



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for the Environment

**MEDIA RELEASE**

3 March 2016

**Government provides \$4.8m to tackle gully erosion in  
Great Barrier Reef catchments**

The Australian Government is providing \$4.86m for five organisations to work with landholders to address the vast issue of gully erosion in the Great Barrier Reef catchments.

These gullies are located in some of the highest risk areas of sediment erosion for the Great Barrier Reef.

Under the Reef Trust Gully Erosion Control Programme, five organisations to undertake projects in six priority catchments to reduce the erosion of sediment into the Great Barrier Reef by supporting activities such as fencing off gully areas, revegetation, adoption of improved land management practices, and gully reshaping where appropriate.

The successful projects will be delivered in high risk areas within the Cape York, Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett-Mary natural resource management regions and will be delivered in partnership with private landholders to address gully erosion on their land.

This is the first targeted investment under the Reef Trust that addresses the considerable challenge that gully erosion presents to the Great Barrier Reef.

Sediment erosion causes the highest amounts of fine sediment runoff to the Great Barrier Reef, which directly affects seagrass and corals.

The Programme will build on the knowledge and practices developed in other reef programmes, and will pilot a range of approaches to managing gully erosion to reduce the level of sediment lost into the reef.

In addition to funding from the Australian Government, projects have identified significant in-kind contributions, including labour (such as fencing, stock removal and revegetation), materials and machinery from landholders, to deliver cost-effective and long-term reductions in sediment runoff entering the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

This shows how local communities are willing to collaborate to address issues affecting the Great Barrier Reef.

The projects include:

- Gully remediation for a 50 per cent reduction in gully erosion from the Normanby catchment.
- Cost-effectively addressing gully erosion with extension and on-ground activities in the western Mary Catchment.

- Partnership approach to gully restoration in two high risk hotspots in the Don catchment, Burdekin.
- Point source sediment management of erosion in the Bowen-Bogie basin in the Burdekin.
- Gully remediation in the Fitzroy (Theresa Creek and Isaac sub-catchments) by revegetation and grazing land management.

This programme is being delivered through the \$140 million Reef Trust, a key commitment contributing to our efforts to boost the resilience of the reef and help it to respond to the impacts of climate change.

The most effective way to protect the reef is to ensure it is healthy, which will help it withstand the effects of climate change. We're doing this with actions over the short, medium and long-term.

In the short-term, Government is working to boost coral health through actions such as culling the predator crown-of-thorns starfish on high value reefs and ensuring reef users comply with the rules so biodiversity is protected.

Over the medium-term, our Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan will increase reef resilience by improving water quality.

Over the long-term, the Paris climate agreement set out the global and national targets needed to protect all reefs. We are already meeting and beating our target for 2020 and we fully expect other countries to do the same.

The Australian Government is also investing an additional \$600,000 over three years through the National Environmental Science Programme (NESP) to evaluate the outcomes of the gully erosion programme.

NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub researchers will demonstrate the benefit of erosion remediation activities in the Bowen and upper Burdekin regions.

Researchers will investigate the effectiveness of remediation techniques, identify the influence of treatments on agricultural production and measure the reduction of sediment loss from treated areas.

The NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub will continue to work with the Department to consider additional research opportunities for reducing sediments entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

Further information on the programme and successful projects can be found at:  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/reef-trust/gully-erosion-control>.

Further information on the National Environmental Science Programme can be found at  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/science/nesp>.

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### **Details of successful projects:**

#### **Fifty per cent reduction in gully erosion from high priority sub-catchments in the Normanby Cape York Normanby / Cape York Natural Resource Management Ltd**

This project will implement cost-effective, on ground action within the Great Barrier Reef catchment, using the most advanced spatial gully prioritisation method. This aims to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in sediment load from gully erosion in the highest priority sub-catchments in the Normanby Basin. Exclusion fencing of the gully sub-catchment, direct seeding of native grasses and trees and strategic gully stabilisation works will be targeted at the most actively eroding gullies to achieve optimum sediment reduction. Training of technical extension officers and grazing land

managers will ensure that the benefits of the Reef Trust Gully Erosion Control Programme are communicated to the wider grazing community.

Approved funding:

\$780,248 (GST Exc) / \$858,272.80 (GST Inc)

**Gully management in highly erodible sub-catchments of the Mary River Catchment**

Burnett Mary Mary / Mary River Catchment Coordination Assoc Inc

The Mary River Catchment Coordination Committee (MRCCC) and the Gympie District Beef Liaison Group will cost-effectively address gully erosion predominantly in the Western Mary Catchments. Gully erosion extension and on-ground activities will focus on key areas where gully erosion occurs on fragile duplex soils that export fine sediment to the Great Barrier Reef. This project will build on 6 years of successful delivery of Reef Water Quality Grants to the local grazing industry, where gully erosion projects were a key focus. The MRCCC will also offer professional grazing land management extension services to participating landholders. These services will be provided to the local industry by experienced practitioners in erosion control.

Approved funding:

\$808,760 (GST Exc) / \$889,636 (GST Inc)

**Don River Catchment Sediment Reduction Project to improve Great Barrier Reef water quality**

Burdekin / Greening Australia

This project will undertake cost-effective gully restoration in the Don River catchment. Partners in this project include a Queensland statutory authority - the Don River Improvement Trust, and the Bowen and Collinsville Landcare Inc. Two sites have been selected that are representative of the gully systems in the upper Don River catchment, and these will be used as ongoing demonstration and monitoring sites. A range of stakeholders within the Bowen region will participate, including local property owners involved in agricultural enterprises.

Approved funding:

\$962,550 (GST Exc) / \$1,058,805 (GST Inc)

**Point Source Sediment Management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region**

Burdekin Bowen Bogie / NQ Dry Tropics Ltd

This project will implement a range of cost-effective gully remediation techniques on monitored demonstration sites in the East Burdekin and the Bowen-Bogie of the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region. The project will be integrating the best available science, extensive land rehabilitation experience, and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.

Approved funding:

\$906,000 (GST Exc) / \$996,600 (GST Inc)

**Gully Remediation in the Fitzroy by Re-vegetation and Grazing Land Management**

Fitzroy Theresa Creek and Isaac / Fitzroy Basin Association Inc

Over three years, Fitzroy Basin Association will work with landholders to undertake on-ground works at 10 sites to reduce sediment delivered into the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon from high sediment sources in the Theresa and Isaac catchments. The project will target grazing businesses that have the potential to achieve practical and meaningful outcomes to address gully erosion.

Approved funding:

Theresa Creek: \$702,883.50 (GST Exc) / \$773,171.85 (GST Inc)

Isaac: \$702,883.50 (GST Exc) / \$773,171.85 (GST Inc)