

Delivering Biodiversity Dividends to the Barratta Creek Catchment

This 4 year project focussed on working with multiple stakeholders to protect, manage and enhance the high ecological functional values of the Barratta Creek Catchment, an artery of the Bowling Green Bay wetlands, the only Ramsar site in North Queensland.

Restoration & On-ground Works

Summary

Throughout the project restoration and on-ground outcomes have been pursued to improve biodiversity values in the Barratta Creek Catchment.

Constructed wetland development, revegetation works, pest plant and animal management programs and strategic fire management have all assisted towards enhancing the ecological values of Barratta Creek, one of the most high integrity floodplain creek systems on the developed east coast of Queensland.

Key statistics

- **Controlled weeds across 37 hectares, targeting Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)**
- **30,000 native trees, shrubs and groundcovers planted from 38 native species**
- **Conducted strategic fire management across 10,000 hectares of environmental zones**
- **7 km of pest animal proof fencing installed**
- **3 fauna surveys conducted**



Pest Management Program

Intensive pest plant and animal management was undertaken to control the population numbers and movement of invasive species in the Barratta Creek Catchment.

Training of traditional owner work teams in weed removal and fire management techniques has helped to control six Weeds of National Significance (WONS) in the region, such as Lantana (*Lantana camara*). Pest Plant Management Plans covering 41,753 hectares were developed with land managers, targeting 11 species including aquatic weeds.

A feral animal management and monitoring program has helped to save the Barratta creek wetlands from further destruction, with 38,856 hectares covered by pest animal control actions. Database collection involving annual field and aerial assessments of invasive species including feral pigs have assisted towards a steady decline in their population numbers. A reduction in invasive species moving across Barratta's connected landscapes will have ongoing future benefits for the natural environment allowing native species such as the emu and frilled neck lizard to thrive.

Strategic Fire Management

A coordinated fire management strategy for the catchment was implemented and the Barratta Creek Catchment Fire Management group (BCCFMG) established.

The BCCFMG group is made up of landowners and representatives from Sunwater, Gudjuda Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation, the Rural Fire Authority and Burdekin Shire Council. Together the group conducted 50 hectares of burns to help meet hazard reduction targets in protecting crops and infrastructure, while having minimum impact on native plants and animals.

Catchment Solutions from Mackay conducted pre and post burn fauna surveys which identified a large variety of native birds, animals and reptiles. This diversity of native fauna was found on the site following rain events after burning.

A coordinated approach to fire ecology has numerous benefits for both farming and conservation, such as controlling woody weed growth in local pest species and protecting crops.





Previous page: Red Kangaroo in Butler Road revegetation site. Before planting the site had been cleared of weeds and numbers of local pest animals, including feral pigs, reduced
Front page: Constructed wetland planting

Above: Hazard reduction burns in Barratta environmental zones
Below: Aerial view of constructed wetland, surrounded by sugar cane fields



Constructed Wetland Development

A constructed wetland was developed with the purpose of capturing irrigation and tail water run-off from several large farms in the Burdekin– Houghton Water Supply scheme in North Queensland. This constructed wetland naturally increases the quality of run-off water and provides an important habitat and wildlife corridor for local native species.

The constructed wetland is a successful showcase for Burdekin farmers who choose to invest in tail water recycling to improve farm water use efficiency, benefitting agricultural zones and the local environment.

Revegetation & Monitoring

Revegetation works increased the diversity of local native species, while rehabilitating corridors provides food and shelter for native fauna and connects habitats. Restoration efforts stabilise soils, improve groundwater and build environmental resilience. Revegetation took place across 48 hectares of identified priority sites to preserve habitat for threatened fauna species. Planting stems, propagating and spreading seeds helped to increase the diversity of local species and provide wildlife corridors. Monitoring included flora and fauna surveys of high value Barratta remnants to identify and preserve habitat for nationally endangered species.



This project was coordinated by WetlandCare Australia (now merged with Conservation Volunteers Australia) through funding from the Australian Government

Program partners



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