

2014 water quality IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Blacks Creek Management Area Progress Report

Summary of progress

Blacks Creek catchment area hydrology was significantly altered in 1997 with the construction of Teemburra Dam to provide water resources for agriculture and townships in the Pioneer Valley. Flow regimes through Blacks Creek are now regulated by the Pioneer Valley Water Resources Plan (2009) to minimise adverse impacts on the downstream environment. However, while Blacks Creek supports good instream and riparian habitat, the dam impacts dramatically on flow regimes and fish passage. Almost 90% of the catchment area supports grazing production.

In 2007, the Blacks Creek catchment area was rated as being in relatively good condition compared to other Mackay Whitsunday catchments. Between 2007 and 2013, there have been excellent efforts by graziers who manage more than 11,000 hectares in this catchment. Their management practice improvements have resulted in water quality benefits and positive ecosystem health changes. This work by local producers forms a good foundation to develop improved flow management strategies for fish habitat and migration.



Teemburra Dam 50km west of Mackay occupies the top of the Blacks Creek catchment with a surface area of 1040 hectares, an average depth of 14.2 meters and holds 147,500 mega litres of water at full capacity.

Agriculture implementation highlights

- Graziers have improved pasture management on more than 8,000 ha with Reef Rescue support

Ecosystem implementation highlights

- Four Blacks Creek graziers managing more than 1,879 ha have improved from C to B class management practices with the assistance of Reef Rescue
- Riparian management has been improved on more than 14 km of Blacks Creek by graziers who have installed riparian fencing and off-stream watering points with Reef Rescue support. This work protects more than 123 ha of important riparian land for improved habitat and water quality

Future priorities

Grazing management practices that reduce particulate and inorganic nitrogen as well as phosphorus loads are the priority for improving event water quality of Blacks Creek catchment area.

Management strategies to improve flow from Teemburra Dam to mimic natural flow regimes of Blacks Creek will be key to improving fish community abundance and diversity. Continued efforts to improve riparian management should see in-stream habitat improvements over time.



Solar powered foot valve to control flow to off stream watering point. The water points are installed in conjunction with riparian fencing and provide stock with access to water when stream banks are fenced off to minimise erosion and improve stock safety.