

Media Release: FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION

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500 local farmers improve reef health

Farmers are rapidly joining a voluntary program to improve water quality flowing to the Great Barrier Reef.

A document launched in Canberra on Tuesday about the impact of Reef Rescue showed that more than 90% of targeted farmers had participated after just three years into the five year program.

The Reef Rescue Impact Statement was developed by the Reef Alliance, a partnership between Queensland Farmers' Federation and Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups Collective - which includes CQ's peak NRM group Fitzroy Basin Association Inc (FBA).

To download the Impact Statement visit www.fba.org.au/publication/.

It reveals that farmers and graziers are ahead of schedule in the quest to reduce environmental impacts on the Great Barrier Reef through the Reef Rescue component of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.

Reef Rescue is a \$200 million program that runs till 2013 to improve water quality in the Great Barrier Reef water catchment.

FBA CEO Suzie Christensen said around \$14 million had been invested on-ground in the Fitzroy Basin over the past three years, helping to prevent sediment from entering Central Queensland waterways and flowing to the reef lagoon.

"We've partnered with almost 500 landholders across grazing, cropping, cotton and horticulture on projects to maintain ground cover and reduce erosion," she said.

"These projects have improved the management of more than 196,000 hectares of land in order to help protect the Great Barrier Reef from run-off."

She said FBA provided up to 50 per cent of costs through Reef Rescue, with landholders contributing equal amounts of cash, and often more, as well as time and labour to get projects completed.

FBA partners with its network of five sub-regional groups, Growcom, Cotton Australia, AgForce and others to deliver Reef Rescue in the Fitzroy Basin region which extends from Nebo in the north, west to the Drummond Range and south to Injune.

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