



Media release

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FBA's year focused on working together to improve water quality

Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated (FBA) partnered with around 100 graziers and almost 40 grain growing businesses last year to improve the management of our local waterways and natural assets.

FBA Acting Chief Executive Officer Paul Birch said working with land managers across the Fitzroy Basin was again at the core of the organisation's activities in 2009-10.

Mr Birch said the group had made significant gains with funding through the Reef Rescue component of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

"We're focused on delivering healthy waterways and a healthier reef by working with landholders on projects to improve water quality on their properties, such as through land type fencing or the installation of fences and watering points to control stock access to river banks," Mr Birch said.

"We also continue to invest in research to help us refine the way we offer incentives to ensure the work we do is targeted, cost-effective and making a measurable difference."

Mr Birch said FBA worked with broad acre cropping enterprises through the innovative Grains Best Management Practice (BMP) program, a web-based self assessment tool that helps growers identify and prioritise areas where they can improve the sustainability of their business.

"Under Grains BMP growers can apply for incentive grants through FBA to adopt improved practices quicker through projects such as accessing expert advice on farm layout or modifying the nozzles on their spray equipment," he said.

He said 37 grain growing enterprises completed modules from Grains BMP in 2009-10 and more than 250 farm plans were developed as a result.

Mr Birch said FBA was progressing towards a collaborative regional approach to monitoring and reporting water quality through funding from the Queensland Government's Q2 Coasts and Country.

"The Fitzroy Partnership for River Health has met on two occasions already – drawing together representatives of sectors including mining, agriculture, and government."

He said FBA also supported a number of research and on-ground projects designed to help improve understanding and protection of our coastal and marine ecosystems, and native plants and animals.

Mr Birch said that during the year FBA had increased its budget for delivering on-ground improvements in land condition and water quality, despite many other regional groups across Australia facing funding cuts.

"Our funders continue to recognise our strength as a regional coordinating body – this is testament to the success we've had to date in developing partnerships, providing expert advice, and getting money on-ground where it makes a difference," he said.

Media contact: Jody McDonald on 49992800, 0429992808, or email jody.mcdonald@fba.org.au.

Fitzroy Basin Association Inc.

PO Box 139, Rockhampton Qld 4700, Ph: (07) 4999 2800, Fax: (07) 4921 2860