Southern Gulf NRM

MEDIA RELEASE

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Major Investment to Protect Southern Gulf Wetlands from Feral Pig Damage

Southern Gulf NRM has secured funding under the Natural Resource Management Expansion Program to deliver a major regional initiative targeting feral pig impacts on wetlands and waterways across the Southern Gulf.

The three-year project, Feral Pig Reduction for Improved Wetland Health in the Southern Gulf Region, will deliver coordinated feral pig reduction and wetland health monitoring across priority waterways, helping protect some of the region's most vulnerable and valuable freshwater systems.

Feral pigs cause extensive damage to wetlands through wallowing, rooting and trampling, leading to erosion, declining water quality, destruction of riparian vegetation and loss of habitat for native and migratory species. In the semi-arid Southern Gulf region, where freshwater resources are limited and often seasonal, these impacts place significant pressure on ecosystems, agriculture and community water security.

Through this project, Southern Gulf NRM will work with landholders across 10 properties to implement humane, targeted feral pig reduction at high-priority wetland sites. Activities will be delivered by professional pest management contractors using best-practice methods, with efforts focused during the dry season when pigs congregate around waterways.

A comprehensive wetland health monitoring program will be delivered in partnership with TropWATER at James Cook University, ensuring the project is underpinned by best available science. Monitoring will assess changes in water quality, habitat condition and aquatic biodiversity across more than 50 hectares of wetlands, with additional downstream sites included to capture broader catchment-scale benefits.

Annual Wetland Health Report Cards will be produced and shared with landholders and the wider community, providing clear, accessible information on environmental outcomes and helping guide future on-ground investment for maximum impact.

The project will deliver significant environmental, economic and community benefits, including improved water quality for livestock and communities, enhanced resilience of wetlands to climate variability, reduced biosecurity risks associated with feral pigs, and protection of culturally and ecologically significant waterways.

Cr. Barry Hughes, Chair of the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and Mayor of Ethridge Shire Council welcomed the funding.

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With the recent flooding event across North West Queensland, this regionally focussed project comes at the right time, providing vital support to primary producers to protect their business from the impacts of feral pigs as they rebuild, as well as protecting the region's wetland assets.

We look forward to working collaboratively with Southern Gulf NRM in the projects delivery over the next three years."

Project delivery will commence in 2026, with on-ground works and monitoring continuing through to 2028.

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Photo Credit: Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
Queensland Government

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Southern Gulf NRM is the Natural Resource Management organisation for the Southern Gulf region of north west Queensland. We work with the community to deliver projects that improve and protect our region's natural resources and to maintain the prosperity of industries that rely on these. The Southern Gulf water catchment region includes all the land whose creeks and rivers run into the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. This encompasses an area of 215,000km square^2.