



CASE STUDY

NRIP WQ Grazing 2021-2022

Reef Catchment with the Natural Resource Investment Program (NRIP) has assisted landholders across the Mackay Whitsunday region with funding for 14.55km of riparian fencing to control stock access

to our waterways. This has been complemented with 14 off stream watering points (OSWP)

The NRIP program has funded riparian fencing and OSWPs to improve ground cover and reduce the threats to riparian vegetation along with improving water quality and reduce sediment mobilisation.

Riparian fencing to control stock access to waterways and gullies has a wide range of benefits to both farm production, livestock health, water quality, wildlife, and ecosystem health.

Stock access to rivers and creeks can have a detrimental impact on water quality and stock health. High levels of animal waste in waterways can be a source of disease-causing bacteria and viruses. It can result in high phosphorus and nitrogen levels and lower dissolved oxygen. These combined can cause deadly algal outbreaks. Through riparian fencing and installation of OSWPs stock have access to clean palatable water that is easy to access using less energy. It also has the benefit of providing the infrastructure to add supplements to their stock through their water.

Riparian fencing can reduce stock loss during flash flooding events, loss of calves during calving, stock getting stuck in bogs and fatal injuries from falling down steep banks. As well as predation from saltwater crocodiles.

QUICK FACTS

- Improved infrastructure adds value to property
- Associated off stream watering points increase stock health
- Keeping stock out of waterways reduces risk factors for stock disease and injury.
- Riparian corridors provide shelter that improve stock health
- The presence of on-farm native vegetation increases the land value of the farm
- Provide safe corridors for wildlife movement across the landscape
- Reduce costs to landholders through increased ease of mustering





WHAT IS NRIP

THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S NATURAL RESOURCE INVESTMENT PROGRAM COMMENCED IN 2018 AND HAS PROVIDED FUNDING TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REGION BODIES TO SUSTAIN NATURAL RESOURCES AND IMPROVE REEF WATER QUALITY ACROSS THE STATE. REEF CATCHMENTS WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR BID TO RECEIVE FUNDING TO UNDERTAKE TWO REGIONAL PROJECTS.

► Improving the relative ecological condition of freshwater streams and Wetlands in the Mackay Whitsunday region.

► Addressing priority sub-catchments water quality targets through grazing management interventions.

The funding reflects the ongoing commitment of both the Queensland Government and Regional Natural Resource Management bodies to ensure the states natural land and water resources are sustainably managed.

The consideration of riparian fences in the early stages of farm planning can have multiple long-term benefits. This includes the foundation for subdivision of paddocks for rotational grazing systems and laneway systems.

Through the implementation of rotational grazing systems landholders can manage when and how long stock graze a paddock. This has been proven to improve and maintain ground cover, reduces water runoff, increases infiltration, and limits overland movement of sediment into waterways.

Through strategic infrastructure planning, landholders can utilise riparian fencing to create laneways to ease mustering and prevent stock disappearing into dense riparian vegetation.

“FENCING THE RIVER HAS MADE MUSTERING EASIER, QUICKER AND WE USE LESS WORKERS. WE CAN KEEP THE CATTLE WALKING ALONG THE FENCE LINE, SO THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO SCATTER AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE TREES” NRIP LANDHOLDER MACKAY WHITSUNDAYS

Controlling stock access to waterways and improving native vegetation along stream banks can greatly reduce erosion to stream banks, beds, and productive farming land.

One of the major causes of erosion is the loss of riparian vegetation structure. Through riparian fencing native vegetation can establish and be maintained. It is important that all levels of structure are maintained to get the full benefit of the riparian vegetation. Structure includes hardy ground covers and shrubs with matted roots to tall deep-rooted trees. These all play a role in maintaining bank stability, regulate water temperature and provide habitat for native wildlife.

In areas of intensive land production, riparian vegetation is often the most significant habitat and corridor for wildlife movement across region from one area to another. These areas play an integral role in maintaining species health and biodiversity.

Reef Catchments adoption of wildlife friendly fencing was implemented due to the findings of a study identifying the top strand of Barbed wire the most detrimental to wildlife, including birds, Gliders, Bats and Owls.

