

2014 water quality IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Waterhole Creek

Management Area Progress Report

Summary of progress

The Waterhole Creek catchment area extends across the coastal lowlands located between the townships of Midge Point to the north and St Helens to the south. Much of this coastal plain has been extensively cleared to support cattle production which extends over almost 80% of the catchment area. Riparian vegetation, mangroves and saltmarshes have been particularly impacted by past land management practices.

In 2007, the ecological condition of Waterhole Creek estuary was ranked as one of the highest in the region, with the freshwater system rated as being in good condition. Between 2007 and 2013, there have been considerable efforts to improve agricultural management by many of the catchments graziers. These management practice improvements provide a solid foundation on which to build further ecosystem health and water quality improvements.



"With design advice and Reef Rescue support we returned problem areas on our farm back into productive management."

Waterhole Creek grazier, Gary Pool

Agriculture implementation highlights

- Graziers have improved pasture management on more than 170 ha with Reef Rescue support
- Nine Waterhole Creek graziers managing more than 3,400 ha have improved from C to B class management practices with the assistance of Reef Rescue

Ecosystem implementation highlights

- Riparian management has been improved along more than 7 km of Waterhole Creek by graziers who have installed riparian fencing and off-stream watering points with Reef Rescue support. This has contributed to improved management of more than 720 ha of riparian land for ecosystem health and water quality benefits

Future priorities

Grazing management practices that reduce phosphorus loads are the highest priority for continued improvement of event water quality. Management practices that reduce other nutrients and residual herbicides are a moderate priority.

System repair actions to restore riparian vegetation, saltmarshes and mangroves are of the highest priority to improve ecosystem health and protect and enhance the important estuarine areas of Waterhole Creek catchment area.



Off stream watering points have been installed in conjunction with riparian fencing. The water points provide stock with access to water when stream banks are fenced off to prevent erosion and improve stock safety