

Media Release

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Queensland first initiative tackling Brisbane River sediment pollution

The first project of its kind in Queensland is helping to reduce waterway sediment pollution, on average preventing 250 truckloads of dirt from entering the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay each year.

With 80% of sediment pollution in the lower Brisbane River coming from just 20% of the catchment, addressing sediment pollution at its source makes good sense.

Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd CEO Roy Cummins said that this initiative allowed the combination of the best onsite stormwater treatments on Port-owned land with targeted investment further upstream in the catchment, known as 'offsite stormwater management'.

"Following the 2013 floods, we undertook an extensive dredging exercise to safely re-open the channel after two million tonnes of sediment was deposited in the mouth of the Brisbane River," Roy said.

"As a result, the Port looked at new ways to treat stormwater run-off to reduce the chances of this occurring, while still delivering the best environmental outcomes. Tackling the problem further up the catchment helps to achieve this.

"Using innovative engineering techniques, we've restored 950m of highly degraded bank of Laidley Creek located 100km upstream from the port, and re-planted more than 4,000 native trees and grasses, which plays a major role in keeping soil on the land and out of our waterways."

The project earlier this year was awarded the Minister's Grand Prize at the 2016 Healthy Waterways Awards and more recently the Queensland Environmental Excellence Award at the 2016 Australian Engineering Excellence Awards.

Key delivery partner Healthy Waterways and Catchments co-invested in the project with funding from the Queensland Government's Environment and Heritage Protection Healthy Country Program.

Healthy Waterways and Catchments CEO, Julie McLellan said that sediment from our upper catchments is a critical issue affecting our waterways in South East Queensland.

"Over 50,000 dump trucks worth of sediment enters the region's waterways each year. During the January 2013 floods, Brisbane came within six hours of running out of drinking water after muddy river water threatened to shut down the Mt Crosby Treatment Plant," Julie said.

"A key focus of the Healthy Country program has been to find innovative ways to tackle sediment and nutrient pollution from the upper catchments and the Port of Brisbane's investment is a great example of this."

"With the Lockyer Valley also being Queensland's salad bowl, we've been able to increase the resilience and productivity of the adjoining farmland owned by Mulgowie Farming Company."

Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd will now invest a total of \$1 million over three years to support the project, co-delivered with a number of partners.

Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd worked with a range of partners to implement the pilot project: Healthy Waterways and Catchments, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Mulgowie Farming Company, Queensland Government (Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation), Planfuture, Alluvium, BMT WBM, Griffith University (Australian Rivers Institute), 02.

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