

# GRASS

Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions



## GRASS Program Review: Cultivating Success

### Key Findings and Future Directions

A 2025 evaluation of the GRASS program has found that graziers in the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary Reef regions are seeing on-ground improvements to their land, livestock productivity, and resilience thanks to their participation in GRASS.

Through GRASS, graziers have received practical on-ground support to identify areas of their property that are in poor condition, plan land management improvements, and access one-on-one advice and funding to get the work done.

Graziers reported that improving grazing land condition was easier than expected and through small changes that are easy to stage and implement, there were lasting improvements to land condition and business sustainability.

#### What is GRASS?

The Queensland Government's Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions program (GRASS) supports graziers in the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions to improve land in poor or degraded condition.

Through GRASS, extension officers from NQ Dry Tropics, Fitzroy Basin Association, Burnett Mary Regional Group, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries work with graziers to develop action plans to improve pasture and land condition. The program also provides funds for on-ground work.

By keeping valuable soil on farms and reducing sediment run-off into waterways, GRASS is improving farm productivity and water quality, importantly, showing how good business decisions and environmental stewardship can go hand-in-hand.

The GRASS program is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by the Department of Primary Industries, NQ Dry Tropics, Fitzroy Basin Association, and Burnett Mary Regional Group.

### Benefits of GRASS

Key benefits reported by graziers included:



**Better ground cover and pasture quality**



**Increased carrying capacity**



**Improved water infiltration and less soil run-off**



**Greater resilience during dry periods**



**Improved infrastructure (fencing/water supply)**



**Productivity gains, reduced operation costs, improved property value**



**Increased confidence in land management**



**No negative impacts reported**

The Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Burnett Mary Regional Group, Fitzroy Basin Association and NQ Dry Tropics.

## The review

In 2024–2025, the Queensland Government engaged Mosaic Insights to evaluate the GRASS program. This included a legacy review of GRASS 1 (2019–2022) to assess long-term outcomes, and a mid-term review of GRASS 2 (2023–2026) to track progress and identify improvements. The evaluation drew on interviews with 49 graziers and delivery partners, visits to 27 properties, a survey of 46 GRASS 1 participants, and a review of GRASS 2 program documents.

Thank you to all the graziers and delivery partners who generously contributed their valuable time, knowledge, and insights to the review.

## What the review found

### Improved land condition and productivity

GRASS participants reported noticeable improvements in land condition, with increased ground cover, healthier pasture, and reduced erosion. Many saw improvements in carrying capacity, soil water retention, and greater resilience during dry conditions. Several participants directly linked land condition improvements to economic benefits on their properties including increased beef profits and reduced operational costs (e.g. lower feed costs and land maintenance).

*"If you've got bare areas of land... you're getting erosion and further degradation of the land. However, on the flipside, if you're improving ground cover, you are improving the pasture... you're improving productivity which comes back to kilos of beef and money income for us." – GRASS participant*

### Improved property management

Most graziers reported that GRASS helped them improve property management through better grazing practices, erosion control, fencing, and water infrastructure. The development of a property Action Plan for Land Management helped graziers identify areas in poor condition and plan practical actions. Some graziers used the plans to validate what they were already doing, while others used them to try new approaches.

*"It sort of gave me [the] guidelines that I needed, and then that reinforcement that ... I was doing it right. For us, ... having that kind of action plan in place, if things were changing, that I didn't think was right, that I actually had an extension officer to come to talk to me about it, so nothing really went haywire". – GRASS participant*

Most former participants continued improving property management practices after the program's formal support ended.

### Fast-tracked results

Many graziers noted that the GRASS program enabled them to tackle improvements sooner and more effectively than they could have managed on their own. While some said the work would have happened eventually, they acknowledged it may have taken years without the advice and financial backing received through GRASS. For others, limited resources meant the projects simply would not have gone ahead without the additional funding and practical support.

### Highly valued support from delivery staff

Graziers consistently praised the technical advice, responsiveness, and practical help from extension staff. Many said the relationships built with GRASS delivery staff was a key part of their success.

### Increased confidence and knowledge

Most participants felt more confident in their ability to manage land condition and enjoyed the opportunity for discussion and feedback. Many learnt new techniques or refined existing ones, especially around water and grazing management. Some said the program helped them shift from reactive to proactive land management.

*"That first project we did was with earthworks. And then when we saw the impact that it had... and how easy it was... we've been able to replicate it around a lot of areas... So, it gave us that confidence and knowledge to just keep doing it without that funding or without anyone holding our hand." – GRASS participant*

### Unexpected outcomes

The majority of graziers did not report any unanticipated outcomes from their participation. Those few who did, reported positive outcomes, such as the surprising speed and effectiveness of landscape recovery, networking opportunities, reduced maintenance needs, and valuable expert advice. One participant mentioned it was difficult to maintain new practices during challenging times, noting however that these became easier over time as land conditions improved.

### Improved awareness of Reef regulations

Most graziers felt confident they were compliant with Reef regulations. Some saw compliance as a by-product of good land management, rather than a primary motivator. While understanding of the specific regulations varied, several participants noted increased understanding as a result of participating in GRASS.

*"It's been a really strong motivating factor to continue to adopt those principles and roll them out across the property." – GRASS participant*

## Reduced run-off to the Reef

Improving grazing practices keeps valuable soil on-farm and out of our waterways. As part of Queensland's broader Reef protection efforts, GRASS has shown how working with graziers on-ground can deliver results for both grazing businesses and the environment.

## GRASS project achievements

Across the two phases of GRASS to mid-2025, the program has:

- Engaged over 1,350 graziers to develop 821 Action Plans for Land Management covering 5.3 Million hectares of poor or degraded grazing land
- Leveraged a \$3.65 Million government investment to achieve \$6.95 Million grazer co-contribution delivering over 320 on-ground projects
- Prevented a projected 30,000 tonnes of fine sediment from entering waterways

## Future program improvements

Graziers identified opportunities that could strengthen GRASS and the impact of future programs to improve long-term management change. Suggestions for future grazing support programs included:

- More flexible funding options
- Increased contact with extension officers and follow-up after the program had finished
- Simplifying application processes
- Delivery of more practical, skills-based training
- Continue in-person, face-to-face delivery
- Connect with graziers who can help reach a wider grazing audience

## For more information

To learn more about the GRASS program, visit [Grazing resilience and sustainable solutions \(GRASS\) program | Business Queensland](#).

Graziers in the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions can apply by calling: Department of Primary Industries, NQ Dry Tropics, Fitzroy Basin Association or Burnett Mary Regional Group.

For more information about the review, please contact the Queensland Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation by emailing [OfficeoftheGBR@detsi.qld.gov.au](mailto:OfficeoftheGBR@detsi.qld.gov.au).