration.

Ms Star’s project was commissioned through the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc (FBA) “Groundcover Land Stewardship” program to encourage landholders to address declined land.

The program developed is supported through the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country.

Ms Star said the whole property case studies projected over 20 years.

“The study using a 5000ha brigalow-blackbutt property shows that it certainly pays to restore the economic performance of grazing country that has been allowed to decline to D condition irrespective of whether it is 100, 500, 1000 or 2000ha being set aside for regeneration,” Ms Star said.

“In a scenario where capital investment is outlaid on 1000ha in the initial three years to regenerate the pasture to a productive B condition, the land manager will be \$188,000 better off over a 20 year period thanks to the higher carrying capacity and increased earnings.”

For a more detailed overview of “The economics of land regeneration”, a fact sheet is available on the FBA website at www.fba.org.au

Subsidies for on-ground work

FBA Acting CEO Paul Birch is reminding local land managers that there are opportunities available to participate in natural resource management.

Mr Birch said FBA could provide information and support for landholders to manage their land more sustainably.

“We don’t tell landholders what to do - instead, we work in partnership with them to help them make positive management changes,” he said.

He said FBA provided subsidies of up to 50% of the cost for on-ground work that improved natural resource management outcomes including fencing river, creeks and wetlands and installing off-stream watering points.

“Through fencing riverine areas and other projects FBA funds, landholders gain more control over when and where cattle graze so they can protect sensitive areas,” he said.

“These projects also provide landholders with other production benefits such as making mustering easier and not allowing cattle to foul areas where they water”.

Mr Birch said that in addition to river and creek fencing and the installation of associated water systems, on-ground works that could be eligible for subsidies included:

- Fencing along different land types;
- Conversion of machinery to minimum or zero tillage, irrigation system changes and soil moisture monitoring equipment to improve cropping practices;
- Assistance with strategic weed control in conjunction with neighbouring properties;
- Investigating options for salinity remediation;
- Provision of satellite maps for property management planning and;
- Provision of technical support.

“Working with FBA does not in any way remove landholders’ normal legislative rights and responsibilities for use of these areas or associated weed control,” Mr Birch said.

“In fact we encourage controlled grazing in these areas to reduce the potential for fire hazards or becoming sites for weed infestations.”

Mr Birch said interested landholders should contact their local sub regional group or FBA and information was available online at www.fba.org.au.

SHORT & SWEET

Webinars available to download:

FBA Online Lunchbox webinars are now available to download via the FBA website at www.fba.org.au. Available webinars include:

- **Grazing Land Condition Indicators and the ABCD Framework, Gina Mace of FBA**
- **Broadsound: A Migratory Shorebird Haven, Roger Jaensch from Wetlands International Oceania**
- **Two Controlled Traffic Farming webinars from Tim Neale at CTF Solutions.**

New Website for CHRRUP:

The Central Highlands Regional Resource Use Cooperative (CHRRUP) has a new website with information about the group, where it works, publications and staff contact details. Check it out at www.chrrup.org

Boyne Calliope Sub Region goes online:

The Boyne Calliope Sub Region of the FBA now has its own website. If you’re a land manager in the Boyne Calliope area, the BCSR website should be your first stop for information about events and support available for natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. Visit the site at www.fba.org.au/bcsr

FBA leading workshops for women:

FBA has been successful in obtaining just over \$30,000 under the Australian Government’s Recognising Women Farmers grants. The funds will be used to conduct a number of workshops aimed at improving leadership qualities in rural women in the CQ region. More details will be announced later in the year.