

## RIS programs at a glance: Water Allocation and Management

Through the Regional Investment Strategy (RIS), Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) coordinates eight programs that support and direct sustainable resource management and conservation in Central Queensland.

The *Water Allocation and Management* program supports the efforts of the Qld Department of Natural Resources and Mines in finalising Central Queensland's water resource plans, and works toward achieving environmental flow and security objectives under the plans.

Water resource plans are the responsibility of the Queensland Government, so this program addresses elements outside the scope of legislation, including improving community understanding of environmental flow, increasing water use efficiency and strengthening partnerships between community, industry and government in managing water.

Agriculture, industry and residential water users need a reliable and secure water supply. A balanced approach is necessary to sustain economic viability and growth while allowing sufficient environmental flow for the region's ecosystems.

The program has strong links to the *Healthy Waterways, Rivers and Wetlands* and *Sustainable Landscapes* programs.

**What is environmental flow?** Environmental flow is the amount and timing of water that rivers, wetlands and coastal zones need to maintain the health of their ecosystems (including migration and other cyclic activities of plants and animals). As water resources are divided among users, consider environmental flow to be the ecosystems' share.

## Share the work: Integrated Catchment Management

FBA's approach to sustainability in our region is called Integrated Catchment Management (ICM).

ICM provides a way for communities to work together. Projects undertaken on a small scale (e.g. backyard, beach, single property) can fail if neighbours take a different approach, or none at all (e.g. weed control). Likewise, projects at a regional or State level can lose touch with people on the ground. ICM bridges the gap, coordinating people on the ground working in small groups, toward common goals, to build up together to a broader, catchment-wide scale.

ICM focuses on strengthening assets as well as eliminating threats (e.g. kill weeds, but also improve land condition so native plants can thrive), so that natural systems bounce back quickly from disturbance.

**Want to know more?** For a copy of our ICM plan, the *Central Queensland Strategy for Sustainability — 2004 and Beyond (CQSS2)*, go to [www.fba.org.au](http://www.fba.org.au) or phone (07) 4999 2800.

## Central Queensland's assets are under pressure

Water and its use underpin the entire social, environmental and economic fabric of Central Queensland.

### Significant assets protected by the *Water Allocation and Management* program include:

- ecosystem health and biodiversity (environmental flow supports marine and freshwater ecosystems)
- agriculture, industry and mining (all rely on water; agriculture alone contributed over \$1,200 million to CQ economy in 2001, according to Agricultural Census 2000/01, Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- rural and regional towns and communities (200,000 residents depend on adequate water supply)
- cultural heritage (streams and rivers flowing naturally have significant cultural value, especially for Aboriginal people)
  - the Great Barrier Reef (environmental flow important for connectedness of the upstream, estuarine and reef ecosystems; GBR contributes \$6,000 million annually to Australia's economy, chiefly tourism and fishing, according to *The Economic and Financial Value of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* report by Access Economics, 2005).

**These assets are threatened by** decreased water availability, increased water extraction and managed water flows (e.g. dams, weirs). These threats can be made worse by unrealistic community expectations for water availability and use.



Capturing water: a weir on the Dawson River near Theodore.



Photo by Russ Beadle, DPI&F

## Activities in the Water Allocation and Management program

The *Water Allocation and Management* program aims to address these threats and strengthen our regional assets by:

- bringing stakeholders together to help Queensland Government finalise Water Resource Plans (WRP) and Resource Operation Plans (ROP)
- improving regional stakeholders' understanding of environmental flow requirements
- working toward highest efficiency use of water by urban, industrial and agricultural users
- protecting groundwater recharge areas in the Callide Valley
- increasing the efficiency and sustainability of the Dawson Valley Irrigation Area.

## Balancing costs and benefits

Reliable water supplies and adequate environmental flows have strong public benefits (biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems and the reef), social benefits (ability of people to live, work and play in the region) and economic benefits (industrial and agricultural production, health of rural and regional centres and employment opportunities).

## How can we help you?

The *Water Allocation and Management* program offers:

- information resources about environmental flow and water use efficiency
- sourcing technical support and training in rural water use efficiency
- incentives for projects aimed at improving water use efficiency for landholders involved in Neighbourhood Catchment groups (contact FBA for information about Neighbourhood Catchments).

## Partners and related projects

The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M) leads water resource planning.

The *Water Allocation and Management* program maintains strong collaborative links with Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association, Callide Valley Landcare, Biloela Basin Water Recharge Study Group, Dawson Valley Cotton Growers, water users and NR&M.

## References and resources

Contact the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines to learn more about water resource planning, including understanding WRPs and ROPs, or visit [www.nrm.qld.gov.au](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au).

Visit the FBA web site ([www.fba.org.au](http://www.fba.org.au)) for the following resources:


- *Central Queensland Strategy for Sustainability — 2004 and Beyond* (COSS2)
- Fact Sheet: *RIS programs: Healthy Waterways, Rivers and Wetlands* (publication number FBA-05-005)
- Fact Sheet: *RIS programs: Sustainable Landscapes* (publication number FBA-05-003)
- Fact Sheet: *Neighbourhood Catchments* (publication number FBA-05-002).

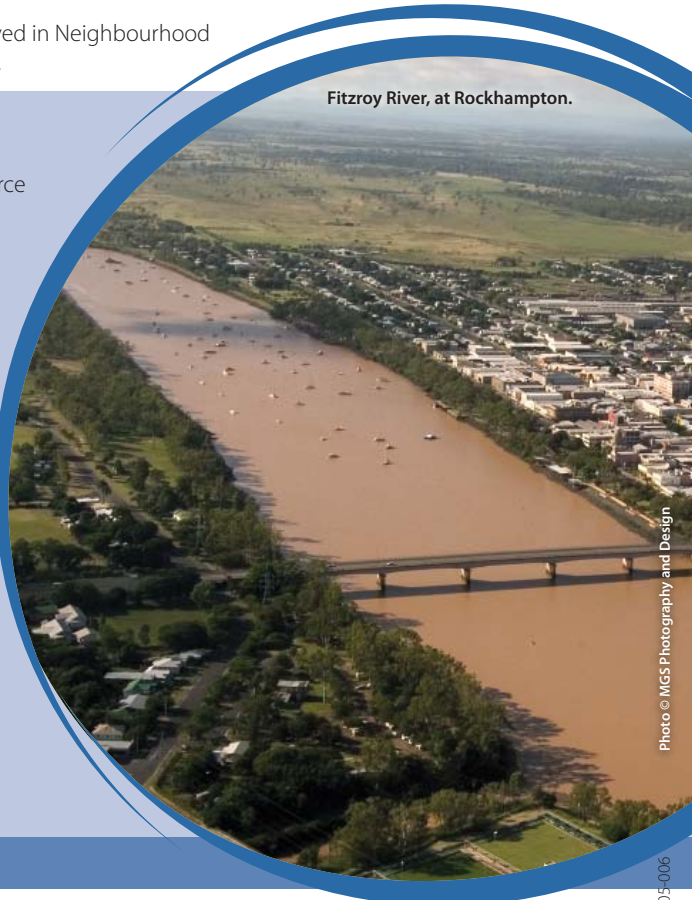
Or contact our NRM Manager on (07) 4999 2800.

## Further information

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Visit us online at [www.fba.org.au](http://www.fba.org.au)

 Printed on recycled paper.



Fitzroy River, at Rockhampton.

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Fitzroy Basin Association is funded by Australian and Queensland Government programmes, including the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) and the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2)