

Reef Rescue Project in the Mary Catchment



Reef Rescue works by co-investing with land managers to give them an incentive to improve their grazing land management practices. Investment from the Australian Government's Reef Rescue program will provide graziers with the technical advice and financial support to implement eligible on-ground projects that can demonstrate best land management practices and enterprise sustainability, and contribute to Reef Rescue outcomes.

For every dollar the Australian Government has invested in Reef Rescue, land managers have contributed an additional \$1.50 in-kind i.e. cash, labour, materials etc.

The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC), in partnership with the BMRG, DEEDI, Gympie District Beef Liaison Group, and AgForce is delivering Reef Rescue in the Mary Catchment. The project works with interested graziers to implement improved land management practices to reduce the amount of nutrients, chemicals and sediments leaving their farms and impacting on Reef water quality.

The MRCCC project team will assist graziers to undertake an assessment of their current grazing land practices using an A, B, C, D rating system. This audit process will identify specific on-ground projects that will contribute to improved grazing land practices with a higher rating.

Improved grazing land condition leads to greater pasture productivity, sustainability and enterprise profitability, whilst reducing the loss of valuable sediments and nutrients from our grazing lands. Wetland systems such as riparian zones, billabongs, and marshes will be a particular focus due to their important function of filtering out nutrients and sediments from the grazing landscape, before they reach the river systems.

The "Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Improvement Plan" was released by the Federal Government in 2003 in recognition of the important role that grazing landholders can play in improving the quality of downstream water entering the barrier reef lagoon. The Mary River is the southern-most of these reef catchments, and the Mary's grazing sector is the largest freehold land user ie about 70% of the catchment area.

The second year of funded on-ground works is currently being finalised, and expressions of interest are invited for the 2012/ 2013 year. The expression of interest period closes in January 2012.

Examples of eligible on-ground projects could include:

Creeks, Riparian Zones & Wetlands

- fencing to reduce bank erosion and manage cattle access to creeks and wetlands to improve water quality
- fencing of wetlands to encourage natural regeneration of aquatic vegetation to filter sediments and nutrients

Stock Watering Points

- provision of off-stream watering points eg tanks, troughs, as an alternate water supply to creek water;
- provision of additional troughs in large paddocks to facilitate evenness of grazing & improved grazing land condition

Sub-division Fencing

- sub-division fencing to separately manage different grazing land types and improve grazing land condition
- fencing of remnant vegetation eg clumps of rainforest, pine scrub etc, or sensitive areas to manage grazing access

Contour or Keyline ripping

- implementing a strategic ripping program on steeper hillslopes to reduce runoff and improve grazing land condition (Note: does not refer to conventional renovation and pasture oversowing practices)

Stabilization of Erosion Gullies or Salt Scalds

- fencing to restore groundcover and encourage the natural stabilisation of gullies and scalds
- planting clumps of salinity-tolerant tree species adjacent to and above scalds to lower the salty watertable
- fencing ridge lines above salinity outbreaks to facilitate the natural regeneration of trees eg Spotted gum, to reduce the amount of surface water recharge of the groundwater

Expression of Interest for a Reef Rescue on-ground project

Please indicate your interest in one or more examples of Reef Rescue on-ground projects:

1. **Creek, riparian zone &/or wetland management projects** (please provide details)

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2. **Stock watering points** (please provide details)

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3. **Sub-division fencing** (please provide details)

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4. **Contour or keyline ripping** (please provide details)

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5. **Stabilization of erosion gullies, salt scalds etc** (please provide details)

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6. **Other works** (please provide details)

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| Name: | Phone Number: |
| Postal Address: | |
| Fax Number: | Email: |

Please return to:
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