

Natural Resources Investment Program

2018–2022

Through the Natural Resources Investment Program (NRIP) the Queensland Government has invested more than \$61 million between 2018 and 2022 to ensure the state's natural land and water resources are sustainably managed, for current and future generations.

NRIP funding delivered tangible benefits for Queensland's unique natural assets including outcomes for grazing land, vegetation, wetlands and reef water quality. NRIP priorities also recognised the importance of engaging and supporting people in regional Queensland, and building science and knowledge.

A total of 59 diverse projects were funded across the state, delivering on-ground improvements, building community capability and trialling innovative technologies. A key NRIP innovation was the development of a statewide indicators framework which tracks the impact of investment and enables accurate reporting on achievements.

LANDSCAPE OUTCOMES



314 933 ha
of improved land condition

equivalent to the size of Brisbane and Sunshine Coast LGAs combined

158 168 ha

of improved native vegetation condition



34 020 t

less sediment entering reef waterways per year



3917 ha

improved wetland condition



equivalent to

3917 football fields

DELIVERABLES

94 904 trees

planted in 59 locations across Queensland



251 km

of exclusion fencing installed

410 543 ha

improved grazing practices



160 ha

of streambank and gullies repaired



RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

\$166.8 million

from NRIP to the economy in direct and indirect contributions.



92 jobs

created or maintained through NRIP



1840

participants



\$65/ha

to achieve outcomes

\$61 million invested

548 097 ha improved



Queensland Government

Land condition

Land condition describes the ability of land to respond to rainfall and produce quality pasture. Land in good condition is robust and has the capacity to recover quickly from pressures such as grazing, fire or short periods of drought. Land in poor condition commonly lacks productive persistent pastures and is often characterised by a decline in ground cover. Critically low ground cover (generally less than 30 per cent) at the end of the dry season can result in erosion with the first rains. Grazing land can become degraded through poor management, including heavy grazing pressure and uncontrolled spread of weeds which inhibit grass growth.

Good grazing management ensures that pasture, either native or improved, is available for livestock year-round, and that the soil remains healthy. It minimises erosion and supports greater biodiversity in the soil and pasture of grazing lands.



The Land Condition Assessment Tool (LCAT) is a science-based assessment framework that the Queensland Government has developed, combining simple design and contemporary technologies. NRIP land condition projects monitor progress using LCAT.

‘Of all the drought assistance we’ve had, the work Southern Queensland Landscapes has done will have the most profound impact on the land’s drought resilience, productivity and health.’

Project participant

HOW has NRIP helped?

NRIP invested in improving the health and stability of soils in order to improve land condition, with a focus on grazing land.

NRIP projects have delivered improvements in land condition through a range of activities including:



Improved grazing practices over
277 516 ha

involving:



Pest plants that degrade land condition have been treated over

35 969 ha

Vegetation condition

Queensland encompasses a wide variety of landscapes across temperate, tropical and semi-arid to arid climatic zones. For this reason, Queensland is the most diverse state in Australia in relation to vegetation, with 14 000 native species of plants, and over 8500 native flowering plant species, with new species being discovered and documented at the rate of approximately 20 every year. More than one third of these species are found nowhere else in the world.

From coastal tropical and subtropical rainforests to the arid and sparsely vegetated tussocky spinifex grass habitats of the west, this variety in vegetation brings with it a remarkable diversity of plant and animal species.



Healthy native vegetation is critical to the well-being of the state's diverse ecosystems. It is essential for supporting biodiversity, preventing land degradation and reducing Queensland's carbon emissions. Vegetation on waterways is valuable for holding banks together and preventing erosion, as well as providing shade and shelter for fish and other aquatic organisms. Trees in a grazing landscape can be beneficial, and actually increase pasture health. Healthy vegetation is also important to communities for cultural, economic, recreational and aesthetic reasons.

'We have been given the confidence that we can successfully plant trees to connect remnant vegetation areas. Long term we know our biodiversity will improve and the benefits to our cattle will as well.'

Project participant



HOW has NRIP helped?

Whilst clearing of vegetation in Queensland is regulated through the Vegetation Management Framework, other threats such as pest plants and animals, wildfires and fragmentation must also be managed.

NRIP projects have contributed to managing these threats through a range of activities.

NRIP projects have delivered improvements in vegetation condition through a range of activities including:



Managing pest plants over
101 746 ha



Pest animal management over
20 729 ha



Planting
91 454 trees



Installing
174 km of fencing



Revegetating
116 ha of land



Supporting improved grazing practices over
33 766 ha

Water and waterways

Queensland has a wide diversity of waterways ranging from the dynamic rivers of the Gulf and Desert Channels regions to the upland streams of the Great Dividing Range and the coastal waters of the Great Barrier Reef. Queensland's wetlands are more diverse than any other state, with seagrass meadows, artesian springs, mangrove forests and tea tree swamps.

These waterways are important to the livelihoods and lifestyles of Queenslanders, providing a vital input for farming and other industries as well as holding cultural, recreational and aesthetic values. Maintaining healthy waterways is also critical for native plants and animals, and the health of the eastern waterways has a direct impact on the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

There are many threats to the health of Queensland's waterways including land clearing, loss of creek-side vegetation, poor land management resulting in gullies and erosion, run-off from human land-based activities, weed infestation, and modifications to the flow of water including through dams, irrigation and weather extremes.



'This project has given me the ability to spell country and lock cattle away from the riparian areas to promote better ground cover to reduce sediment runoff.'

Project participant

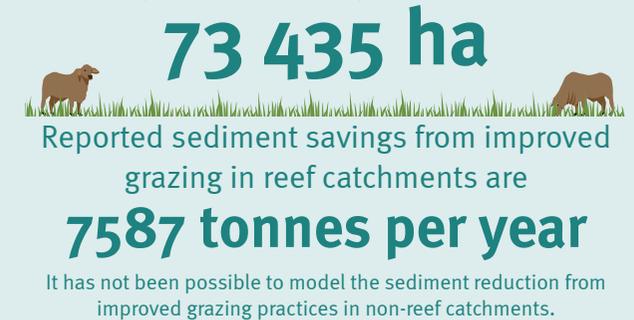


HOW has NRIP helped?

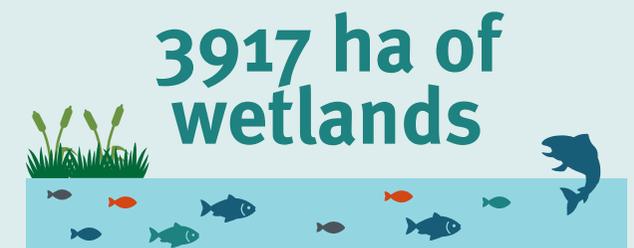
NRIP has reduced 26 433 tonnes of sediment from entering reef waterways each year by



Improving grazing practices over



The health of waterways has also been improved by managing threats and removing fish barriers across.



People and communities

It is the people and communities of Queensland that depend on, and benefit from, the health of our natural resources, and it is landowners and managers that are making the changes needed to improve our land, vegetation and waterways. Working collaboratively with landholders, indigenous Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, community groups, local councils and other community organisations has been a foundational principle of NRIP.

All NRIP projects have collaborated with, and supported, a wide diversity of participants. This harnesses the knowledge, energy and commitment of Queensland's community to building resilient natural landscapes.

NRIP projects have:

- supported landholders and managers to make changes through incentives, training and networking
- provided funding through local community groups to deliver outcomes
- harnessed the knowledge of local communities and landholders in science and innovation initiatives
- built capacity of landholders to actively monitor the condition of their land and vegetation
- worked in partnership with local government and science entities do deliver projects
- produced communication and educational products
- found the 'win-win' solutions that deliver benefits for the environment and the community.

'We will continue to control our Rubbervine and manage our stocking rate to carrying capacity so land condition does not decline.'

Project participant



Many regions collaborate with their local Landcare groups on NRM, including contracting them to delivery components of the project." Burnett Mary Regional Group



During COVID, engagement continued online, bringing with it new technology skills to many project participants. Terrain NRM

Southern Queensland Landscapes

HOW has NRIP helped?

In recognition of the key role landholders play in managing our natural resources, a key NRIP focus has been supporting them to make improvements.

End-of-project surveys of
90 landholders
across
8 regions

evaluated the effectiveness of NRIP projects.

Landholders rated their level of satisfaction with NRIP projects on average


9.2/10

The level of benefit landholders perceived from participating in the projects was rated at



9.1/10

For the majority, this was not related to financial gain.

Landholders rated their level of commitment to ongoing improvements at



8.4/10

This level of satisfaction, commitment and perceived benefit from NRM activities is a clear demonstration of landholder stewardship.

Traditional Owners

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders have been managing and caring for country for thousands of years, and bring experience, knowledge and passion to contemporary Queensland Government programs such as NRIP.

As part of the 'people and communities' component of NRIP, projects engaged with, and supported, Aboriginal people's and Torres Strait Islanders to undertake natural resource management initiatives on country.

South East Queensland

Traditional Owners of Bribie Island have worked collaboratively on co-management of their ancestral lands, as well as active management, such as the removal of weeds, the restoration of vegetation and a return to cultural burning. They have been supported to map and survey the cultural archaeological indicators such as old cypress pines, and document the cultural landscape including important plant associations.



Co-management on Bribie Island . Healthy Land and Water

Cape York

Collaboration with Traditional Owners on major gully remediation created an opportunity to provide machinery operator training together with erosion science modules to local First Nations ranger groups and entities. Training was provided to 30 Traditional Owners in the use of surveying equipment and road building and gully remediation techniques. One round of training offered a females-specific program, resulting in improved training outcomes for 10 First Nations women.



Traditional Owner Ranger training in surveying and gully remediation works . Cape York NRM



Torres Strait

Working with ranger groups and community across the Torres Strait, NRIP funded projects included a focus improving native vegetation through the management of wild horse populations and revegetation to provide vegetation cover and assist in restoring soil condition. All projects were founded in traditional knowledge coupled with new ideas and cutting-edge technologies.



Rangers working on cutting edge technology. TSRA



Rangers monitoring vegetation condition. TSRA

Summary of the State-wide Indicators Framework (SWIF)

WHY develop an Indicators Framework?

In recognition of the importance of tracking the impact of Queensland's natural resource management (NRM) programs, the Natural Resources Investment Program has invested in the development of a State-wide system for gathering data about the outcomes of project activities. Historically, reporting has focused on activities and direct deliverables such as the number of trees planted or kilometres of fencing. For the first time, the SWIF provides a consistent approach to monitoring methodologies, data collection and analysis to show detailed project outcomes.



WHAT does it do?

The SWIF – the first of its kind within the NRM Sector in Australia – provides consistent methods and tools for collecting data on the difference a project has made, as well as smart systems for analysing and combining this data to tell a whole-of-Queensland story.

Monitoring data collected at the regional level is aggregated into a State-wide data set. This is displayed via an interactive dashboard which allows the viewer to explore the monitoring results in a range of ways.



HOW does it work?

The end-to-end system enables a project team member to collect monitoring data in the field using one of the SWIF Apps. At reporting time, custom-built python script combines the monitoring data with project mapping and generates results, including change in condition over time. The results are combined to produce a State-wide data set which drives the dashboards and informs Report Cards. The detailed monitoring data remains in the regions, supporting regional reporting as well as informing continuous improvement of projects.

The SWIF and its associated tools have been developed collaboratively by Regional NRM Bodies and the Queensland Government, making it a practical, efficient and valued approach to tracking project impacts and assessing value for money.



SWIF end-to-end process

STATE

REGIONS



Data collection



Regional Database



Regional analysis



Regional dashboards and reports

State-wide Database



State-wide dashboards and reports



For more information on the Statewide Indicators Framework visit: [Statewide Indicators Framework | Regional Group's Collective \(nrmq.org.au\)](https://www.nrmq.org.au)

resources.QLD.GOV.AU



NRM
REGIONS
QUEENSLAND

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