

Wire and water help landholder become Reef Champion

JANUARY 2023

Working to improve wetlands within his grazing and sugar cane property has earned local landholder Jason Bradford recognition as a Reef Champion at the 2022 Queensland Farmers Federation Awards.

Mr Bradford, who owns a mixed enterprise property near Sandringham Creek, has been working with Reef Catchments over the years with funding from the Australian Government's Reef Trust VII Coastal Priorities Project, which has allowed him to remove invasive weeds and construct fishways to improve connectivity between the freshwater and marine environment.

He said that in addition to these works, changes as simple as fencing and off-stream watering points can have dramatic results.

"Wire and water - those two things have allowed me to radically change how I manage the place and have resulted in benefits to the landscape and my operations.

"With the right infrastructure and the right management you can have a financially viable enterprise and also look after the environment. In fact, the two can go hand-in-hand - when it's managed correctly, the natural landscape enhances the financial outcomes.

"My advice to other landholders is to look at your operations, and ask yourself if you're doing everything you can to get the best of both worlds."

Growing up on the property he now owns and manages, Mr Bradford's connection to the land is what drives him to look after the natural environment while ensuring his farm continues to be successful.

"I spent many hours down here exploring and I guess I fell in love with it. It's in my blood. I spent a lot of time in the marine environment here, in the creek fishing and exploring. It was really a great childhood," he said.

"Because the property is on the highway and it's pretty visible, people see the work happening and they ask me all the time, what are you doing here, and why are you doing it. For me, it's about the ability to bring a vision to life.

"We've got an asset here that's pretty special, and I think if it was in the best condition it could possibly be in, in terms of biodiversity and function, what would that look like? That's what I'm aiming for."

Reef Catchments' Project Officer Carlos Bueno said he nominated Jason for the award as he was a great advocate for improved practice and a great example for fellow landholders.

"From the outset of this project, Jason has been fundamental in exchanging knowledge, learnings and experiences," he said.

"Jason's presence and active participation has influenced the engagement of his neighbours and greater network. He has been very vocal in sharing his knowledge and vision to other landholders and stakeholders, allowing for a greater understanding of this sub-catchment area."

The Reef Champion Awards is an initiative of the Queensland Farmers Federation with support from the Australian and Queensland governments. The awards recognise and celebrate the achievements and efforts of outstanding individuals and organisations who have taken action to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef.

Read more about this project at www.reefcatchments.com.au/projects/coastal-priorities-project/.

ENDS

Media contact

Rebekah Smith, Communications and Media Officer

Mobile: 0418 888 969

Email: rebekah.smith@reefcatchments.com

